

An Exploration of William Glasser's Choice Theory in Classroom Management

Robert P. J. Paularinne

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Lakehead University
Thunder Bay, Ontario

December 2007



Library and
Archives Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-42172-7
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-42172-7

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.


Canada

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether secondary school teachers used Glasser's choice theory in classroom management and how it was operationalized and/or to describe the alternative approaches they may be taking to classroom management. The study was a qualitative case study of five highschool teachers. Methods included semi-structured interviews and fieldnotes. The study explored the perceptions of five highschool teachers regarding the efficacy of Glasser's (1998a) choice theory in terms of their classroom management strategies and personal responsibility. According to Glasser, individuals achieve responsible behaviour when they attempt to satisfy their own needs without depriving other people of the same opportunity.

As a result of data analysis four themes (goals of classroom management, strategies for classroom management, teachers' perceptions of the reasons or misbehaviour and teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of effective teachers) emerged. The participants' perspectives illuminated several of Glasser's (1988, 1998a, 2002, 2004) beliefs including the quality world, student needs, the importance of a positive teacher/student relationship, the importance of meaningful work, student responsibility, positive feelings, and the positive effects of encouraging, supporting, listening and caring. In addition, participants noted that although student choice is important for a number of reasons, teacher control is also necessary to ensure structure and safety.

It was determined that, although choice theory was not specifically adhered to, the use of elements of choice theory illustrated the power of choice theory in that as teachers negotiated the tensions of classroom management they indeed did use a lot of ideas consistent with Glasser (1998a).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Unquestionable appreciation must be extended to a number of individuals who were sources of support, encouragement and motivation throughout this research endeavor. First, I would like to express my appreciation to my thesis advisor, Dr. Karen Reynolds, whose advice throughout my journey was invaluable. I thank her for her time, patience and researcher guidance.

To the supporting member of my thesis committee, Dr. Mary Clare Courtland. Your expertise in qualitative research was invaluable and greatly appreciated. I have the utmost respect for you and I am very grateful for your taking an interest in my research.

To my internal examiner, Dr. Daniel Klassen, thanks for introducing me to Glasser's work, I have deeply enjoyed all the discussions we have had over the years and I look forward to future ones. I would also like to thank my external examiner, Dr. Thomas Ryan from Nipissing University. Also, special thanks to Barb for her help.

To my parents, Pentti and Marion Paularinne who instilled in me the importance and appreciation of education and taught me about commitment, perseverance and hard work. If it were not for the two of you my train may have fallen off the track.

Finally to Mary Bortolin, whose continuous love, support and distraction were very important elements to keep me happy throughout a challenging endeavor.

To the participating school board and the principal of the highschool, I express great appreciation for allowing me to conduct my research. To all of my participants, a researcher could not have wished for more wonderful and dedicated participants. You are all a great asset to education and a source of constant encouragement for generations of students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Research Questions	2
Definition of Terms.....	2
Personal Ground.....	4
Significance of the Study.....	8
Limitations.....	8
Summary.....	9
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
Purpose of Behaviour	10
Goals of Classroom Management	11
Choice Theory	12
Basic Genetic Needs	16
The Quality World.....	21
Total Behaviour.....	24
Creativity	28
Schooling	29
Teachers as Mangers	30
Learning Teams	31
Other Applications of Choice Theory.....	31
Related Methods of Classroom Management.....	32
Summary.....	36
CHAPTER 3: DESIGN & METHODOLOGY.....	38
Design.....	38
The Setting & Participants.....	38
Methodology.....	39
Interviews.....	39
Fieldnotes and Participant Observation.....	41
Research Process.....	42
Entry	42
Data Collection.....	43
Data Analysis.....	43
Ethical Considerations.....	47
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION.....	49
Participant Profiles	49
Findings.....	50
Goals of Classroom Management.....	50
Strategies for Classroom Management.....	55
Teachers' Perceptions of the Reasons for Misbehaviour.....	79
Teachers' Perceptions of Characteristics of Effective Teachers.....	84

Summary.....	88
Interpretation.....	89
Goals of Classroom Management.....	89
Strategies for Classroom Management.....	92
Teachers' Perceptions of the Reasons for Misbehaviour.....	100
Teachers' Perceptions of Characteristics of Effective Teachers.....	102
Summary	104
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION.....	105
Introduction	105
Revisiting the Research Questions.....	105
Implications for Theory, Practice & Research	109
Implications for Theory	109
Implications for Practice	112
Implications for Research	114
Conclusion	115
REFERENCES.....	118
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND FIELDNOTES REFERENCE GUIDE.....	123
APPENDIX B: COVER LETTER AND CONSENT FORM.....	127

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Connecting Habits & Deadly Habits.....	14
Table 2. Summary of the Research Findings.....	44
Table 3. Comparison of Participants Reasons for Misbehaviour with Glasser.....	101
Table 4. Strengths and Limitations of Choice Theory as Illuminated by Participant.....	108

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

When teachers want to promote responsible behaviour in their students, they need to offer choices and help students decide how best to satisfy their own needs. Teachers do not promote responsibility in their students by withdrawing choice or by choosing their responses for them. Such actions are contradictory to the nature of responsibility. Covey (1989) writes, “look at the word responsibility – ‘response-ability’ -the ability to choose your response” (p. 71). Glasser (1998a) argues that responsibility comes from satisfying one’s own needs without depriving other people of satisfying their own needs. He developed his choice theory on this premise. True responsibility can only be achieved when people willfully choose their responses because only they know which personal needs are not being met. Malley, J., Basic, J., Beck, M., Kranzelic Tavra, K., Feric, M., and Conway, J. (2003) comment that “adolescents have an increased developmental need for more autonomy and decision making regarding their own learning, but as students get older, schools tend to tighten classroom controls and offer fewer opportunities for student decision making” (p. 6). Glasser asserts that this reasoning explains why some students put little effort into their education.

The purpose of the study was to investigate secondary school teacher’s use of Glasser’s choice theory in classroom management and how it was operationalized and/or to describe the alternative approaches they may be taking to manage classrooms. In addition, the researcher also explored the perceptions of five highschool teachers regarding the efficacy of Glasser’s (1998a) choice theory in their classroom management

strategies and personal responsibility. The study was a qualitative case study of five highschool teachers. Methods included semi-structured interviews and fieldnotes.

Research Questions

1. How do the participants implement/apply Glasser's (1998a) choice theory in their classroom management strategies?
2. How do the participants implement Glasser's choice theory in response to classroom management issues?
3. How would classroom management strategies based on Glasser's choice theory foster student responsibility?
4. What alternative approaches are participants taking to classroom management? How consistent are these approaches with Glasser's theory?

Definition of Terms

Choice Theory: A biological/psychological theory that offers an explanation of human behaviour as well as guidelines to successful relationship building. Choice theory emphasizes achieving and maintaining personal responsibility (Glasser, 1998a).

Classroom Discipline: According to Morrish (2000), "discipline is about developing and creating appropriate behaviours, not just managing the ones which are already there. It's about instilling values and positive attitudes, teaching prosocial skills and training children how to work within a structure of rules and limits. Because it deals with all aspects of behaviour, discipline is capable of producing higher order attributes such as respect and responsibility" (p. 2).

Classroom Management: A method used by teachers to achieve student responsibility.

According to Erwin (2004), "managing is first creating the conditions for students

to be interested in learning or performing, and then providing the structures, strategies, and activities that will encourage quality learning and quality performance” (p. 5).

Effective Choices: According to Erwin (2004), “effective choices refers to behaviour that works for us; it satisfies our needs” (p. 19).

Fun: One of Glasser’s (1998a) proposed genetic needs. According to Glasser (1998a) all humans have a genetic need for fun. This need is characterized by laughter.

Genetics: “A branch of biology that deals with heredity in any of its manifestations” (Reber, 1995, p. 311). According to choice theory, the five basic needs are genetic.

Irresponsible Behaviour: The terms irresponsible/misbehaviour behaviour refer to behaviour that may satisfy one’s needs at the expense of depriving someone else the opportunity of satisfying their own needs (Erwin 2004; Glasser 1998a). This behaviour is often disruptive to students and teachers. It is problematic when teachers are attempting to create and maintain a productive, safe, and nurturing learning environment (Erwin 2004; Glasser 1998a).

Responsibility/Responsible Choices: According to Glasser (1998a) responsible choices refer to choices that satisfy needs without depriving other the opportunity to satisfy their own needs.

Schooling: According to Glasser (1998a) schooling refers to the practice of forcing kids to acquire useless or meaningless knowledge.

Personal Ground

Once I had a clear understanding of Glasser's (1998a) choice theory, I had the opportunity to apply it at work. For several years, I had been working at a greenhouse during the summer months. I very much enjoyed my work, but this past summer, I asked to work at one of the smaller, satellite greenhouses instead of working at the home base. I was confident that my request would be accepted because I had a good working relationship with the manager. I considered myself a senior member of the greenhouse staff and decided very early that I would take full responsibility for the greenhouse. I chose to apply choice theory with my coworkers and my customers to see how suitable it was to a business setting. I talked with my coworkers and explained my plan of action. I explained to them that I wanted things to be different at this satellite than at the home base, and they all reacted with relief.

To consider this application a success, I would have met a few criteria: (a) Business had to be better than it was last year when I was not working; (b) the other workers had to be happy working in the satellite Greenhouse; (c) the customers had to be happy while in the greenhouse; and (d) I had to have return customers, a sure sign of the success of this application. There was no question in my mind that the other employees were happier working at the satellite greenhouse than at the home base. Even though the prices were higher than in past years, the customers seemed happy; approximately 85% to 90 % of them were return customers.

Business was significantly higher that year than in the past. Our satellite greenhouse stayed open longer because it was the busiest in Canada, according to my managers. When customers came to the satellite greenhouse, they were treated with

respect and received personal attention. I would ask how their flowers were doing or if they had caught any fish on their fishing trips. Customers knew that there was a limit to what I was allowed to do (e.g., I could not accept returns on flowers), and they accepted those limitations and policies.

Choice theory was successfully applied in this context. Workers and customers got along well with each other in their interactions. The greenhouse always looked clean, and most of the time, people were happy while in the greenhouse. I wanted to do a good job because I got along with my coworkers, my managers, and my customers. Customers knew that the staff at this greenhouse could meet several of their gardening needs. I believe my customers shopped at the greenhouse for this reason. It was a place where they could not only find what they wanted but also be in an environment where they could feel satisfied and happy.

Choice theory asserts that humans need positive relationships (Glasser, 1998a). I can recall teachers who showed me respect, trust, acceptance, support, and encouragement. I believe that encouragement is important to all students, regardless of age. Even though I thought school was important, I did not always do my best. I had the impression that some of my teachers did not really care whether or not I did well in school. Others had the attitude that some students “have it,” but others do not. This unsupportive attitude can have negative repercussions for students that may result in low self-esteem, underachievement, and harmful self-concept.

Some teachers believe that all students “have it”. For example, I was very quiet in my drama class, and most of my friends thought that drama was a waste of time. When it came to volunteering to go on stage to do some improv, I would almost never put up my

hand first. I wanted to get on stage, but I just did not want to be first. After a while, my teacher would ask me to get on stage; consequently, I felt that she enjoyed watching me on stage.

When the chance to audition for the school musical arose, I wanted to try directing instead of acting. When I arrived for the audition, I noticed that my drama teacher and the production director were on the audition committee. I acted out the scene that I had prepared, and then I asked to be the assistant director because I was not comfortable at the time singing in public. As soon as I said that, my drama teacher encouraged me to sing in front of the group of people overseeing the audition. I refused, but appreciated the encouragement. Even though I did not sing, I did act out a small part in the musical, and I will be forever grateful for her encouragement.

Encouragement is one of the strongest tools that teachers have to facilitate student responsibility. I remember the good feeling I had when teachers took the time to listen to me, even if my concerns or interests did not pertain to schoolwork. When I recall my highschool drama class, I remember how much effort and care I took in learning my lines and creating the character. I felt happy and responsible because I had found something that defined me as an individual. To me, my teacher and the entire school body (students, teachers, my parents, everyone) encouraged me. I wanted to entertain; I loved everything that came with the stage, even the stress. I put more effort into drama than any other subject in school because I was encouraged to do what I thought was best. I chose what I wore, when and where to learn my lines, and how to act.

In my experience, nowhere else is choice theory more firmly embraced than in a drama class. The whole environment fosters choice and students' need for power and

freedom are satisfied by the emphasis on choice. Their need for love and belonging is satisfied through teacher encouragement as well as peer interaction (since all assignments are completed in groups). Their need for fun is satisfied through the enhancement of imagination and creativity. As Erwin (2004) notes, "Drama games in the classroom not only enhance students' creativity, they have other benefits as well. Drama games develop skill that students need to be successful in many other areas of their lives: concentration, focus, self-control, spontaneity, and confidence" (p. 181).

Teachers struggling with classroom management may benefit from watching how an experienced drama teacher creates a classroom where classroom management problems can be nonexistent. A drama classroom is already created to foster choice theory. Every student's needs can be satisfied relatively easily in a drama classroom because of the way the classroom is created and maintained by the teacher.

If the implementation of choice theory had been successful in working with people at work, or getting along with my friends and family, I believed that it could be successful in classroom management. In addition, if the qualities I respected in teachers the most could be attributed to the way they implemented choice theory with me (consciously or not), I have no reason to believe that other students would not also respect the teachers who have similar methods of dealing with their students. Therefore, it is important to explore whether or not choice theory (or at least some elements of choice theory) is apparent in classroom management and the impact of choice theory on student responsibility.

Significance of the Study

A number of researchers have found that students' need to develop personal responsibility is high (Bennett, 1998; Glasser, 2004; Houston, 1998; Kohn, 1998; Lewis 2001; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). This is particularly evident in the classroom situation because this is where students develop their social skills and work habits, and learn to take responsibility for their behaviour. The study provided insights into the participants' perceptions of their interactions with their students and the effectiveness of their current classroom management strategies. It also provided insights into the implementation and results of classroom management.

Limitations of the Study

As with all studies, the study had some limitations. These limitations were directly connected to the chosen data collection procedures. In regards to interviewing, Creswell (2003) discusses limitations to interviews. Interviews provide "information in a designated place rather than the natural field setting" (p. 186). A researcher's presence "may bias responses" (p. 186). Lastly, Creswell (2003) explains that "people are not equally articulate and perceptive" (p. 186).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) also illuminate some limitations to interviewing. Among them are the possible problems associated with self-reports:

Interviews involve personal interaction; cooperation is essential. Interviewees may be unwilling or may be uncomfortable sharing all that the interviewer hopes to explore. Or they may be unaware of recurring patterns in their lives. The interviewer may not ask questions that evoke long narratives from participants either because of a lack of expertise or familiarity with local language or because

of lack of skill...and at times, interviewees may have good reason not to be truthful... (p. 110).

In addition to these limitations this study also suffers from a sample size of only five participants.

Summary

This chapter described the research problem rationale, design of the study, definition of terms, as well as the significance and limitations. I also explained my personal ground.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are seven interrelated strands of the research related to choice theory. The review describes them in sections: (1) The Purpose of Misbehaviour, (2) Goals of Classroom Management, (3) Teachers as Managers, (4) Learning Teams, (5) An Exploration of Glasser's (1998a) Choice Theory, (6) Other Applications of Choice Theory, and (7) Related Theories of Classroom Management.

The Purpose of Behaviour

Glasser (1998a) claims that the purpose of misbehaviour is not an attempt to be disruptive, but rather an effort to satisfy a need that is frustrated. Misbehaviour is indicative that students' needs are not being met by the teacher or the school. From a teacher's point of view, the teacher and the student are accountable for identifying the need that is being frustrated. Once this happens, the student can choose more responsible behaviour that satisfies the need responsibly.

As mentioned previously, Glasser (1998a) believes that all behaviours are motivated by needs. When teachers focus on the behaviour, they miss what may be the most significant aspect of the issue, namely, that the student's needs are not being satisfied in school and that misbehaviour is an attempt to satisfy them.

To encourage student responsibility, it may be beneficial for teachers to use classroom management strategies that provide students with what they need. Unless the strategies help students to understand the purpose of irresponsible behaviour, the students may have little motivation to change the behaviour. A classroom management strategy that focuses on understanding the purpose behind a particular misbehaviour requires student insight. Once the student understands the motivation for the behaviour, he/she is

more likely to choose more responsible behaviour to satisfy an unmet need (Glasser 1998a).

If students do not understand why they are misbehaving, it may be very difficult for them to change these behaviours. However, teachers are better equipped to facilitate responsible behaviour in students once they understand what motivated the behaviour in the first place. Classroom management strategies that emphasize the importance of student motivation may lead to more responsible student behaviour because they focus on the cause of the misbehaviour.

Goals of Classroom Management

Glasser claims that “good discipline is clearly a matter of running schools so that students say, ‘This school makes sense to me. I won’t break the rules of a place in which I can get what I need’” (as cited by Gough, 1987, p. 8). Glasser suggests that students will behave when they feel that the classroom is a needs-satisfying place. It remains the job of teachers to succeed in creating classrooms where students will choose to act responsibly because they feel that teachers and the school are needs-satisfying sources. Glasser explains, “There are a plethora of discipline programs on the market these days, but all of them are based on stimulus/response psychology-on doing something *to* the student” (as cited by Gough, p. 8).

According to Glasser (1998a), the way some teachers see, interact, and interpret the world may be problem. Teachers may be attempting to solve problems with their students in ways that may exacerbate the problems they are attempting to solve. Choice theory offers teachers the framework to understand the *purpose* of behaviour and an effective way of handling it. The theory offers teachers a new way to look at human

behaviour, including thoughts and feelings. Choice theory represents a particular type of psychology, including a flexible framework, whose sole purpose is to teach people that they are in effective control of their own lives and that any decision in almost any circumstance is theirs to make.

Choice Theory

Glasser (1998a) notes that choice theory “explains why and how we make the choices that determine the course of our lives” (p. 7). He adds, “Whatever behavior we choose is generated inside our brains” (p. 17). Choice theory emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships. As Glasser (2004) explains, “students don’t listen to people that they do not have a positive relationship with, they hear them but they don’t really listen” (n.p.). Glasser contends that hearing and listening are two different concepts. Hearing is a physiological response, if we are capable of hearing we hear automatically. Listening to someone is to consider, consciously what he or she has said, and then choosing how best to respond. This need to establish close relationships is the foundation not only of choice theory but also of happiness. Glasser (2004) observes:

The problem that the people come in with is they are unhappy...almost all of them are unhappy about one thing...they can’t get along with the important people in their lives to the extent they want to. And when you can’t get along, you’re unhappy. Unhappiness isn’t a feeling, it is a kind of realization. (n.p.)

Because students must feel that school is a place where they can satisfy their needs before they choose to behave responsibly, one way in which teachers may be able to help accomplish this task is to ensure that students perceive teachers as a resource for satisfying students’ needs (Glasser, 1998a). In other words, students need to realize that

teachers can satisfy some of their needs. To be seen as this type of resource, teachers must have a good relationship with all of their students. Glasser (1998a) asserts that, "...many who teach and manage don't understand that given care and support, the students and workers who are doing so little now would be willing and eager to work hard" (p. 50). Many students who do not enjoy school will work for teachers with whom they have a good relationship because the relationship means so much to them. For instance, students may view their teachers as the only people who can satisfy the students' need for love and belonging.

According to Glasser (1998a), a good teacher/student relationship will help to ensure that students act responsibly in school: "...if there is a truth about people that no one can dispute, it is that success in any endeavor is directly proportional to how well the people who are involved in it get along with each other...students who get along with their teachers and with each other are almost always successful" (p. 21). He argues that if teachers and students cannot coexist in an environment where both groups get along, conflict will likely be evident. A classroom with no classroom management problems may be indicative of a positive and mutually respectful relationship between the teacher and the students.

In addition to claiming that humans need strong relationships, Glasser (2002) also offers teachers certain habits that he believes are more likely to create strong relationships. He refers to these habits as *connecting habits*. Glasser (2002) also notes several habits that he believes harms the much-needed positive teacher/student relationship. He refers to these habits as *deadly habits*. These habits are considered

“deadly” because commitment and wide spread use of such habits are “deadly” to the teacher/student relationship. Table 1 summarizes these habits.

Table 1

Connecting Habits & Deadly Habits

Connecting Habits of Choice Theory (helps create strong relationships)	Deadly Habits (inhibits the creation of successful relationships)
1. Supporting	1. Criticizing
2. Encouraging	2. Blaming
3. Listening	3. Complaining
4. Accepting	4. Nagging
5. Trusting	5. Threatening
6. Respecting	6. Punishing
7. Negotiating differences	7. Bribing or Rewarding for control

Throughout his in-the-field work as a school consultant, Glasser (2004) has found that there are no discipline problems in high-quality schools that function by using choice theory principles. He claims that although there may be discipline issues, enduring discipline problems are nonexistent. It is when students and teachers do not get along that classroom management becomes a problem. Although teachers want an effective learning environment, the students may not construe them as resources that satisfy their needs. If students and teachers get along, discipline problems can be diffused (Glasser, 2004).

In concurrence with Glasser (1998a), Lewis (2001) found that “students who receive more relationship based [*sic*] discipline are less disruptive when teachers deal with misbehaviour and generally act more responsibly in that teacher’s class” (p. 315). When compared with other forms of classroom discipline, students will act more responsibly when managed by teachers who utilize classroom management strategies that promote relationship building. Glasser (2004) contends that some schools have difficulty

facilitating responsible behaviour in their students because of the way in which teachers and administrators choose to deal with students.

Glasser (1998a) believes that many teachers often resort to controlling behaviours (characterized by the *deadly habits*) as a means of promoting responsibility. As Palmatier (1998) explains, this behaviour is contradictory to choice theory, places accountability on the teacher and does not promote responsibility:

Choice theory or responsible choice theory places personal accountability directly on the students' shoulders. Teachers in a quality school do not even try to manipulate environmental reinforcers to control their students; instead, they remove the barriers that inhibit students from controlling their own behavior. (p. 120)

An environmental reinforcer is anything that is external to students and attempts to control students' behaviour. When a teacher punishes a student for doing something that is considered "wrong" or rewards a student when he/she performs a more desirable behaviour, the punishing and rewarding behaviours place controls on the students' choices. As a result the students' behaviour is no longer considered responsible because he/she is only acting to either get rid of the external control (the punishment) or to get the reward.

To facilitate responsible behaviour in students, teachers must not attempt to control their students with coercion, or other similar environmental reinforcers (Glasser, 1998a). The student might respond negatively to the teacher in an attempt to rid himself or herself from the external control. He or she may then find it difficult to consider responsible behaviours because all he or she may be thinking about is how to get rid of

the external reinforces. In fact, this practice may promote misbehaviour by motivating feelings of anger and resentment from the student. Students must also realize that responsible behaviour does not deny other people the opportunity of satisfying their own needs. Erwin (2004) notes:

The class clown may find that disrupting the class helps her meet her power, freedom and fun needs; but again her behaviour is depriving others (particularly the teacher) of meeting their needs effectively. The good news is that people can, and most are more than willing to, choose new, responsible behaviours if they are at least as need-satisfying as their former, irresponsible behaviours. (p. 19)

Glasser (1998a) explains that responsible behaviour has two aspects: (a) the ability to satisfy one's needs; and (b) the ability to satisfy one's needs without depriving other people of the opportunity to satisfy their own needs. Students may not understand that concept when they are being disruptive in class. It becomes an important aspect of classroom management to ensure that students understand that responsible behaviour includes both aspects. To manage a classroom so that students are more likely to make responsible choices, it is important to explore which student needs must be met in school.

Glasser (2004) explains that "choice theory is made up of four different components" (n.p.). The four components are basic needs, the quality world, total behaviour, and human creativity.

Basic Needs

Glasser (1988) explains that "according to choice theory, discipline problems do not occur in classrooms in which students' needs are satisfied" (p. 8). Glasser (1998a) identifies the following five needs:

...besides *survival*, which depends a lot on our physiology, I believe we are genetically programmed to try to satisfy four psychological needs: *love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun*. All our behavior is always our best choice, at the time we make the choice, to satisfy one or more of these needs. (p. 28)

In order to help students understand how to satisfy their needs, it is important for them to understand what needs, according to choice theory, they have. It is also important to determine which need out of the five needs may be unsatisfied. Once the frustrated needs are understood, the teacher will be able to more fully understand the misbehaviour. In addition, the teacher will also be in a better position to help the student choose more responsible behaviour that will result in the satisfaction of the students frustrated needs.

Furthermore, Erwin (2004) explains the possible consequences of not providing opportunities for students to meet their needs:

If we (teachers) do not provide opportunities for students to meet these needs in our classrooms, the genetic instructions don't go away. Students will be frustrated. Some frustrated students will behave responsibly and just wait until they are home or at lunch to satisfy their unmet needs. Many others have not developed that much self-control and engage in irresponsible behaviours in their attempt to follow their genetic instruction. (p. 19)

Glasser (1998a) claims that these needs are universal, innate, and genetic.

Regardless of age, gender, intelligence, or cultural heritage, everyone is born with the task of satisfying these five needs. Furthermore, although everyone has the same needs, not everyone experiences the same drive for each need to be satisfied. Erwin (2004) states that "the basic needs often conflict with other people's needs" (p. 18). For example, a

teacher with a high need for power may satisfy that need by trying to force disruptive students to stay after class, a situation that may conflict with the students' need to satisfy one of their needs. Glasser notes that, "Our need for love and belonging drives us not only to care for others to the point of caring for others we don't know, but also to seek satisfying relationships with special people, such as mates, family members, and friends all our lives" (p. 28). Regarding love and belonging, Glasser (2004) states "if we practice that need we'll get along wonderfully well with most of the people in our lives. If we help them to satisfy their needs and don't deprive them of a chance to satisfy their needs, this is a wonderful way to get along" (n.p.).

To promote responsible behaviour, teachers must attempt, either directly or indirectly, to satisfy all five of students' needs. Teachers must satisfy their students' need for love and belonging if they are to convince students that teachers and schools are needs-satisfying sources. Glasser (1998a) notes that, "we all need happy, supportive people...It is the job of parents, teachers and employees to be such people. Too many teachers and bosses do not realize how much they are needed just to be warm, friendly, and supportive to those they teach and manage" (p. 50).

According to Glasser (1998a), until students realize that they can satisfy their need for love and belonging in school, classroom management problems may occur because teachers may not be regarded as supportive and caring individuals. Students must feel teachers care about them. Repeat offending students may have found it difficult in the past to satisfy this need for love and belonging because they may have come from broken homes or have a poor social network. Their teachers may become the only source that may satisfy this unmet need. If students choose to satisfy this need irresponsibly, they

may disrupt the class, thereby successfully satisfying the need by gaining the teacher's attention. Teachers need to develop classroom management strategies that will fulfill this unmet need in a more responsible way.

Glasser (1998a) explains that freedom "is evolution's attempt to provide the correct balance between your need to try to force me to live my life the way you want and my need to be free of that force"(pp. 39-40):

Whenever we lose freedom, we reduce or lose what may be a defining human characteristic: our ability to be constructively creative... When we don't feel free to express ourselves, or if we do and no one will listen to us, our creativity may cause us pain or even make us sick. The more we are free and able to satisfy our needs in a way that does not stop another person from satisfying his or hers... the more we are able to use our creativity not only for our own benefit, but for the benefit of everyone. Creative people who feel free to create are rarely selfish; they get a lot of pleasure from sharing their gift. (p. 40)

Taking freedom away from students in school may result in their putting less effort into schoolwork. For example, if students are given a choice as to which assignments to complete, their need for freedom may be satisfied. Students who are given the opportunity to choose their assignments may also be more inclined to produce creative work, which they view as a way to satisfy several needs, including freedom. In addition, students may be more inclined to take personal responsibility for a task that was chosen rather than a task that was forced upon them. Constructive creativity is the natural product when students satisfy their need for *freedom*. Many great accomplishments of human history are attributed to *freedom*.

According to Glasser (1998a) fun, “is the genetic reward for learning” (p. 41). Glasser also commented that “with the possible exception of whales and porpoises, we are the only creatures who play all our lives. And because we do, we learn all our lives. The day we stop playing is the day we stop learning” (p. 41). Glasser (2004) argues that we learn best when we are having fun. When we are not having fun, we are not learning to our full potential. When students are playing and having fun, they feel free to be creative. Students are also more inclined to take chances and work harder when fun is a part of schoolwork. Glasser (1998a) claims that “fun is defined by laughter” (p. 41). A classroom with a lot of laughter is a good indication that the students are learning. According to Erwin (2004), a classroom without fun not only makes students dull but also creates “the conditions for Johnny and Jenny to be absent, to shut down, to give up, or to disrupt” (p. 162).

Glasser (2004) purports that students do not want to put effort into work that is not need satisfying; and one of the best ways to make learning need satisfying is to make it fun. He states that “we could have much better schools if we keep in mind that fun, when you satisfy it, is a genetic reward” (n.p.). If teachers make schoolwork and learning fun, then classroom management problems may decrease because students may see school as being a place to satisfy their need for fun. As a result of having this need met, *fun* may also promote responsible behaviour. If a student is having fun learning about a subject, he or she may be more likely to place a lot of effort into the subject because it is helping to satisfy one of his or her needs.

According to choice theory, the need for power and the freedom from oppressive power cannot be ignored (Glasser, 1998a). However, Glasser (1998a) offers advice on

how to satisfy teachers' and students' needs for power. Discipline problems are reduced when students' needs are satisfied and when students respect teachers and vice versa. It is important that teachers consider the use of power in their current classroom management strategies. If teachers' need for power is being satisfied through means that will not gain students' respect, misbehaviour will occur. In addition, when teachers satisfy their need for *power* in a way that may not gain students' respect, the result will be the frustration of students' own need for *power*. According to Glasser (2004), dealing with power in any other way but through respect results in a power struggle. Thus, a classroom management technique that positions teachers as the powerful and the students as the powerless results in the escalation of conflict and the decrease of responsible behaviour. Teachers who believe there should be more suspensions and more detentions often have more classroom management problems with their students.

The Quality World

Glasser (1998a) suggests that students and teachers bring their own perceptions of the world into the classroom. Situations are going to be interpreted differently by individuals who have different ways of constructing and interpreting reality. Glasser explains that "choice theory explains that the reason we perceive much of reality so differently from others has to do with another important world, unique to each of us, called the quality world" (p. 44).

The quality world represents the way in which students interpret the world. Although all students are working in the same classroom environment, each student interprets what happens in the classroom differently. "Optimists and pessimists live in the same world, as do the sane and the crazy, but each sees it far differently. Much of what

we see may be close to what others see or we wouldn't get along, but it is not the same" (Glasser, 1998a, p. 44). Glasser also asserts that, "This small personal world...is made up of a small group of specific pictures that portray, more than anything we know, the best ways to satisfy one or more of our basic needs" (pp. 44-45). He explains:

What these pictures portray falls into three categories: (1) the *people* we most want to be with, (2) the *things* we most want to own or experience, and (3) *the ideas or systems of belief* that govern much of our behavior. Anytime we feel very good, we are choosing to behave so that someone, something, or some belief in the real world has come close to matching a picture of that person, thing or belief in our quality world (pp. 45)

If school, schoolwork, and teachers are not perceived as important in students' quality worlds, they will not be able to satisfy students' needs. Glasser notes that when "students see their school as need-satisfying, there are almost no discipline problems" (Glasser, 1998b, p. 71).

The importance of the quality world and how it relates to education and classroom management strategies cannot be ignored. If teachers can put their students into their quality world and, more importantly, get themselves into their students' quality world, then "everything that concerns you as a school teacher will start to work. They'll start to learn, they'll be nice, they will treat each other well, they'll do well on the test, they'll enjoy school" (Glasser, 2004, n.p.).

When a person, an idea or a thing is placed into students' quality world, it is interpreted as a needs-satisfying source. According to choice theory, because individuals are happy when their needs are satisfied, it does not seem plausible that students will react

to pictures in their quality worlds by any other means than to embrace them. If schoolwork, teachers, and classmates are in students' quality worlds, students perceive them as needs-satisfying sources.

How people satisfy current needs depends on how they satisfied them in the past (Glasser, 1998a). If students' needs for fun were satisfied in school in the past, students will look to school to satisfy the need again. People do not admit things that do not satisfy needs into their quality worlds. If a classroom management plan does not increase the likelihood that the teacher will be placed into students' quality worlds, the plan may be useless. According to Glasser (1998b), teachers, schoolwork, and school must be admitted into students' quality worlds. For example, if teachers want students to perceive Shakespeare as a needs-satisfying source, they must find a way to convince students to admit Shakespeare into their quality world. To do this, a teacher may ask students to perform scenes from a play that they are studying. If successful, this assignment may satisfy students' needs for fun, freedom, power, and love and belonging. In the future, Shakespeare may be interpreted as a needs-satisfying picture by students, but the assignment itself also may be interpreted similarly.

Teachers need to identify the criteria that will allow them to become pictures in their students' quality worlds. When teachers ask students to describe what a good teacher is, the responses represent the criteria for admittance. A classroom management technique that emphasizes the importance of understanding students' quality worlds may gain the necessary insights from which teachers can use to gain access into their students quality worlds. If teachers hope to facilitate responsible behaviour in their students, they may benefit by using a classroom management system, such as Glasser's quality school, that

will help them gain entrance into their student's quality worlds. Once admitted, students will see the teacher as a need-satisfying source, and discipline problems will decrease (Glasser, 1998b).

Total Behaviour

Many people interpret behaviour as an action. In fact, *Dictionary.com* defines behaviour as a "manner of behaving or acting". Although action is an important aspect of behaviour, Glasser's (1998a) concept of total behaviour may be a more complete definition of what it is to behave:

Not only are we always behaving, but we are also always trying to choose to behave in a way that gives us *the most effective control over ourselves*. In terms of choice theory, having effective control means being able to behave in a way that reasonably satisfies the pictures in our quality world. (p. 71)

It is important to note that from birth to death humans are always behaving. Each behaviour is an attempt to satisfy a picture in the person's quality world. When a student behaves in a manner that is undesirable to a teacher, the student may not be behaving in this way with the intention of disrupting the class. The student is only behaving irresponsibly in an attempt to satisfy her/his unmet needs. For teachers to minimize discipline problems, it is important to consider that all discipline problems represent total behaviour. According to Glasser (1988),

...when a student talks back to you in class, you might not think that what he is doing is very complicated. He's just another lazy kid 'shooting off his mouth' instead of doing his work. He thinks it's pretty simple too. You just got him so upset that he told you off. It's not his fault; you deserved it. If we are to deal

effectively with problems like these, it would help if we could understand how much more complex these simple behaviours are than they seem at first glance. (p. 48)

This example illustrates a potential problem with the definition of behaviour. If behaviour is as simple as responding without choice to another person's reaction, responsibility is lacking. If the teacher caused the student's behaviour, the student is absolved from any responsibility in this situation. According to Glasser all behaviour, regardless of how presented, represents total behavior. Regarding the use of the terms, behaviour and total behaviour, Glasser (1998a) admits, that "I occasionally use only *behavior*, but I always mean *total behavior*" (p. 72).

Glasser (1988) explains that there are four components of total behavior: "They are a complex mixture of four individual components" (p. 48). There is a feeling aspect to behaviour, along with three other components to total behaviour: an action, a thought, and some component of physiology. In addition to feeling anger, the student in the example above is yelling, possibly moving his arms in anger, and thinking how unfair the situation is. His heart may be pounding, or some other physiological response, during the confrontation.

Glasser's (1998a) choice theory posits that discipline and classroom management strategies that do not acknowledge that the complexity of behaviour is not as simple as just acting may be unsuccessful because they fail to include the other three aspects of behaviour. Glasser (1988) explains that "while we may not choose every part of the total...we almost always choose the total which is the sum of all four parts" (p. 49). Although humans do not have direct control over all components of total behavior, that is,

humans do not have direct control over their physiological responses or their feelings, Glasser believes we have direct control over our actions and our thoughts. Glasser (2004) explains that

acting is our actions. *Thinking* is our thoughts. And if we want to change our behaviour we change those...our feelings are important because...we're always encouraged to satisfy a need because of how we feel. We know that if we are lonely and find a friend we'll feel better...so our feeling give us instantaneous feedback as to how well we're doing as we attempt to satisfy our needs. (n.p.)

Teachers must focus on the two aspects of behaviour that their students can control: their thinking and their acting. Glasser (1988) cautions:

Most of us have no difficulty accepting that any total behaviour which is mostly action or thinking is chosen. If the student had calmly slammed his books down on the floor or quietly cursed the teacher; he would have had little success in convincing anyone that he did not choose what he did. But a student doesn't slam and curse calmly and quietly; he does it with anger and tries to avoid responsibility by claiming that he was so upset by the teacher that he couldn't help what he did. In a sense, he is claiming that it is his feelings, not he, that are responsible for what he did, and since his feeling were caused by the teacher, she, not he, is really responsible for the whole outburst. (p. 49)

Glasser reminds teachers that "as much as it is helpful to think of behaviour as a whole, this is difficult because we have always described what we do by its most recognizable component" (p. 50). In order to effectively manage misbehaviour, it is important to recognize that behaviour is not as simple as it is commonly thought to be.

The four components of total behaviour are equally important when dealing with classroom management problems. To promote responsible behaviour on the part of students, it may be beneficial for teachers to treat all misbehaviour as total behaviour, a strategy that may help students better understand their own misbehaviour. Teachers could explain the concept of total behaviour to their students and ask them to reflect on their misbehaviour. This self-awareness may be all many students need in order to act more responsibly. Having a precise understanding of total behaviour will lead to responsible behaviour. If a misbehaving student only recognizes his feelings and does not understand how his actions contribute to those feelings, the student believes that he is not responsible for his behaviour. A student may be more inclined to choose responsible behaviour when he understands how acting and thinking relate to feelings. Glasser (1988) explains that, “any total behaviour that gains you more need fulfillment than you previously had... will always have pleasure as its feeling component” (p. 55).

For teachers and students to change their feelings, they must first change their behaviour and thinking (Glasser, 2004). Responsibility comes with dealing with thinking and acting. When teachers and students blame the acting aspect of their behaviour on their feelings, they absolve themselves of any responsibility for their actions. It is important to remember that each act of misguided behaviour is a complex process of thinking, acting, feeling, and physiology (Glasser, 1998a). This may sometimes be difficult for many teachers to keep in mind because a discipline issue is often only the *acting* aspect of total behaviour that the teacher experiences with the student.

Because each total behaviour is “always our best attempt to gain effective control of our lives” (Glasser, 1988, p. 57), the concept of total behaviour adds important insights into student needs and students’ quality worlds. Glasser (1988) contends that

...a disinterested student rarely has a satisfying picture of school in his head...if his parents are able to force him to go to school, he may choose the angry behaviour of disrupting to the extent that he is suspended. Now, out on suspension, he is satisfied. In school he was frustrated and he disrupted to get closer to the picture that he wants. On the street he is in control; in school, he has almost no effective control at all. (pp. 57-48)

Classroom management problems may indicate that students do not find teachers or the school to be a needs-satisfying source. In other words, disruptive behaviour means that there may be few or no pictures of anything related to school in the misbehaving students’ quality world. Although misbehaviour is often interpreted as a negative occurrence, it may be beneficial for teachers to treat all behaviour as an opportunity to hypothesize what purpose the misbehaviour is serving and how best to satisfy the misbehaving students’ needs. What Glasser wants teachers to realize is that the behaviour is not where the true solution lies; rather, the solution lies in what motivates the behaviour.

Creativity

The final component of choice theory is creativity. According to Glasser (1998a), human beings are inherently creative. Anyone who has ever had a dream has tapped into a creative system. Glasser states that “in our brains, we have a *creative system* that adds creativity to all our total behaviours.... It can add creativity to one or more of the four components of any total behaviour” (p. 135). When students are given reasonable choices

on how to be creative, discipline is not a problem because the opportunity to be creative has satisfied several of their needs.

Glasser (1988) has noted that the most common classes in which students are responsible are the ones that emphasize creativity: drama, music, and art. Student creativity is embraced, encouraged, and modeled to a much greater extent than in other classes. It is important for teachers to allow their students to express their creativity freely in school.

Schooling

Glasser (1998a) claims that many schools have committed to an inaccurate definition of education. According to Glasser many schools are structured in such a way that they define education as acquiring knowledge. To Glasser, education should not be defined as acquiring knowledge; it should be defined as applying knowledge. He believes this structure is the result of many schools committing to a practice he refers to as “schooling”, and claims that many students do not put a lot of effort into school because the education system commits to it. According to Glasser (1998a) schooling is defined by two practices:

The first practice is trying to make students acquire knowledge or memorize facts in school that have no value for anyone, including students, in the real world. The second practice is forcing students to acquire knowledge that may have some value in the real world but nowhere near enough value to try and force every student to learn it (p. 237).

Glasser (1988) further emphasizes that “...children who are taught relevant material will make more of an effort because material that you can relate to is empowering” (p. 67). If

students are to be motivated to produce high-quality work, Glasser believes that schools need to stop using “schooling” and focus on providing students work that is valuable, usable and meaningful.

Teachers as Managers

According to Glasser (1988, 1998a, 1998b), effective teachers are comparable to effective managers. He (1998b) comments that teachers should be lead-managers and spend their time and effort attempting to figure out, “...how to run the system so that workers will see that it is to their benefit to do quality work” (p. 32). He continues by describing the four most important elements of lead-management. The first element involves the leader engaging the workers in a discussion of the quality of the work to be done and the time needed to do it in so that they have a chance to add their input. The second element involves, the leader modeling the job so that the workers who are to perform the job can see exactly what the manager expects. At the same time, the workers are continually encouraged to input their suggestions as to what they believe may be a better way. The third element consists of the leader asking the workers to evaluate their own work for quality with the understanding that they understand what quality work is. The last component involves the leader showing the workers that he has done everything possible to provide them with the best tools and workplace as well as a noncoercive, nonadversarial atmosphere in which to do the job (p. 33).

Erwin (2004) further elaborates on Glasser’s (1998b) belief regarding teachers as managers by describing what teacher’s responsibilities are towards the school:

Managing is first creating the conditions for students to be interested in learning or performing, and then providing the structures, strategies, and activities that will

encourage quality learning and quality performance. Teachers manage the learning space, time, materials, and the mental, physical and emotional states of individuals, partners, small groups, and large groups. (p. 5)

Learning Teams

According to Glasser (1988), students work best when they are part of a team. He notes that the hard work and dedication students put in when they are part of a team can be found in "...the band and the orchestra, the drama program, athletics, the school newspaper and the yearbook" (as cited by Gough, 1987, p. 9). He further claims that "in each of these situations, students are working together in some sort of a group that I prefer to call a learning team..." (p. 9). Glasser (1988) believes that the learning team approach is so successful and important because it helps students satisfy their needs for fun, love and belonging and power.

Other Applications of Choice Theory

Researchers and educators have suggested choice theory to be beneficial in improving behavioural problems (Beck & Dolce-Maule, 1998; Coats, 1991; Edens & Smryl, 1994; Marshall, Weisner, & Cebula, 2004; Wittek, 2000); promoting responsible behaviour (Kim, 2002; Peterson, Chang, & Collins, 1998); as well as experiencing the positive effect teachers have when they satisfy students needs (J. G. Parish & Parish, 1999; T. S. Parish & Parish, 2005).

Although researchers and educators have found applying choice theory in school to be useful (Beck, 1997; Coats, 1991; Hammond, 2002; Kim, 2002; Passaro, Moon, Wiest, & Wong, 2004; Peterson et al., 1997; Wittek, 2000), few recent studies evaluating the effectiveness of such applications or others directly related to the proposed research

problem were found. The most comprehensive application of choice theory remains Glasser's (1998a) anecdotal study at the Schwab Middle School in 1994. After applying choice theory to the school, Glasser reported:

Our students became polite, even though no one spoke to them about manners. There was no vandalism, no graffiti, and not one hole was poked in the upholstery furniture... The sixty security assistants for the 700-student school who were busy the first semester had less and less to do, but they make a great contribution by socializing with the students... By the end of summer school, 148 of the 170 students enrolled in the Cambridge Program (a program designed for the problem students) went on to high school. (p. 267)

According to Glasser, "The predicted number for this group [to enter secondary school] when the school year began was close to zero" (p. 267). The students at the Schwab Middle School are described in Glasser's (1998a) book, *Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*, as anything but typical problem children. Almost none of the students had a vision or image associated with school in their quality worlds, which caused classroom management to be a major problem.

Related Theories of Classroom Management

There are several schools of thought regarding how discipline problems might be managed. Glasser (1998a) and Gordon (1974) maintain that effective teachers have the skills to identify student problems and needs. With this knowledge, teachers can change the class environment and instructional practices to improve student behaviour by "sending 'I-Messages' and actively listening" (Gordon, 1974). In later research, Gordon (1989) found that teachers need to insist upon self-discipline in their students: "While it is

true that obedient, fearful, submissive, and subservient kids are sometimes produced by adult-imposed discipline, truly self-disciplined youngsters are not” (p. 8). Rather than punishing students to no avail, teachers should realize that they cannot accept responsibility for someone else’s behaviour. They should insist that students accept the responsibility of disciplining themselves (Gordon, 1989). Similarly, both Gordon (1989) and Glasser (1998a) emphasize internal responsibility. It is the job of the teacher to facilitate, not force, student responsibility.

Gordon (1989) suggests that empathic understanding, in which a teacher learns about students, their specific needs, and their interests and abilities, is one of the best ways to correct or prevent student misbehaviours. He (1989) articulates a six-step problem-solving process for resolving conflicts:

Step I. Identifying and Defining the Problem

Step II. Generating Alternative Solutions

Step III. Evaluating the Alternative Solutions

Step IV. Decision Making

Step V. Implementing the Decision, and

Step VI. Follow-up Evaluation (p.169-170).

Like Glasser (1998a), Gordon focuses on students’ needs. He believes that teachers must pay attention to students to gain a better understanding of their needs. However, even though Gordon has created a step-by-step strategy to classroom discipline problems, Gordon (1989) stressed that he is “not advocating or prescribing any specific or ‘best’ solutions to problems...the six-step methodology does not always produce the best solution or one that solves a problem for all time” (p. 153).

Glasser (1998a) also questions the effectiveness of any technique that promises to solve all classroom problems: "Such programs provide fertile ground for problems to occur. I developed one myself in the 1970's [*sic*], the Ten-Step Discipline Program based on reality therapy, and unfortunately it is still in use" (p. 269).

Kohn's (1991) philosophy of classroom management is comparable to Glasser's perspective. Both theorists recognize the ineffectiveness and damage of rewards and punishments. Kohn writes:

Like sticks, carrots are artificial attempts to manipulate behaviour that offer children *no reason to continue acting in the desired way when there is no longer any goody to be gained*...people who think of themselves as working for a reward feel controlled, and this lack of self-determination interferes with creativity. (p. 31)

Neither Glasser (1998a) nor Kohn (1991) advocate the use of external rewards or believe that responsibility is achieved by external means. Both theorists strongly discourage the use of control (punishment and bribing) in the classroom, believing that instead of teaching responsibility, it destroys the relationships that need to be built to influence people. Furthermore, both Glasser (1998a) and Kohn (1991) emphasize the positive effects of cooperative learning and teacher encouragement.

Dreikurs (1964) believes that behaviour is related to needs; therefore, to effectively deal with discipline problems in the classroom, teachers must recognize the role of needs. Although conceived in the 1960s, the concepts and methods espoused by Dreikers remain popular among teachers. Dreikurs' (1964) theory shares similarities with Glasser's (1998a) approach, even though their methods differed. Like Glasser (1998a),

Dreikurs urges teachers to avoid punishments and rewards, encourage children more often, create an environment of mutual respect, and eliminate criticism. Central to Dreikurs's strategy are the concepts of natural and logical consequences. Natural consequences occur naturally, meaning that no one else places external controls on anyone else. Burning one's finger on a hot stove is a natural consequence of touching that hot surface. A logical consequence, according to Dreikurs (1964), occurs when the consequences of an action are directly related to the misbehaviour.

Levin and Nolan (2000) explain how logical consequences can incorporate choice or control:

Logical consequences may be applied in two different ways. In the first way, the teacher prescribes the logical consequences without giving the student a choice.

'Joe, you spilled the paint; please clean it up.'

...In the second way, the teacher offers the student a choice of changing his behaviour or experiencing the logical consequence.

'Mike you have a choice to raise your hand or not be called on.'

Notice that the phrasing for all the choices clearly identifies the student being addressed and the desired behaviour as well as the logical consequences if the behaviour does not change. (pp. 133-134)

Consequences and punishment are different, and it is important for teachers to understand that the proper use of logical consequences means that punishment will not be used. In the first method described, the student may interpret the resulting consequence as punishment because of the lack of choice in response. The second example conforms more closely with a choice theory response to a classroom management problem.

According to Dreikurs (1964), "If we allow a child to experience the consequences of his acts, we provide an honest and real learning situation" (p. 76). Young (1981) compares both Glassers' (1969) and Dreikurs' (1971) assertions, arguing that, misbehaviour is counter-productive in the long term. It occurs because individuals feel that their self-identity is threatened and their experiences have taught them that misbehaviour is the only avenue left open. Misbehaving students are reacting to perceived threats to their identity in the only way they feel will be successful... What Glasser and Dreikurs propose is that misbehaving students be met with strong yet logical consequences of their behaviour. (p. 23)

Logical consequences, if not used properly, may be construed as a subtle form of punishment. If that is the case, student responsibility is unlikely because the teacher is enforcing punishment. The success of logical consequences comes with convincing the student that choosing them is the most responsible choice. For example, a student might respond to breaking a chemistry beaker with guilt. If this is the case, the most appropriate logical consequence, which is cleaning up the mess without rebuke or retribution from the teacher, may relieve the student's guilt.

Summary

Glasser (1998a) claims that the purpose of misbehaviour is not an attempt to be disruptive but rather an effort to satisfy a need or several needs that are frustrated. Glasser suggests that students will behave when they feel that the classroom is a needs-satisfying place. It remains the job of teachers to succeed in creating classrooms where students will choose to act responsibly because they feel that teachers and the school are needs-satisfying sources.

According to choice theory the only person whose behaviour we can control is our own. All we can give to or receive from another person is information. But information by itself cannot make us do anything. All behaviour is motivated internally by five genetic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. In order to be happy these needs must be satisfied. We can satisfy these needs only by satisfying a picture or pictures in our quality world. Our quality world represents our perfect world filled with the people we like, the things we want to own or experience, and ideas or systems of beliefs that are important to us. All we do from birth to death is behave. All behaviour, represents total behaviour and is composed of four inseparable components: acting, thinking, feeling and physiology. We have direct control over our acting and thinking. Our feelings are products of our actions and thoughts. All humans have within them a creative system, which adds creativity to one or more of the four components of any total behaviour.

In addition to Glasser, other researchers and educators have suggested choice theory to be beneficial in improving behavioural problems. Other educationalists and researchers have likewise developed theories that, although fundamentally different, relate to choice theory. The most notable of these educationalists are Gordon (1974, 1989), Kohn (1991), and Dreikurs (1964).

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the study, the research design and methods the process of ethical approval.

Design

The purpose of the study was to investigate secondary school teachers' use of Glasser's choice theory in classroom management and how it was operationalized and/or to describe the alternative approaches they may be taking to classroom management. The study was a qualitative case study. Stake (1995), a proponent of case study research, described case study research as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). Based on this definition, I chose a case study as the most appropriate format because it would facilitate an understanding of insider perspectives. Methods included semi-structured interviews and fieldnotes (Krathwohl, 1998).

The Setting and Participants

The sample was comprised of five highschool teachers. Highschool was chosen because "the big change (in school) comes in middle school where there is an abrupt shift to more schooling and more coercion and much less time for teachers to give students individual attention" (Glasser, 1998a, p. 251). In addition, I attempted to investigate the effectiveness of choice theory concepts from the perspectives of highschool teachers. I wanted to know if Glasser's concepts are utilized, knowingly or otherwise, by teachers. Because Glasser (1998a) argued that in middle school, coercion commonly increases, highschool appeared to be the most appropriate environment to conduct the study.

Methodology

Two types of data collection, that is, interviews and fieldnotes, were chosen for this study.

Interviews

Van Manen (1990) asserts that interviewing has three purposes. Two of these purposes are “to study the way individuals see themselves and others in certain situations (psychological perception) [and] to study the way people feel about certain issues (social opinion)” (p. 66). Van Manen also suggests:

In hermeneutic phenomenological human science the interview serves specific purposes: (1) it may be used as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that may serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon, and (2) the interview may be used as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a partner (interviewee) about the meaning of an experience. (p. 66)

Because I was interested in how Glasser's (1998a) choice theory relates to classroom management in terms of the perspectives and attitudes of the participants, the interview process is an appropriate data collection technique. Bogden and Biklen (2003) offer an opinion similar to that of Van Manen: “The interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world” (p. 95).

Regarding the type of interview chosen, Krathwohl (1998) claims that semi-structured interviews have a specific, open-ended nature: “Questions and order of

presentation are determined. Questions have open-ends; interviewer records the essence of each response” (p. 287).

The study was comprised of two interview stages. The first interview took approximately sixty minutes and was recorded using a VN-3100PC OLYMPUS digital voice recorder. In the first interview, I asked each participant a series of questions (Appendix A) pertaining to the individual’s perspective on aspects of classroom management. These questions were also structured in such a way that they attempted to explore the use of Glasser’s (1998a) choice theory. I then transcribed the first interviews and invited participants to edit the transcript to assess its accuracy in representing the participants’ points of view.

After the participants were given the opportunity to review the interview transcripts, a second interview was conducted. The second interview took between thirty and forty-five minutes and followed the same procedure as the first interview, including respondent validation. The follow-up interview allowed me to ask questions pertaining to the first interview and gave the participants an opportunity to add new information or clarify ideas. A transcript of the second interview was given to the participants so that they might edit statements and clarify their responses. This technique, known as member checking, ensured responded validation. In member checking:

The actor is requested to examine rough drafts of writing where the actions or words of the actor are featured, sometimes when first written up but usually when no further data will be collected from him or her. The actor is asked to review the material for accuracy and palpability. (Stake, 1995, p. 115)

Member checking ensures that the collected interview data are accurate. The study relies heavily on the participants' honest responses, so it is important to ensure that they feel that their perspectives have been represented accurately. Otherwise, the research problem cannot be successfully explored.

Fieldnotes and Participant Observations

Throughout the two interview stages, I recorded my observations and feelings in fieldnotes. These records act as an ethnographic data collection technique. Regarding the nature of fieldnotes, Bogden and Biklen (2003) suggest:

After returning from each observation, interview, or other research session, the researcher typically writes out, preferably on a computer, what happened. He or she renders a description of people, objects, places, events, activities, and conversations. In addition, as part of such fieldnotes, the researcher will record ideas, strategies, reflections, and hunches, as well as note patterns that emerge. (p. 110)

To give different labels to different content, Richardson (1994) finds it helpful to distinguish among several types of field notes: observation notes, theoretical notes, and personal notes. Richardson comments that observation notes, "...are as concrete and detailed as I am able to make them. I want to think of them as fairly accurate renditions of what I see, hear, feel, taste, and so on" (p. 526). The purpose of observation notes is to provide an accurate account of the physical environment, including how the participants act, as well as my interpretation of my own biases, that is, feelings, thoughts, and attitudes. Richardson (1994) also explains theoretical notes:

These are hunches, hypotheses, poststructuralist connections, critiques of what I am doing/thinking/seeing. I like writing these because they open up my text - my field note text – to alternative interpretations and a critical epistemological stance.

It is a way of keeping me from being hooked on my “take” on reality. (p. 526)

The purpose of *theoretical notes* was to ensure that I took as open-minded view of the issue as I could. To imply that I do not have a bias to my proposed research problem is erroneous. However, it was also important to step away from my bias as much as possible in order to accurately explore my proposed research problem.

Finally, on the topic of personal notes, Richardson (1994) comments:

These are feelings statements about the research, the people I am talking to, myself doing the process, my doubts, my anxieties, my pleasures. I do no censoring here at all. I want all my feelings out on paper because I like them and because I they are there anyway, affecting what/how I lay claim to knowing.

Writing personal notes is a way for me to know myself better, a way of using writing as a method of inquiry into the self. (p. 526)

The purpose of *personal notes* was to gain as much insight as possible into my role as a researcher. To explore the research problem truthfully and to understand the participants' perspective, it is important to also explore my role during the research process. I generated a guide that would help me create accurate and relevant fieldnotes (see Appendix A)

Research Process

Entry

To begin the process I called a local highschool and had an informal telephone conversation with the principal to inform him of the study. In the telephone conversation, I explained the purpose of the study and the size of the sample of volunteers. The principal informed me that he was interested in having the school participate in the proposed study. Following ethics approval by the Research Ethics Board at Lakehead University, I sent a copy of my proposal to the participating principal and arranged a meeting with him/her in which we discussed the study. He/she recommended teachers who may volunteer to participate in my study. At the conclusion of the meeting I was invited to attend the staff meeting later that day to introduce myself to the school in an attempt to recruit participants. I explained my study, left consent forms with my contact information and talked to a handful of potential participants after the staff meeting. The principal was also kind enough to approach a few potential volunteers for my study. Three of the five participants chosen for the study came as a result of the principal's recommendation.

Data Collection

As noted above, each of the five participants participated in two interviews. The interviews were conducted in March of 2007. Each had an opportunity to revise the transcript of the first interview prior to my scheduling a follow up interview.

Data Analysis

Stake (1995) suggests, "there is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71). Data analysis was an ongoing process and was constant-comparative. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed into codes, categories and themes,

as were the fieldnotes (Bogden & Biklen, 2003). Data were analyzed through a six-step coding process outlined by Creswell (2003, p.191-195). A brief outline of this process is presented below.

When the transcripts were completed (step one), I read through them a first time in an attempt to understand the entire picture (step two). I went through the transcripts a second time and began to organize the material with pencil crayons and underlined recurring codes. Each colour also corresponded with a number, so I would not get confused which shade of green was actually used. I wrote the number, which corresponded with the appropriate colour, above the quote that was colour coded (step 3). Many codes overlapped and I found that in these instances I was able to create themes based on the coding process (step 4). When this was completed I was left with four themes. Table 2 on summarizes the findings.

Table 2

Summary of the Research Findings

Theme	Category	Codes
Goals of Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mutual Respect - Student Success - Maintaining Positive Feelings - Student Responsibility 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining a Positive Learning Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fun/Noise - Teacher Control - Student Choice - Care/Comfort - Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistency - Fairness - Structure - Meaningfulness

Theme	Category	Codes
Strategies for Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective Teaching Strategies - Meaningful/Authentic Work 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fostering Student Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fun/Humour/Noise - Ensuring Interest in the Subject
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choice Promotes Success - Choice Increases Motivation - Choice Empowers Students - Choice Promotes Responsibility
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring Behaviours/On-task Work and Environmental Change - Alternative Strategies of Assessment 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining a Positive Teacher/Student Relationship - Discussing/Getting Involved in non-school Issues/Events 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-on-one Interaction - Encouragement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening - Clarity in Directions - Negotiation

Theme	Category	Codes
Strategies for Classroom Management <i>cont.</i>	- Fostering Student Engagement	- Fun/Humour/Noise - Ensuring Interest in the Subject
	- Student Choice	- Choice Promotes Success - Choice Increases Motivation - Choice Empowers - Student Choice Promotes Responsibility
	- Monitoring Behaviours/On-task - Work and Environmental Change - Alternative Strategies of Assessment	
	- Maintaining a Positive Teacher/Student Relationship - Discussing/Getting Involved in non-school Issues/Events	
	- Communication	- One-on-one Interaction - Encouragement - Listening - Clarity in Directions - Negotiation
	- Student Control vs. Teacher Control	- Choice and Structure - Choice and Competence - Rewards/Punishment /Threats
	- Reinforcement/Consequences	
	- Promoting Togetherness/Group Collaboration	- Whole Class - Group Work - Peer Teaching
	- Other Support	
Theme	Category	Codes
Teachers' Perceptions of the Reasons for Misbehaviour	- Lack of Respect - Lack of Subject Interest - Lack of Clear Direction	
	- Lack of Student Comfort	- Student Frustration - Lack of Success

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problems with School Environment - Attention-Seeking - Problems in Students' Lives - Negative Teacher/Student Relationship 	
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Theme	Category	Codes
Teachers' Perceptions of Characteristics of Effective Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitation of Student Learning - Belief that Every Student Can Succeed 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caring Nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening - Patience - Encouragement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibility - Knowledge/Experience - Reflection 	

In addition I also coded the fieldnotes in the same manner. I read through the fieldnotes and found instances of the four generated themes and other evidence that might illuminate the finding of the research problem.

Ethical Considerations

In accordance with the Research Ethics Board at Lakehead University I was required to complete the *Introductory Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement*, and attach a copy of my certificate of completion. When I met with each participant I explained, verbally, the following ethical considerations and invited their participation in the study (Appendix B):

- Participants have the right to withdrawal at any time.
- There are no potential risks (physical or psychological) involved in participating
- Anonymity and confidentiality
- All data will be securely stored at Lakehead University for seven years

- The results may be presented at conferences and in peer-reviewed publication

Participants read, signed and dated the consent form (Appendix B) prior to the interviews.

In addition, I requested permission from the participating school board, namely, the Lakehead Public School Board. I was available to answer any questions or concerns that might have arisen during this approval process.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter includes the findings and interpretation of the study. The first section presents the profiles of the five participants. The second section presents the findings that emerged as a result of data analysis, as well as a description of the findings. There are four themes: goals of classroom management; strategies for classroom management; teachers' perceptions of the reasons for misbehaviour; and teachers' perceptions of characteristics of effective teachers. The final section presents the interpretation of the findings.

Participant Profiles

The following are profiles of the individuals who agreed to participate in the study. The participants' names are pseudonyms, and were chosen by the researcher to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

Sarah is a secondary Math teacher. Most of the experiences that she shared came from her Math classes. She has been teaching both applied and advanced classes for approximately nine years.

Jason is a secondary teacher with over twenty years of experience. He has taught many subjects from English, to Geography, to Religion and Politics. He has also taught a variety of age groups, including grades 1 and 2, grades 5 and 6, special education at the elementary level, and special populations children going to/coming from jail. He was raised in a rigid, teacher-centered educational system overseas. Jason currently teaches senior classes in Travel and Tourism, and Politics and Religion.

Mary is a secondary English teacher. She taught at the elementary school level in the past but now teaches at the secondary school level. She has been teaching for at least

fifteen years. Of all the participants in this study, she was the only one who expressed any previous knowledge of Glasser's work.

James is a secondary Visual Arts and English teacher. Most of his shared experiences were from his Visual Arts classes but he did offer some experiences from his English classes. Both of these subjects he teaches in the intermediate grades (nine and ten). James has been a teacher for approximately five or six years.

Kevin is an experienced secondary Music teacher with over fifteen years of teaching experience. Although he taught grade ten History when it was added to the curriculum as a compulsory course, he has been a Music teacher for the majority of his career.

Findings

Four themes emerged from data analysis: goals of classroom management; strategies for classroom management; teachers' perceptions of the reasons for misbehaviour; and teachers' perceptions of positive characteristics of effective teachers. Each theme will be discussed below.

Goals of Classroom Management

Participants described a wide range of goals, purposes and beliefs in relation to their perspectives on classroom management. The most relevant goals that emerged as a result of data analysis were: mutual respect, student success, maintaining positive feelings, student responsibility, and maintaining a positive learning environment.

Mutual respect. All five participants in this study found mutual respect to be an important goal of classroom management. For example, Sarah said she was "...looking for mutual respect and understanding..." (March 5, 2007). Kevin also believed that

classroom management is about the "...whole notion of, not demanding respect but commanding the respect you need to function within the class and hopefully that is reciprocated as well" (March 12, 2007). When discussing the goals of her classroom management strategy, Mary said, "...it's that respect for other people in the classroom that is really important to me too...Bottom line, respect the kids and they will respect you" (March 6, 2007).

Student success. Sarah, Jason, Mary and Kevin all indicated that student success was an important goal of classroom management. Jason offered an attitude synonymous with student success when he said: "...one of the things I tell the kids is that I will remove every obstacle to learning you have...So whatever excuse you think you have for not being successful I will remove" (March 7, 2007).

Reiterating a classroom management goal of hers, Mary said, "...I want to see them achieve and do something" (March 6, 2007). Finally, regarding student success, Kevin believed that, "...if you can find what that student does well, if they can demonstrate something for you...that's the name of the game, trying to find out what they can do well, and have them demonstrate that and feel good about that" (March 12, 2007).

Participants also explained the reasons why promoting student success is important. These included the following: students find the content more meaningful; an increased sense of importance; and there is less off-task behaviour.

Sarah noted that it is important to promote student success because it helps students find meaning: "...you need to find a way to show them that it is really difficult, that they need to find some kind of success, and that they need to have some kind of skills" (March 5, 2007). Mary observed that finding success often leads to a feeling of

importance: "...it's really important for those kids who need to move up from a level 2 to a level 3, from a failure to a borderline, to also feel important in those classes. It's finding those opportunities to find success...and finding out what they are good at..." (March 6, 2007). Finally, Kevin noted that success often ensures on-task work: "...by correcting the problem of proficiency, it corrects the problem in the classroom of off-task behaviour because they participate then, they feel like part of the group" (March 12, 2007).

Maintaining positive feelings. Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin not only emphasized that ensuring students felt good was an important goal of classroom management but that it was also a good indicator of how effective the learning environment is. During her second interview, Mary commented that, "You [students] are not going to remember what I am teaching you, you know, who cares about that? But if you can remember feeling good, than that is what is more important" (March 29, 2007). Kevin also explained that it is important for students to, "feel welcome there [the classroom], with or without other students there..." (March 12, 2007).

Student responsibility. All five participants explained that an important goal of classroom management was to promote student responsibility. For example, James commented that his number two goal was, "...to teach to a point where kids are learning manners through classroom management" (March 7, 2007). He also explained, "our ultimate goal, I know mine is, is to make our students to be active learners...that's one of the best feelings in class, if your kids are able to govern their own behavior instead of you doing it" (March 7, 2007).

Kevin's comment was consistent with James': "...the ultimate goal, or the goal of what we are trying to do here is to have them be able [to] demonstrate that they're taking

some responsibility for their own learning” (March 25, 2007). Mary offered a similar view to both James and Kevin: “when they [students] take ownership of their own learning. That is the critical thing, the critical moment” (March 29, 2007). She also noted that she wanted her students to, “...have control over themselves...” (March 6, 2007).

Maintaining a positive learning environment. All five participants mentioned that maintaining a positive learning environment is an important goal of classroom management. Sarah explained that, “...classroom management is trying to keep the focus on what’s going on. As well as keeping an environment where everybody is actually getting the best of what you can give” (March 5, 2007). Jason noted that a goal of classroom management is, “...to create a situation where I can do my job and the kids can get what they need” (March 28, 2007).

Similar to Sarah’s assertion, Mary believed that the purpose of classroom management is “to create, first of all, a very safe and comfortable environment for my kids” (March 6, 2007). James also observed that his number one goal is to, “...make sure you have a good environment to keep everyone focussed on the task at hand...” (March 7, 2007). Finally, Kevin said that, “to me the goal, I suppose, is creating a safe environment, an inviting environment. An environment where students can arrive and it looks to them that it’s a place of learning...” (March 12, 2007).

In addition to participants explaining that maintaining a positive learning environment is an important goal of classroom management, participants also offered their perceptions of what they thought characteristics of a positive learning environment were. These included: fun/noise; teacher control; student choice; consistency; fairness; care/comfort; safety; structure; and meaningfulness. Since fun/noise, teacher control,

student choice, structure and meaningfulness were also found to be classroom management strategies, they will be discussed under that theme.

All five participants noted that consistency is an important aspect of a positive learning environment. For example, Mary believed that it is important “that they [students] know how I am going to react in situations so that there is consistency” (March 29, 2007). Jason also commented that an effective learning environment has “...fairness, consistency...” (March 28, 2007).

Mary and James both emphasized that a positive learning environment has fairness. James noted that “... treating everyone fairly is a top priority” (March 7, 2007). Furthermore, Mary said that, “Fairness and equity is really important...so if you’ve got some hard...kids they know they can be away and still come back” (March 6, 2007).

Apart from safety, Sarah, Mary and Kevin all believed that student care and/or comfort is/are important. Sarah noted that a positive learning environment is “...an environment where they feel safe, happy...respected...comfortable...” (March 26, 2007). Mary offered a similar view, contending that, “That’s all it’s about. It’s about caring about each other. And tolerance and comfort, and safety and enthusiasm and a happy place, it’s just got to be all those things. When it’s not, then I really want to fix it. I want to fix it so it is a happy place for kids to be” (March 6, 2007).

Sarah and Mary, Jason, James and Kevin also observed that ensuring that students feel safe is a top priority in an effective learning environment. Jason explained that “In my classroom, it will be a safe, secure learning environment and you [students] will not disturb anybody else’s life ...you do not have that right”(March 7, 2007). James stated

that "...inclusion... safety and expectance" (March 26, 2007) are important characteristics of a positive learning environment.

Strategies for Classroom Management

The participants used a variety of strategies for classroom management. These strategies served to promote and foster the goals described above. These techniques have been clustered into six categories: effective teaching methods; maintaining a positive teacher/student relationship; student control vs. teacher control; reinforcement/consequences; promoting togetherness/group collaboration; and seeking other support.

Effective teaching methods. Participants described several different teaching methods that they found effective in classroom management. These included: offering students meaningful/authentic work; fostering student engagement; ensuring student interest in the subject; promoting student choice; monitoring behaviours/on-task work and environmental change; and alternative strategies for assessment.

All five participants believed that offering students meaningful or authentic work increased the likelihood of student engagement. Jason noted that an important classroom management strategy involves "...making everything we do as close as we can to being authentic" (March 7, 2007). Mary described a meaningful assignment that her students responded to with enthusiasm in which students are required to use multiple intelligence:

... So if you are musical you might want to write a song...I've had incredible visual paintings that are like visual essays. Just blow me out of the water kinds of stuff. Like, whoa, whoa, whoa, media productions... You know, or performances,

live performances, and those kinds of things are really important. (March 29, 2007)

James said that he often wondered, “how can I figure them out to allow them to discover something or learn something that they normally wouldn’t do but in a way that they feel comfortable with or simply like?” (March 7, 2007). Sarah, Jason and Mary also noted that ensuring students understand that there is meaning (or purpose) in what they are asked to do is an important classroom management strategy.

Mary noted that students often need to understand the reasons behind teachers’ decisions: “...[students] can see in you that you are not sure of the reason why you’re doing something or saying something and they need to understand all that” (March 6, 2007). Sarah also explained her grading decisions to students: “...I try to make sure I address it fairly and that I’ve got a set, so they know why they’re marked, what they’re marked” (March 5, 2007).

Participants observed two conditions that ensured students remained engaged in their work. The first condition was a fun environment, often characterized by noise and fostered by humour. The second was ensuring that students were interested in the subject matter.

Sarah, James and Kevin found fun/noise to be effective classroom management strategies. For example, Sarah suggested that: “My classroom...is never quiet and if it is, I’m always wondering what is going on” (March 5, 2007). Mary said that “...fun is important and it’s all about the personality, seizing the moment, letting kids have fun” (March 29, 2007). Kevin also emphasized that it is important to have the attitude that “...learning can be, and should be fun. There is nothing wrong with having a sense of

humour as a way to teach or a way to respond or a way to conduct oneself in the classroom or outside of the classroom” (March 25, 2007). Jason also said that fun is an important classroom management technique: “... getting back to how would I bring them back?...you’ve got to use humour” (March 7, 2007). In an attempt to illustrate how humour is used Jason said “... I will try, when disciplining someone to make a joke out of it. ‘Everybody point to the person who is not listening to me’. Everybody points” (March 28, 2007).

Sarah, Jason and Kevin all noted that the benefits to having a fun/noisy environment were that students would remain engaged in the class and have a better opportunity at success. Sarah recalled how some of her past co-workers believed that a fun math class is inappropriate and ineffective:

When I first starting teaching I remember, totally, one of my associate teachers going, “Oh your classroom is way too noisy...They’re laughing, it’s math!”...So I always use that line on my kids and then I laugh after it. I go, “Stop having fun, this is math class!” (March 5, 2007)

She made a connection between fun and student success: “... lots of people comment on that, ‘uhh I go by your room everyday, and they are still blah blah blah’. Yeah, but ask them if they can do quadratic equations-bring it on. They’re there (laughter)” (March 5, 2007).

Lastly, Kevin noted that noise often indicates structure and motivates on-task behaviour:

...if it’s kind of noisy and it’s sort of rambunctious, there is still learning taking place...students are going over their own thing and by themselves and it sounds

like a bunch of noise but it's kind of structured. And that's what we find tends to work best, when we allow them to spend some time on their own, work on stuff on their own. (March 25, 2007)

All participants believed that when students have an interest in the subject it helps to ensure engagement. Kevin explained that student interest in the subject is motivational. He explained that his students practice music during their lunch periods because,

...that's when they'll pursue it. That's when they will continue to want to learn it. Because it is something that they have been interested in... And it gives them a chance to work on original stuff. Often in class we're working on stuff that we have given them... So it gives them that opportunity to sort of further take what we are doing in class... (March 12, 2007).

All five participants found that promoting student choice to some degree can be an effective classroom management strategy. Participants offered several reasons why they thought student choice was beneficial. They included an increase in student motivation; an increase in student success; student empowerment; and an increase in student responsibility.

Sarah, Jason and Kevin observed that students are often more motivated on tasks that they have chosen. For example, Sarah noted that as a result of students having choice, they are more motivated to work hard: "For the most part, they go after it. A million percent harder than I have ever seen them do anything, because they want to do it" (March 5, 2007). Although hesitant to offer choices, Jason did say that students are, "...more focused, more motivated on something they choose..." (March 7, 2007).

Kevin suggested that when students are given the choice of how to succeed it helps to motivate students to continue to work. Kevin understood that some students are going to lack the skills that other students may have and to combat this Kevin encouraged students to do what they are good at. Kevin stated that "...if the assignment says to draw a picture, some of them will go and do a collage and color it all in but that is because they are really pumped about this and they know a lot about that particular artist. That keeps them engaged. It keeps it exciting for them" (March 12, 2007).

The benefit to student motivation of offering students choices was further articulated by Kevin:

...If we say, "Ok we have a few minutes left here, so you can either continue to play or put your instruments away", for the kids that are done, they are done, but for the ones that continue to play you know that something good is happening, where they can continue to play after they have done it for a whole hour. (March 12, 2007)

Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin all noted that choice often motivates success. For example, Sarah observed that students "...are definitely more likely to do better on something they have chosen" (March 5, 2007). She offered an example to illustrate this point:

... I have a kid who shuts down completely if you give them about 10 questions and tell them to do them, as opposed to giving them 20 questions or whatever and saying do any 10. They go crazy because all of a sudden they feel motivated because they can find the ones they feel comfortable doing. (March 5, 2007)

Sarah's perception was consistent with Mary's regarding this issue. Mary said, "I think that they [students] tend to do better on...absolutely, no question [on assignments], that they have chosen" (March 5, 2007). Mary continued, reiterating that the most successful student assignments are often choices: "Best papers I get in are papers of choice. And so, within that realm choice is very important...I couldn't agree more" (March 6, 2007).

James also offered an observation similar to Sarah's. He noted that by allowing students to choose their group members they are often more successful and more responsible: "...I usually find that they are successful...So if they pick their own groups they already have the understanding of who is in the group, who they can relate to, and then they deal with any problems that arise within..." (March 7, 2007).

James also noted that choice is "...vital for things like writing assignments. So if you have something that you want to write about they feel better if they are able to pick their own topics and stuff. So I have been pretty successful with that..." (March 7, 2007).

Furthermore, Kevin noted the motivating power of choice: "...we find that by allowing them to choose, because they are genuinely interested in this player or performer or whatever, the tendency is that they will complete the project" (March 12, 2007).

Kevin explained that he provides options to choose within the context of an academic assignment that he has selected:

...And I will often tell them, choose the information that is most interesting to you. If there are ten facts about this particular player, you know if the fact that he had ten brothers means nothing to you, choose the fact that he had one hundred saxophones or something. Whatever is the most interesting to you, include that ...So there is still choice within that...It encourages them to read the whole thing,

so that they can make that choice where they say, “Oh this is interesting”, or, “Well, I’ve had a similar experience”, or, “That’s the way that I would have preferred it”, or whatever. So they can do some self-reflection as well. (March 12, 2007)

Much like Jason, Kevin found benefit in allowing students to choose when to have a test. However, in an attempt to make tests more relevant, Kevin took this idea further and actually allows his students to choose what they want to be tested on: “Sometimes I will give them a choice in terms of what they want to play for a playing test. I want them to be successful and I find that if they are successful in the first few tests they will be successful in further tests” (March 25, 2007).

Although choice was related to success, Jason and James observed that some students do not react to choice favourably. Jason stated that when students are given choice in an assignment; “...I would expect them to do better on something they have selected but that’s not always the case” (March 7, 2007). He noted that what motivates them initially may not carry through to the end: “...And what motivates them initially, ‘Oh, that’s not what I thought it was going to be...why did I choose it?’”(March 6, 2007). As a result of not having learned to make choices in elementary school, James believed that a completely open-ended assignment may not promote success for some students: “... When it comes time to give a student an optional assignment or something that involves their own choice, I think they struggle with it more now” (March 7, 2007).

According to Sarah and James, choice is a method used in an attempt to empower students and help them feel good about themselves. For example, Sarah observed that

“...by giving them choice they certainly feel more confident in themselves by being able to go after the ones they want to do...” (March 5, 2007). James also noted that,

The more options you give them, the more power you give them and then ultimately they are able to choose something and they feel good about it too because they are able to look back and say, “I’ve made a decision and I have something that I am able to do, by choosing it”. Not, “I’m forced to do this, I’m able to choose it”. (March 7, 2007)

Regarding why she allows students to choose group members, Sarah noted that allowing them to choose often increases responsibility: “...it’s a huge part on their part plus...they have a connection, an ownership to what is going on” (March 5, 2007).

Kevin also observed the power of choice to promote responsible behaviour: ...allowing them choice sort of allows them to take some ownership in their learning and...if they can make responsible choices and demonstrate to you that they can make those responsible choices, the tendency is that you will give them more opportunity to do that in the future. If they’re not able to manage that and they’re making poor choices then you need to guide that or direct that or change it for them. (March 12, 2007)

Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin believed that it is essential for the teacher to monitor student behaviours and change the environment when needed. Sarah observed that student misbehaviour is “...a really good indicator of how to change your room. And how you are going to keep things moving in the right direction” (March 5, 2007). She also noted that “...addressing issues as they come up is another big one. If there is something that is

really going on and you try to find a way to figure out...what it is and make sure they make the right choices” (March 5, 2007).

Mary believed that, “...a teacher needs to be that person who provides them with limitations to the behaviour... You are responsible supervisors, it’s like *Lord of the Flies*...you need that caring, constant supervision in order for young people to control themselves” (March 6, 2007). Mary offered an example of how she does this:

...So see me for editing after school, see me for this. First draft is due, checking that, calling home if that is not done. You know, if I start seeing already in the process that two or three steps are lagged behind, I know that I have got to call.

So that helps create responsibility I hope. (March 29, 2007)

During Kevin’s second interview he noted that the environment may be a reason behind the misbehaviour: “you will speak to another teacher about the student and they say, ‘Well in my class they are doing this’, and you’re thinking, ‘in my class, completely different response.’ So you have to ask yourself now, is it actually the student or is it the environment?” (March 25, 2007).

Mary believed that moving a student is not meant to punish that student but to help him/her succeed. She noted that it is important to change the environment when students are having trouble with success: “...you move a kid because they are talking too much right? And it’s not to say that ‘You’re moving because you are annoying me. You are moving because I want you to get the best value out of this classroom” (March 6, 2007).

James used the example of group work to illuminate his belief that it is important to monitor student behaviour and possibly change the environment when students are not getting the most out of school:

...you have to address groups before hand, so if people get together and you go, “ooohhh, I see you’ve got together.” And if you know these people are not necessarily the most focused you can address issues before hand and aid them with planning...the other thing is, you can say, “You know, maybe I have to make a decision and split you all up”, and then disband the group. (March 7, 2007)

Kevin also said that in order for students to show success it is important to find different ways to evaluate students and offer students the choice of how to succeed:

There are different ways to evaluate someone and I’ve had to do it. I mean if there is someone who has a limitation, whether it be writing or whatever, you just have to find different ways to evaluate these kids. And if you end up evaluating your whole class in another way, then that’s fine...you just have to give them another opportunity, a different type of opportunity to be successful. (March 12, 2007).

He elaborated on this point by reiterating that student engagement is often dependent on whether or not the student can find success in the class:

[A student]...may not be able to demonstrate something for you...as the rest of the class can. But if they can demonstrate for you in another way that essentially demonstrates the same thing, it’s providing them that opportunity to be successful in another way and you learn more about yourself and you learn more about them and they will tend to continue to stay engaged if they know there are ways that

they can be successful. So they're going to want to come here because they know that there are things that they can do that make them feel good about themselves. And then they will continue to overcome other hurdles and other barriers to be successful based on giving them that opportunity to...The majority of them will be successful in the same way and that's standard but for some kids, they may have other, sort of unique talents that are not as measurable as you can find by doing a theory test...if everybody has to do it this way and you don't give them opportunities in other ways they will tend of give up, they won't want to be successful they will just tell themselves they can't be when in a lot of cases they are...or can be successful in your class...So they will find their own strengths and as a teacher we tend to teach to our strengths and for the students they will demonstrate their abilities in the best way they know how. (Kevin, March 25, 2007)

Maintaining a positive teacher/student relationship. All five participants believed that maintaining a positive teacher/student relationship is an important classroom management strategy. Participants found that when they discussed non-school topics, got involved in non-school events, and used effective communication techniques, it helped to create a strong relationship between teacher and student. Participants also noted that a positive teacher/student relationship has the benefits of increasing student engagement, motivation and commitment while also decreasing student misbehaviour. For example, Mary observed that if she has a successful connection with the students that "...they try and achieve...I think that they know that I want them to do well and that they want to do well as a result" (March 6, 2007). Sarah stated that when there is a positive

teacher/student relationship "...they are willing to put forth some really good stuff..."(March 26, 2007). Sarah further explained that students "...would rather show success if it's somebody who cares about them" (March 5, 2007).

Kevin offered a similar view to Sarah's, that if there is a successful teacher/student connection "...you will get the very best from every student regardless of their level" (March 12, 2007). James explained that "...a good rapport translates into good work habits or at least giving you the benefit of the doubt. So instead of 'No, I'm not going to do this' it's 'No, Mr. _____, says this, I think it would be worth doing'" (March 7, 2007).

Jason further observed that having a positive teacher/student relationship decreases misbehaviour: "...Just because I connected with the kids I don't have any problems with behaviour or anything like that..." (March 7, 2007).

All five participants noted that discussing or getting involved in non-school issues/events is important when trying to connect with students. For example, Mary believed that, "...we have a really important role as teachers to acknowledge what our kids are doing outside of this building too, not just inside" (March 6, 2007). Jason noted that when attempting to connect with his students it is essential to get involved in non-school events. Jason stated that he is "...always going to do something, where I can see the kids outside" (March 7, 2007). Kevin explained that one extra-curricular activity he engages in is group outings:

We used to go up to Seattle (coffeehouse) a lot...So just things like that, every year-end of the semester, we would go up to Seattle (coffeehouse) and spend time there. And if we're not playing there, we'd go out for coffee there, you know have

like a pizza day, just stuff like that. And other kinds of stuff they are interested in.

(March 12, 2007)

Sarah, Jason, Mary and James articulated the idea that communication is also important when attempting to connect with students. Sarah tries to establish personal connection and invites students to share their own feelings or concerns: "...to let them know that if there is something that is interesting or exciting or sad or whatever that they need to talk about that... I'm there. And I am always building in stuff about my life..."

(March 5, 2007). James also invites open communication: "So talking with them, letting them know what I think and then also getting their input, because it's not only my class, it's their class too. And you would want to get their input about what or how they feel uncomfortable, how they feel in danger, how they feel tentative about doing things"

(March 26, 2007). Participants explained that several ways they communicate with students included: creating one-on-one scenarios; encouraging students; listening; and negotiating.

All five participants stressed the importance of one-on-one interaction with students as an effective and responsible way to deal with classroom management problems. Mary stated that, "... I try my best to create one-on-one scenarios in the classroom" (March 6, 2007). For example, Sarah, Mary and James indicated that it is important to ensure that students do not feel singled out in front of the class. As Mary noted: "...I really believe in don't back a kid into a corner, don't center him out, that sort of stuff...I believe in talking to them individually" (March 29, 2007). Jason also said that in an attempt to make his students feel important he perceives it to be "... a respect thing...Letting them know you think enough of them that you are going to...engage them

meaningfully...Let them know that you are going to be in their face” (March 7, 2007). In Jason’s second interview he continued, “I walk around the halls a lot, I ask for the duties in the cafeteria and the library. That way I get to see a lot of kids and intermingle with them” (March 28, 2007).

All five participants used encouragement as a form of classroom management strategy. Sarah, Jason and Mary believed that it is important for a teacher to be encouraging. Sarah described how she uses encouragement in an attempt to increase motivation:

every once in a while we do stuff and they hand it in and I go “You know what! This is really good but this question and this question and this question, you need to look at something because it...try that again and see what happens. Do that with a totally different view.” And then all of a sudden they start feeling “Ok let’s figure out where the problems are” and they are happier to do that. (March 5, 2007)

She stated that, “You try and encourage them that they are in a classroom with other people who are trying to help them to succeed...” (March 5, 2007).

Sarah’s perceptions and attitude are illuminated in the following example of how she approaches a classroom management problem:

...I think of one student in particular whose anger issue were just huge. And we finally came up with a plan that when he was feeling really angry he never had to ask me to leave. He just gave me a little nod and he went out the back door. Little things like that, like allowing them to make some good choices about what is going on like, “I can’t handle this anymore, I’m going to snap” and then he would just, with one

little thing, just go. And we learned to work through that. And then he would come back and he would have to tell me why he left and what was going on and what we could change and everything. It was really good...

Sarah explained that one day the student picked up a desk and threw it across the back of the classroom:

...and at the time, it was the most scary thing I've ever seen in my life, right?

Because you are sitting there with eighteen kids and yourself and this desk, literally goes across and hits a wall on the other side of the room... We had this big conversation and at the end of it he looked at me and he said, "But I did think for a second" and I said, "What do you mean by that?" and he says, "I was at the back of the classroom and there was nobody at the back," he says, "Everybody was towards the front...he says "My first impulse was to throw the desk towards the front of the room" he says " I went across the back." Which never occurred to me but that was a huge step for him...But it was little things by allowing him those opportunities to show me what was going on and to tell me what was the issue...How are we going to control things within that classroom for him and make it a manageable place...and that was a horrible incident don't get me wrong but there was lots of positive things that came from that because we had found a way to make it work. Like instead of him getting up and chucking his books across the desk, that was the first thing that happened, he would give you that nod that he would have to leave...but being able to see him take on his issues and learning a good way to deal with them was a big step...when he came back and talked to me about it that was huge...to know that that kind of thing was making a difference for him...And that is the kind of thing we're

trying to do is try to encourage that stuff and allow them to have successes and if they are not having success to be ok about that and to figure out ways to work past it...So we try and do that together. (March 5, 2007)

Mary recalled, "I used to have a philosophy, 'hit'em hard, hit'em fast in the beginning, let them know what they've got to do', and now I'm realizing, 'No,' try and find out what they are doing well right now and really just say, 'Hey if you do this you're really going to start succeeding'" (March 6, 2007).

As a music teacher, Kevin also understood the importance of encouragement. When a student is having difficulty, he reassures the student by encouraging him/her: "I've said to them 'I've never taught an instrumental music class where someone has not been successful on an instrument'" (March 12, 2007). He expanded on the reflective nature and effectiveness of this strategy:

...some kids that don't have a lot of self confidence will say, "Oh I can't do this, I can't play this, this isn't working" or whatever. And more often than not they have already played it for me, they have created the sound that I am looking for...and I've said, "You know what? Even if you said to me that you can't do it and you haven't done it, but you've done it for me, you've demonstrated it...It hasn't been, you know, absolutely perfect but you've done it...so you can't tell me you haven't done it because I've heard you." It gives them a little different mind-set, "Oh I have done it" you know? But I'm sure for some students that's sort of the attitude they have to a lot of things. (March 12, 2007)

All five participants commented that listening to students is an important classroom management strategy. For example, Sarah noted that students often "...need

someone who will just listen to them, you don't even need to have the answers for them. They just want to know that someone does appreciate that they do have questions and they don't know what to do either" (March 26, 2007). Mary associated listening with showing respect when she explained the lesson she learned as a student: "...when a kid wants to come in and talk to you, it is so important to stop and listen. That is probably one of the greatest lessons that I ever received as a student ...I thought, 'What great respect that is'. So that is an important thing too, so just stop and listen" (March 29, 2007).

A final dimension of communication is negotiating. Both Mary and James noted that negotiation often promoted responsibility. Specifically, Mary said that, "...by negotiating deadlines...Having opportunities to have things edited with me..." (March 29, 2007) promotes responsibility.

Student control vs teacher control. Although all participants noted that it is important to be flexible as James said: "Flexibility becomes a big issue. So if you have a flexible assignment, it can also be a fun one because they find different ways to problem solve and cater to their own skills" (March 7, 2007). Participants differed in their opinions regarding how much control students should have. For example, although Sarah admitted she likes to have a little control, she said, "...I don't think that you should be the only control. I think the kids should be able to help you find that right level so that things are going on in a positive way and that they feel they are part of the classroom" (March 5, 2007). She believed students,

...should have that kind of say in what is going on, how to maintain it...I have my ideas of what should happen and they tell you what they want to hear too...they

want to be able to make some choices...they want to have those options and they feel like part of a group (March 5, 2007).

All five participants noted that when choice is offered, it is best offered in a structured environment. Kevin commented, "...as much as students will tell you that they don't like structure, they need structure and they do like structure" (March 12, 2007). Mary believed that students,

...should have choices within. Choices on how to behave, choices on...in assignments. For example, there needs to be a certain amount of leeway...when a student says, "Can I do it this way," I have to understand why they are asking me to do that. Perhaps that choice is the better choice for them in that situation. (March 6, 2007)

James, Jason and Mary also admitted that students may have problems with open-ended choice.

Mary admitted that, "I sometimes worry about the open-endedness of choosing, and so you need parameters, you still need parameters, you still need kinds of exemplars with kids despite their choosing". (March 29, 2007)

Jason noted that the purpose of classroom management is "control, the necessary control in a social situation, so they can be students, I can be a teacher" (March 28, 2007). He commented that maintaining control ensures that he is comfortable and able to do his job as a teacher: "...You come in, the bell goes, it's my time. On the sideboard everyday I've got what they are going to do, what they need, where they get it. So they can always see up there...everything is controlled and rigid" (March 7, 2007). Jason explained,

...I also think that if you give the students too much choice, they can't handle it. They're not built that way, and while I may be left-leaning social democrat, that all people are created equal and they should be given the ability to make a lot of choices, I believe young people should not be given a lot of choice. And it is earned, and it's later, so I give my 12s more choice than my 9s. But I will give some 12s lots of choices and some not. So philosophically, I'm doing the choosing. (March 7, 2007)

Jason perceived that choice is a right to be earned through competence:

...once they have a set amount of competence, then I will give them choices and not everyday and not every lesson but in things where I can, I'll let them know, 'hey guys, you get a choice because you deserve it'...So, some students are comfortable with everything being done for them in terms of how they respond to their request. Some want choices. And I have to recognize where and when".

(March 7, 2007)

Jason also placed emphasis on the use of rewards:

I will pull the vice-principal or principal from the hall and bring them in and- "Hey! Look at this class!" let them know out loud that I am thinking enough of them to show somebody else they are doing well, and giving them compliments when they deserve them. Supply teacher comes in, supply teacher writes me a note "Kids were good" "Hey, you did what I expect you to do but you still deserve a compliment, thank you very much," or I bring them cookies on that day, "you've done well, I'm pleased with it. You know what, no homework this week". (March 7, 2007)

Jason further stated that he initially allows students to choose their seats but is not adverse to moving students if they are misbehaving. Jason said, "...you can stay in that seating plan for as long as you like, but if I don't see you going by the simple rules, commitment to work, handing stuff in etc., etc., then I move you. So you have some rights and if you don't adhere to them, then I step in and move you" (March 7, 2007).

While Jason employs rewards to maintain control. He observed that punishment was often an effective form of control. Jason said, "...there has to be punishment for those who skipped, or else they think they can come and go as they please..." (March 7, 2007). To illustrate this belief Jason offered this anecdote:

... You come late, I tell you where to sit, because you have not followed up on your side of the bargain...you've had your freedom removed...and they do it because they don't want the consequences of not. So the next day they are on time, or they don't show up. (March 7, 2007)

Jason noted that there is a problem with these techniques if they are used continually:

I don't want to continually do it because it loses its effectiveness, if you keep telling them all the time. So I am not sparse with my praise but I am economical with it. And if they don't do what I am asking them to do, I let them know that, "I gotta do this, you've got to be punished. You gotta realize that there is some responsibility here and if you don't do it, then you let somebody down. And your marks will be reflecting it". (March 29, 2007)

Reinforcement/consequences. Sarah, Jason, Mary and Kevin all used some form of positive reinforcement as a classroom management technique. According to these participants, positive reinforcement increases commitment and self-esteem. For example,

Sarah explained that, “you are always trying to positively reinforce what they are doing, if they are doing the right thing” (March 5, 2007). Jason noted that, “...compliments in front of the class encourages others to keep going” (March, 7, 2007). Finally, in regard to how he makes his students feel important, Kevin responded, “By eventually, eventually, acknowledging a positive aspect of what they are doing” (March 12, 2007).

Both Jason and James believed that to ensure student responsibility, more consequences need to be administered for irresponsible behaviour. In response to what kind of environment fosters responsibility Jason said, “One that is somewhat different than what we are giving them. We are giving them...multiple opportunities for learning...and I read that as delaying the consequences, avoiding the consequences, giving them so many second chances” (March 26, 2007). He believed that as a result of little/no consequences, “...we sometimes are creating situation where students are avoiding the consequences of their actions, because we are giving them way, way too many opportunities” (March 28, 2007).

James also expressed concern about having little/no consequences for student misbehaviour: “We just keep giving them chances and chances and that is not preparing them for the area where they are not going to give them chances...by trying to squeeze in as much consequence and repercussion on things it’s an attempt to promote responsibility” (March 26, 2007). When asked to elaborate on his perception of consequences, James said,

So if we go out of our way as a teacher to provide an alternative or another attempt or some type of accommodation and still nothing is done, then consequences of zeros instead of “No marks,” time wasted being returned in time

paid for. So for example, if you are late for class everyday for fifteen minutes, trying to use some time at lunch to make up that time. (March 26, 2007)

Promoting togetherness/group collaboration. Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin believed that emphasizing an environment where togetherness or collaboration is embraced is effective in keeping students engaged and all four noted the positive effect it has on promoting student responsibility. Remembering a past professor of hers, Sarah noted the relationship between togetherness and having a positive teacher/student relationship: “If you have a good professor you are going to take basket weaving with them because you are going to learn beyond that...if that professor is good, it doesn’t matter what you are learning because you are in the process together, and it’s a good experience” (March 26, 2007).

In response to what assignments students respond to with enthusiasm Sarah said, “...ones where they get to work in groups. That tends to be huge, huge! Which is sometimes difficult in Math. But I have found, generally speaking, they do better if they are able to at least work with one person...” (March 5, 2007).

Jason used a buddy system: “...at the beginning of the year I give them a buddy system, find somebody, who is dependable, if you are sick, he or she will get the work and give it to you” (March 7, 2007).

When asked if his students get chances to collaborate with other classes, Kevin responded with an anecdote that expresses how togetherness/collaboration promotes student success and responsibility, “We do something, we collaborated with my grade 12 band and guitar class, actually it was a grade 11 class combined with Drama this year. We did an original production at Magnus [theatre]...”. Kevin continued, “And it was

funny and it was thoughtful, and it was insightful and you wouldn't believe that highschool students came up with that stuff" (March 12, 2007).

Both Sarah and Kevin recognized the importance of collaborative work to enable students to benefit from peers' expertise. Sarah created peer groups as an attempt to help her students learn, not only from herself but also from other students. Sarah recognized that there are times when students do not understand and it is because she has been unsuccessful in explaining the concept to the student. To combat this Sarah has found it beneficial to seek help from other students in the class through a concept she called, peer groups:

...not everyday but they [students having trouble] are still going... "We need to talk to our peer group" and they do partners and that kind of thing "We need to talk to each other about what is going in here because I'm not getting it" and it's good... It's hard sometimes to hear "I don't understand what you are saying Ms. ___ but I love it when ___ tells me what to do" (Laughter). But I think if that is what causes them to learn it then that is a good thing... some of the kids can get that and some of the kids are just "No I don't see it your way" and then somebody else goes "how about this way?", and I think that that is a big part of what is going on... (March 5, 2007)

Kevin further elaborated on this idea and explained that, "...what I tend to do and, more so with senior classes, is, I give them an opportunity, whether it be the first 20 minutes, first 15 minutes of class to do that very thing. To learn from others because I cannot provide that depth of knowledge as compared to what everybody in that class can bring

individually” (March 12, 2007). Kevin also discussed how students will get together during their lunch break to learn from each other:

...they show up with someone who likes the same player and they know a couple of different songs each and often the best way to learn that kind of stuff is through another player playing it for you right in front of you. So they will get together and do that. And they are just sharing the joy of something they both like. So that’s why they will often be here. (March, 12, 2007)

Other support. Mary, James and Kevin commented that when students are having emotional difficulty, that the teacher is unable to deal with, the participants often seek help from other sources or suggest that the student seek the support from other individuals, such as students, peers, parents, administration, social workers and counselors. Mary said that “...there is a series of procedures that you can take kids through. And that’s talking to them, talking to parents, talking to administration, talking to...social workers...” (March 6, 2007).

James stated that,

...I have been fortunate enough that I have been involved in some crisis stuff here at the school in terms of natural helpers and so helping kids out and stuff like that. So I know the support staff, so for me that is one of the best places I can suggest kids to go if they are not willing to talk with me immediately. (March 6, 2007)

Kevin also noted that when students come into his class they are sometimes upset about something that has happened earlier that day: “I do sort of speak to them of course, but a lot of the times it’s their friends that will comfort them or whatever. I just sort of give

them a time out and give them time to figure it all out, let them do what they need to do..." (March 12, 2007).

Teachers' Perceptions of the Reasons for Misbehaviour

The participants articulated various reasons why a student may misbehave. These reasons serve to rationalize the use of the strategies described above. Reasons included: lack of respect; lack of interest in the subject area or topic; lack of direction; student comfort problems (which also includes student frustration and lack of success); problems with the school environment; attention-seeking; problems in students' lives; and negative teacher/student relationship.

Lack of respect. Jason and Kevin both noted that misbehaviour may be the result of a lack of respect. According to Jason, misbehaviour is often, "because they have not been taught a certain amount of respect at home. When somebody talks, you listen" (March 7, 2007). Kevin observed that when students' home environments are not founded on respect, this may effect students' behaviours in the classroom:

...if they have come from an environment where there is not a whole lot of respect, they don't respect anybody at home because, maybe they made poor decisions or bad decisions, or had decisions made for them that they are not happy with. When they come here, sometimes it's a continuation of that, they don't have respect for...either the teacher or authority or something. (March 25, 2007)

Lack of interest in the subject area or topic. James and Kevin both believed that misbehaviour might be the result of a disinterest in the subject area or topic. James explained that students may misbehave "when they are disinterested in the topic" (March 7, 2007). Kevin noted that, student may choose to behave or misbehave "depending upon

if they liked the class or not” (March 25, 2007). He also noted that if the teacher chooses the assignment there is a chance that the student may not find it interesting. Kevin said that with no choice students will not

...be engaged. They could, but if it's nobody they know, and have no interest learning about, not a whole lot of learning takes place. They'll do it because they have to do it, it's an academic assignment but they won't remember it, they will just do it to get it over with or choose not to do it at all...and then they start asking questions like, “Well how much is it worth?” and “Do I need to finish it”... So that could be a limitation, just completing it. (March 12, 2007)

Lack of clear direction. Sarah and Jason both attributed some misbehaviour to a lack of clear direction. Sarah believed that when students are misbehaving “You know that something is not right that the lesson isn't what they need to be doing, that you haven't clearly explained it...” (March 5, 2007). Jason observed that students often misbehave, “...when they lack clear direction. When they haven't got a choice...they haven't got a means of asking for direction” (March 7, 2007).

Student comfort. Sarah, Mary and Kevin believed that misbehaviour might be the result of students not feeling comfortable in the classroom environment. Sarah observed that, “...if you go to classrooms and you find that lots of kids are constantly away or late for class I think that shows that it's not a room that people want to be in and that's not effective” (March 26, 2007). Mary noted that, “...when discipline becomes an issue in the classroom I think it is because the kid is backed into a corner, there isn't trust, there isn't comfort...” (March 6, 2007).

Another dimension relating to a lack of student comfort was offered by Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin. All four of these participants believed that misbehaviour is often the result of students being frustrated. Sarah noted that, "...when they are really having difficulty with something they tend to act out instead of showing their difficulties..." (March 5, 2007). She believed the main purpose of misbehaviour is an attempt to show the teacher the student is frustrated: "...it's their way of saying 'I don't understand and I'm lost and I wish I wasn't but I can't admit that so I have to find another way to cover up the fact that I can't get through the task at hand. I can't do it so I'm going to do something else'..." (March 5, 2007). Kevin also made a similar observation: "...the class moves together, progresses together as a group but then there will be some that drop off and they tend to begin to act out, only because they can't keep up...and they are frustrated" (March 12, 2007).

Unlike the other four participants, Jason did not seem to recognize that misbehaviour may be the result of student frustration. Jason reflected on the concept of purpose of misbehaviour:

Are they trying to indicate to me that they have some problems and this is how it's manifest...like I don't understand how to do math, I am frustrated therefore I'm going to misbehave...I don't see a lot of credence in that. If you show up, listen, get focused, you can get by and you can do well. (March 7, 2007)

A final dimension associated with a lack of student comfort was offered by Kevin. Throughout his interviews, Kevin placed great emphasis on student success. Regarding the effects that having little success has on student behaviour, he believed that "...if it's a class that they don't do well in, they're not successful in, they're not engaged in, that's

when I would think they tend to act out” (March 25, 2007). Kevin contended that students “...need to know that they are going to have some kind of success on some level for them to stay and want to be there and so they will participate” (March 25, 2007).

Problems with the classroom environment. Kevin believed that often when there are problems with classroom management it is because the classroom environment is not conducive to learning. He explained:

[if] is it an environment where, if they have experienced learning in another environment when you bring them to one that they’re not, that’s not conducive to learning...it’s tough for them to be engaged. I mean...as an adult you wouldn’t go somewhere where you don’t feel particularly welcome, you just wouldn’t. For them it’s tough, because they need to be there, even if they don’t feel truly welcome. So it’s easy to see why they are not engaged or choosing to not be engaged in the class. (March 12, 2007)

Interested in this comparison to adulthood, I asked Kevin to elaborate on his anecdote.

Kevin responded by saying,

I guess for me, knowing that or being an adult, again going to a situation where you are not successful, whether it be...if you know, you decided you wanted to learn curling and you are completely terrible at it, and you go there and...others are better at it, and you sort of are only going to be so good and you don’t really fit in, that kind of thing. You would tend to not want to return you would tend to go somewhere where you are happy, where there are like-minded people. (March 25, 2007)

Attention-seeking. All five participants said that some misbehaviour occurs because students attempt to gain attention. For example, Sarah said that, "...more and more kids don't get a lot of attention along the way and this is a way...negative attention is better than no attention" (March 5, 2007). Jason also explained:

Often misbehaviour is uncontrolled...Others it's just lack of self-control. No desire to have any sort of control because it's more fun to do something else. A combination of diet, lack of proper control by whoever is in the situation to control them. The purpose, if it is controlled, is attention seeking. (March 7, 2007)

Kevin also commented: "Going back to that whole notion of not understanding, frustration, looking for attention for all the wrong reasons, perhaps they are not getting the attention or the praise through their playing and so they need to seek it in other ways" (March 12, 2007).

Problems in students' lives. Sarah, Jason, James and Kevin all believed that when discipline becomes an issue, it is often because students have problems in their lives. Jason, for example, suggested that these problems may result in misbehaviour in the classroom: "Often things outside the classroom, problems with...it's often boyfriend, girlfriend, parent related", are responsible for some misbehaviour (March 7, 2007). Kevin explained that many students "...still have a notion about adults that they are all going to make poor decisions for me or think about me in the wrong way. And so sometimes there is some transference from outside of the building into the building and that's how you can account for some of that behaviour" (March 25, 2007).

Negative teacher/student relationship. In discussing the theme of *Strategies for Classroom Management* above, the participants highlighted the importance of having a

positive teacher/student relationship. Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin all attributed some misbehaviour to negative teacher/student relationships. According to Sarah, "...if you do not have that connection I think the kids are willing to say 'Well you don't care about me. So why should I care about what you are doing'. And then you get all of your issues." (March 5, 2007). Mary offered a similar explanation when she said, "If there isn't a connection with a teacher, if there is a negative connection with a teacher, it's just bad" (March 6, 2007). James, too, believed that many students do their work for their teachers but also added, "I can also say that a lot of students don't do their work because of their teachers" (March 7, 2007).

Finally regarding the effects of a negative teacher/student relationship, Kevin observed that a negative teacher/student relationship may promote misbehaviour: "...a student will tend not to act out or do something they know they shouldn't be doing or take it as far as they normally would, or in a situation where they don't have that same connection with a teacher they would take it further" (March 25, 2007).

Teachers' Perceptions of Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Participants articulated characteristics of effective teachers. Among them were: facilitation of student learning; an attitude that every student can succeed; a caring nature; knowledge/experience of subject; and personal reflection.

Facilitation of student learning. Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin all suggested that a teacher needs to be a facilitator. Sarah noted that a teacher is supposed to be there, "...to help along the way. So they can become better people and you learn some stuff along the way too" (March 26, 2007). James believed that "the role of a teacher, I think, is to facilitate a student to want to learn at some elevated level..." (March 26, 2007).

Kevin expressed the view that students need to learn to be responsible throughout highschool and that facilitation of learning was important in the later grades:

...in the earlier grades, nine and ten, your role is more of...you need to give them more guidance. In terms of being responsible for their learning or how they learn that stuff. As they get into grades eleven and twelve, you are more of a facilitator...And discover what it is, what they like to learn and how they like to learn it...So for me, in the beginning it's more teacher-centered for nines, in terms of how they should learn things, different ways that they should learn things and it's more teacher directed learning. And then as they get into eleven and twelve it's not as much teacher directed it's more choice for them and it's them, hopefully finding out what it is they do well. And they can transfer those abilities to other things in their lives as well. (March 25, 2007)

Every student can succeed attitude. According to Mary and Kevin, it is important for a teacher to have the belief that every student can/wants to succeed. Mary stated: "I firmly believe that every child wants to succeed and it's just finding that way there and for the most part...let the kids understand that you want to find a solution it generally helps the situation and I would say, more than generally, I would say almost 95 % of the time" (March 6, 2007). Kevin also said that, "...you have to have that belief, as an educator, you have to have that belief that every student can be successful. And not [necessarily] in the same way" (March 25, 2007).

Caring nature. Sarah, Jason, Mary and Kevin all believed that it is important for a teacher to care about his/her students. Sarah noted that a teacher needs to have patience and be

...a good listener...And I think you have to want to care, you have to want to be there... You want them to be caring, you want them to be concerned about them...but sometimes they need someone to know really what is going on. Maybe they don't want you to help them but you need to be able to understand them. (March 26, 2007)

Mary said that, "...I think that's what it's all about, being a really kind, concerned parent to these kids" (March 6, 2007).

Jason expressed the attitude that it is important for teachers to be caring: "...let them know that you care about what happens to them outside of school too. Because I think they have enough adults in their life who may not care about them, so they've gotta have somebody else who cares about them" (March 7, 2007).

Knowledge/experience of subject. Sarah, Jason, Mary and Kevin all believed that it is important to have knowledge and experience in the subject you are responsible for teaching. Sarah said that, "...sure you want to be knowledgeable about your curriculum and what you are actually trying to get your kids to understand..." (March 26, 2007).

Jason gave an interesting analogy when he said, "If you are merely a teacher, I call them 2 by 4's, you teach within the two covers of the book and the four walls of the classroom. You've got to do more than being a 2 by 4" (March 7, 2007).

Reflection. Throughout the process, all five participants showed examples of self reflection. At the end of the first interview Sarah commented on the questions being asked "...These are good questions...and they make you think a lot. So I like that...And it really makes you think a lot about different things that you sort of take for granted..." (March 5, 2007).

Jason believed that teachers should have control in the classroom. In the first interview he noted, “And there is some truths, some first principles I found while teaching, and one of them is don’t give the students a lot of choice” (March 7, 2007). Throughout both of his interviews Jason maintained this perception. However, as a result of reading over his first interview transcript, Jason questioned his philosophy: “Do I need to change?...you know what, yeah maybe I do. You also want to be able to tell kids, ‘you know, I still change’” (March 28, 2007). Jason added that he also thought “far more about the choices I want to give students. And finding, looking for more opportunities to give them choices” (March 28, 2007). He noted that the first interview “...made me think more philosophically and ethically, humanistically, ‘what do I want to do for my class?’ and I figure, ‘Ok, now and then I need a shove in a certain direction and I can take it from there, and I’ve got one of my shoves and that is good’” (March 28, 2007).

At the conclusion of the final interview James commented on the interview questions:

I just find it curious because we don’t get a lot of those questions answered to us...I think a lot of people need to sit down and contemplate little things like this...Maybe the other thing that I can add to this is we always ask our colleagues and our teachers...we exclude the kids a lot and we need to address that too.

(March 26, 2007)

Summary

Four themes arose from data collection: goals of classroom management; strategies for classroom management; teachers' perceptions of the reasons for misbehaviour; and teachers' perceptions of positive characteristics of effective teachers.

Each theme was illuminated by relevant categories and codes. The goals of classroom management proposed by participants were mutual respect; student success; maintaining positive feelings; student responsibility; and maintaining a positive learning environment (which included consistency, fairness, care/comfort and safety). The different strategies for classroom management included: meaningful/authentic work; fostering student engagement (maintained through fun and humour and characterized by noise); student choice (which promotes success, motivation and responsibility and empowers students); monitoring behaviours/on-task work and environmental change; alternative strategies for assessment; maintaining a positive teacher/student relationship (by discussing/getting involved in non-school issues and events and various communication strategies); student control vs teacher control (including choice and structure, choice and competence and the use of rewards, threats and punishment); reinforcement/consequences; promoting togetherness/group collaboration (including whole class, group work and peer teaching); and other support. Teachers' perceptions of the reasons for misbehaviour participants included: lack of respect; lack of subject interest; lack of clear direction; lack of comfort (including student frustration and lack of student success); problems with the school environment; attention-seeking; problems in students' lives; and negative teacher/student relationship. Finally, teachers' perceptions of characteristics of effective teachers' participants included: facilitation of learning; the

belief that every student can succeed; a caring nature (which was characterized by listening, patience and encouragement); flexibility; knowledge/experience; and personal reflection. The following section presents the interpretation of the findings.

Interpretation

Analysis of the participants' perspectives illuminated the following themes: goals of classroom management; strategies for classroom management; teachers' perceptions of the reasons for misbehaviour; and teachers' perceptions of characteristics of effective teachers. Within each theme there were several categories.

Goals of Classroom Management

Participants articulated five goals of classroom management. They were: mutual respect; student success; maintaining positive feelings; student responsibility; and maintaining a positive learning environment. Each is discussed below in relation to choice theory.

Mutual respect. Participants in this study suggested that mutual respect between teacher and student is an important goal of classroom management. Kevin believed that mutual respect is something that can not be demanded but must be commanded by showing respect, being an example of respect and setting standards. Both he and Mary noted that when the teacher models respect students may reciprocate in kind. Participants' perspectives were congruent with Glasser's (1998a) proposition that if teachers wish to gain students' respect it is not effective to attempt to coerce a student with the hopes of achieving this goal.

Student success. Sarah, Jason, Mary and Kevin shared the attitude that promoting student success is important because it increased self-importance, decreased off-task

behaviour and increased engagement. Kevin described his practice of allowing students to choose what is going to be on certain tests because he found this practice increased student success. Glasser (2004) also notes the use of choice to promote student success: "...all tests are open-book, open-note, open-ask-the-teacher, open-ask-the-kid-next-to-you, because the whole point of the test is to make sure that you learn something and are able to use [apply] it. That is what you are tested for" (n.p.).

Positive feelings. According to Mary and Kevin, maintaining positive feelings was an important goal of classroom management. Furthermore, Sarah, Mary, James, and Kevin regarded positive feelings as key indicators of how successful participants were at creating a positive learning environment. Similarly, Glasser (1998a) notes that our feelings give us instantaneous feedback on the choices we make. According to choice theory, ensuring that students feel good in the classroom is an important goal of classroom management because positive feelings suggest that student's are making effective choices and their needs are being satisfied within the environment.

Student responsibility. According to all five participants, student responsibility was an important goal of classroom management. Mary, James, and Kevin discussed student responsibility in terms of students taking ownership of their learning and behaviour. For example, James explained that, "our ultimate goal, I know mine is, is to make our students to be active learners...that's one of the best feelings in class, if your kids are able to govern their own behaviour instead of you doing it" (March 7, 2007). Like James, Mary and Kevin, Glasser (1998a) also believes that one of the main goals of classroom management, and choice theory, is to motivate student responsibility.

Maintaining a positive learning environment. All of the participants in this study believed that maintaining a positive learning environment was an important goal of classroom management. Participants in this study regarded a positive learning environment to be a place where students can get what they need. For example, Jason noted that a goal of classroom management is, "...to create a situation where I can do my job and the kids can get what they need" (March 28, 2007). Similarly, Glasser (1998a) explains that a positive learning environment is an environment where students can reasonably and responsibly satisfy their needs.

Participants described several characteristics of a positive learning environment in terms of consistency; fairness; care/comfort; and safety. All participants noted that consistency and safety were important characteristics of an effective learning environment. For example, Mary commented that consistency ensured predictability and James believed that "...safety and expectance..." were important. The views presented by the participants are consistent with Glasser's (1998a) assertion that the classroom should be a safe and secure environment for all students.

To some extent every participant believed that a positive learning environment was characterized by an atmosphere of care and comfort. This is consistent with Glasser's (1998a) belief that caring promotes responsible behaviours. For example, Mary believed that school is "...all about caring about each other...and comfort, and safety...and a happy place, it's just got to be all those things" (March 6, 2007). Similarly, Glasser (1993), states that, "Quality schoolwork (and the quality life that results from it) can only be achieved in a warm, supportive classroom environment" (p. 18).

Strategies for Classroom Management

Participants described a variety of classroom management strategies in the following manner: effective teaching methods; maintaining a positive teacher/student relationship; student control vs. teacher control; reinforcement/consequences; promoting togetherness/group collaboration; and seeking other support.

Effective teaching methods. Participants described several teaching methods that they found effective. These included offering students meaningful/authentic work, fostering student engagement, ensuring student interest in the subject, promoting student choice, monitoring behaviours/on-task work and environmental change and alternative strategies for assessment.

All five participants believed that offering students meaningful/authentic work increased student engagement and commitment. For example, James said that he often contemplated the different ways of keeping an assignment meaningful to his students. Jason also noted that the more authentic, meaning the more realistic an assignment, the better it is. Attitudes presented by participants resonate with Glasser's (1998a) belief that students should not be required to acquire knowledge or do work that is not meaningful to the students.

Participants noted two conditions that ensured students remained engaged in their work. The first condition was a fun environment, often characterized by noise and fostered by humour. The second was ensuring that students were interested in the subject matter. Sarah, James and Kevin noted that fun/noise was an effective classroom management strategy. Jason said that he often used humour as a means of ensuring that students remain focused. In addition, Sarah, Jason and Kevin commented that the benefits

to having a fun/noisy environment included more student engagement and better opportunities for success. Finally, Kevin observed that noise often indicated structure and motivated on-task behaviour. Like the participants, Glasser (2004) also believes that students learn best when they are having fun.

Participants contended that when students have an interest in the subject it promotes student engagement. Kevin explained that student interest in the subject was motivational and described how his students often practiced their music (often original compositions) during their lunch period. Like the teachers, Glasser (1988) observes that students are more inclined to put effort into work that is interesting because interesting work satisfies needs.

Participants in this study found that promoting student choice was a beneficial classroom management technique in a number of ways. This approach promoted student motivation, increased in student success, increased student empowerment and increased student responsibility. For example, Jason noted that students are "...more focused, more motivated on something they choose..." (March 7, 2007). According to Glasser (1998a), students are more focussed and motivated on something they choose when what they have chosen is satisfying an unmet need.

Sarah observed that students were "...definitely more likely to do better on something they have chosen" (March 5, 2007). Although promoting student choice increased student success, Jason and James noted that this was not always the case. Regardless of being allowed choice or not, there is still the possibility that students will make an ineffective choice. However, making ineffective choices can offer an opportunity for a learning experience. Like participants, Glasser (1998a) believes that student choice

motivated student success. Sarah and James also used choice as a method to empower students. For example, Sarah noted that "...by giving them choice they certainly feel more confident in themselves..." (March 5, 2007). Sarah and Kevin noted that student choice is effective in promoting student responsibility. Kevin commented that "...allowing them choice sort of allows them to take some ownership of their learning..." (March 12, 2007). Glasser's (1998a) also believes that true responsibility is fostered through choice.

Maintaining a positive teacher/student relationship. Participants in this study found that having a positive teacher/student relationship decreased disruptive behaviour and increased a student's motivation to work hard, which as a result often increased student success. The benefits of having a positive teacher/student relationship represented a strong connection among participants' perceptions and Glasser's (1998a) choice theory. For example, Mary noted that when there is a positive teacher/student relationship, students are motivated to do well because they know this is what she wants: "...I think that they know that I want them to do well and they want to do well as a result" (March 6, 2007). Similarly, Glasser's (1998a) claims that many students who do not enjoy school will work for teachers with whom they have a good relationship because the relationship means so much to them.

Sarah, James and Kevin also observed that a positive teacher/student relationship increased student motivation and engagement and often motivated success. For example, Sarah noted that students "...would rather show success if it's [for] somebody who cares about them" (March 5, 2007). Kevin also explained that when there is a positive teacher/student relationship, "...you will get the very best from every student regardless

of their level” (March 12, 2007). Finally, James believed that, “...a good rapport translates into good work habits...” (March 7, 2007). Finally, Jason noted that a positive teacher/student relationship decreased misbehaviour. Like Jason, Glasser (2004) also believes that a positive teacher/student relationship will decrease misbehaviour.

According to participants, discussing/getting involved in non-school issues/events helps create a strong teacher/student relationship. For example, Mary believed that teachers have an important role to acknowledge what students are doing outside of school. Jason also said that he always asks for the teacher duties in which he is able to see his students outside of the classroom. Glasser (1998a) also comments that teachers who participated in extra-curricular activities often appeared to have strong relationships with their students.

According to Sarah, communication served the purpose of motivating students to share their feelings or concerns. James offered a similar view noting how open communication helped to ensure student comfort. Sarah, Jason, Mary and James, offered several different methods of communication they found to be successful in establishing a positive teacher/student relationship. They were one-on-one interaction, encouragement, listening, clarity in directions and negotiation. All five participants stressed the importance of one-on-one interaction with students as an effective classroom management strategy. According to participants one-on-one interaction is effective because it helped students feel important, decreased the chance of students feeling singled out, and helped to ensure student engagement. The belief that encouragement, listening and negotiation helped to create a positive teacher/student relationship is directly related

to Glasser's (2002) concept of connecting habits. In fact, the three communication techniques offered by participants are included within Glasser's (2002) concept.

All participants observed that encouragement motivated responsibility and increased commitment to work. For example, Jason noted that the best way to motivate students is through encouragement. He commented that "...you can lead them but you can't make them drink" (March 7, 2007). Like James, Glasser stated that, "...teachers can only teach in a way that makes students *want* to learn...you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink" (p. 15-16, as cited by Gough, 1987). Sarah also said that encouragement might promote responsibility.

Participants noted that listening to students is a beneficial practice in the classroom. Sarah explained that listening promotes togetherness and helps students feel appreciated: "...[students] need someone who will just listen to them, you don't even need to have the answers for them. They just want to know that someone does appreciate that they do have questions and they don't know what to do either" (March 26, 2007). Mary associated listening with showing respect and caring. Glasser (2004) explains that listening is the natural product of students having respect for their teachers. He explained that, "Students don't listen to people that they do not have a positive relationship with, they hear them but they don't really listen" (n.p.).

Mary and James pointed out that in order to promote responsible behaviour it is important to negotiate differences between teacher and student. Glasser (2002) also believes that negotiating differences helps create a stronger relationship between teacher and student.

Student control vs teacher control. Although all participants noted that it is important to be flexible, participants differed in their opinions regarding how much control students should have and how much control teachers should have. For example, although Sarah did say she liked to have a little control, she recognized that in order to find that “right level, so that things are going on in a positive way...”(March 5, 2007), students also need to have some control.

Participants also noted that when choice is offered, it is best offered in a structured environment. For example, Mary believed that, “...students should have choices within...” (March 6, 2007). Regardless of the apparent pedagogical reasons for choice, Mary, Jason and James all observed, to some extent, that teacher control is necessary. This perception is consistent with Glasser’s (2004) treatment of teachers as managers and his contention that structure ensures that students’ needs can be acceptably satisfied in a safe environment and maintaining this structure is in large part the focus of the teacher.

Jason noted that the use of punishments, threats and rewards, ensured that teachers remain in control. He believed that, “...there has to be punishment for those who skipped. Or else they think they can come and go as they please” (March 7, 2007). Jason also noted that if these techniques are continuously used, they lose their effectiveness. Jason did not offer a reason for this decrease in effectiveness.

Jason also noted that punishment might lead to more misbehaviour, which often leads to more punishment (from the teacher), in an attempt to deal with the student’s reaction to the initial punishment. This statement clarifies Glasser’s (1998a) assertion that “...what makes external control doubly harmful is that not only does our belief in it create

the problems we are trying to solve, but it is also used to deal with the problems. When punishment doesn't work, invariably we punish harder" (p. 12-13).

Although Jason observed that removing a student's freedom often results in obedience, he also admitted that after a student's freedom has been removed he/she might not come to class the next day. In terms of choice theory, this student behaviour can be understood as the student's attempt to ultimately satisfy the very need that was purposefully frustrated in the classroom the day before.

Reinforcement/consequences. To some extent, every participant noted using positive reinforcement as a classroom management technique. Both Jason and James believed that in order to promote responsibility it is essential to offer more consequences. Consequences were more in line with punishment than with actual consequences. For example, James noted that he believed consequences and punishment were the same. This thinking appears to be contrary to Glasser's (1998a) conception of how to promote responsibility. Erwin (2004) notes, that there are difference between consequences and punishment. He contends that consequences are known ahead of time, are fair and reasonable, and are best when they are natural or at least related to the offense, are often developed with the help of the students and are imposed without emotion. In contrast he notes that punishments are imposed after the fact, are often excessive, are usually unrelated to the offense, are imposed by the teacher and imposed with anger. To clarify further Erwin offered an example of how a teacher might approach the same problem with either punishment or consequence. For example, if a student came to class late, the punishment may be to send the student to the office: whereas the consequence may be

that the student misses the learning that took place and must get notes from another student or the teacher on his/her own time.

Promoting togetherness/group collaboration. All five participants noted that togetherness was an important aspect of a positive learning environment. For example, Sarah observed that students are often enthusiastic when they are allowed to work with each other. She also found they are generally more successful “if they are able to at least work with one person...” (March 5, 2007).

In accordance with participants, Glasser (1988) places great emphasis on students working together on academic assignments. It is interesting to note that Sarah’s concept of peer groups is very similar to Glasser’s (1988) concept of learning teams. Glasser noted that, “...though this kind of endeavour has been accurately labeled ‘cooperative learning’ I like ‘learning teams’ better...the idea, having students function as a group to produce some result has been carefully studied, and it works” (p. 9-10, as cited by Gough, 1987). In addition to Sarah, Kevin also placed great emphasis on learning together and noted that his classes often collaborated with other classes in the school.

Sarah and Kevin commented that in order to ensure student success it is often beneficial for students to learn from their peers because peers can often provide a different kind of depth or understanding than the teacher. What Sarah and Kevin noted was a change in the role of the teacher from a position of authority to that of one where the teacher embraces a student’s individual talents and expertise. Glasser (1998a) also places an emphasis on the ability of proficient students to help their peers.

Seeking other support. Mary, James and Kevin commented on the importance of having other support as a means of helping with students who are having difficulty. For

example, Mary observed that when students are having problems in school that she is not capable of handling she relies on parents, administrators, and social workers. In addition, James noted the importance of counselors and Kevin has found that students' peers are often sources of comfort for these students.

Being a board-certified psychiatrist in the United States of America, Glasser (2002) understands the important role school counselors, parents, administrators and peers can be with problem students. He (2002) describes a case in which a disruptive student, who was labeled as "unreachable," is helped with the assistance of the school counselor and a peer mentor (p. 50-60).

Teachers' Perceptions of the Reasons for Misbehaviour

Participants offered several reasons for misbehaviour. They included: a lack of respect, lack of interest in subject area, lack of clear direction, lack of student comfort, problems with the school environment, attention-seeking, problems in students' lives and a negative teacher/student relationship. Participants' attitudes regarding the motivation behind misbehaviour was not clearly articulated. That is, it was unclear whether participants considered misbehaviour to be internally motivated and/or externally motivated.

The eight different reasons for misbehaviour that were proposed by the five participants can be grouped into at least one of Glasser's five basic needs. Meaning that although participants did not directly attribute irresponsible behaviour to Glasser's five needs (love and belonging, survival, freedom, fun, or power), an indirect link between misbehaviour and Glasser's (1998a) needs is apparent. Table 3 summarizes how each of the eight proposed reasons can be explained as resulting from the frustration of one or

more Glasser's (1998a) proposed needs. The reasons are italicized in the left column along with the participants who noted them. The right column compares the proposed reasons with choice theory and illuminates how a frustration of Glasser's (1998a) basic needs could motivate misbehaviour. Further discussion of these reasons follows.

Table 3

Comparison of Participants Reasons for Misbehaviour with Glasser

Proposed Reason for Misbehaviour	Possible Frustrated Need Offered by Glasser (1998a)
<i>Lack of Respect</i> – proposed by Jason and Kevin	Frustration of Glasser's <i>power</i> need
<i>Lack of Interest in the Subject Area or Topic</i> – proposed by James and Kevin	Frustration of Glasser's <i>fun</i> need
<i>Lack of Clear Direction</i> – proposed by Sarah and Jason	Frustration of Glasser's <i>survival</i> need
<i>Lack of Student Comfort</i> (which included student frustration and lack of student success) – proposed by Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin	Frustration of Glasser's: <i>survival</i> need; <i>power</i> need; <i>freedom</i> need; <i>fun</i> need; and <i>love and belonging</i> need
<i>Problems with the School Environment</i> – proposed by Kevin	Frustration of Glasser's: <i>love and belonging</i> need; <i>survival</i> need; and <i>fun</i> need
<i>Attention-Seeking</i> – proposed by all five participants	Frustration of Glasser's; <i>power</i> need; <i>freedom</i> need; and <i>fun</i> need.
<i>Problems in Students' Lives</i> - proposed by Sarah, James and Kevin	Frustration of Glasser's: <i>survival</i> need; <i>power</i> need; <i>freedom</i> need; <i>fun</i> need; and <i>love and belonging</i> need
<i>Having a Negative Teacher/Student Relationship</i> – proposed by all five participants	Frustration of Glasser's <i>love and belonging</i> need and <i>power</i> need.

Glasser (1998a) does not specifically note that a “lack of clear direction” will cause a classroom management problem. He explains that a frustrated need might motivate misbehaviour as an attempt to satisfy that need. For example, where participants noted that a lack of success, student frustration and attention-seeking were reasons for

misbehaviour, choice theory explains that these three reasons could all be perceived as a frustration in the needs for power, freedom and fun.

Regarding a lack of success, Kevin stated that: "...if it's a class that they don't do well in, they're not successful in, they're not engaged in, that's when I would think they tend to act out" (March 25, 2007).

What is apparent from participants' perspectives is that students misbehave for a variety of reasons and it may not be apparent from the onset why a student is misbehaving. Where participants articulated several reasons for misbehaviour that were largely unrelated, Glasser (1998a) specifies only one purpose and claims that all apparent reasons for misbehaviour can be understood in terms of satisfaction of needs. What participants have illuminated is that teachers should try to understand the reason behind the misbehaviour before attempting classroom discipline.

Teachers' Perceptions of Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Participants described characteristics of effective teachers in terms of facilitation of student learning, an attitude that every student can succeed, a caring nature, knowledge/experience of subject and personal reflection.

Facilitation of student learning. Sarah, Mary, James and Kevin believed that a teacher needs to be a facilitator. For example, Kevin described the role of a teacher as changing from guidance to that of facilitation:

...in the earlier grades, nine and ten, your role is more of...you need to give them more guidance. In terms of being responsible for their learning or how they learn that stuff. As they get into grades eleven and twelve you are more of a

facilitator...And discover what it is, what they like to learn and how they like to learn it... (March 25, 2007)

This view is in accordance with Glasser, who, in an interview with Pauline Gough, claimed that the role of a teacher should not just consist of traditional teaching methods. He claims that a teacher should be, "...a consultant, a facilitator-someone who lectures once in a while, who teaches traditionally at times, but who also teaches nontraditionally, moving (as a good manager) from team to team to give leadership, support, and encouragement to the students..." (p.10-11, as cited by Gough, 1987).

Belief that every student can succeed. According to Mary and Kevin, it is important for a teacher to have the belief that every student can/wants to succeed. For example, Kevin said that, "...as an educator, you have to have that belief that every student can be successful..." (March 25, 2007). This view is in accordance with Glasser's (1998a) belief that teachers should create and maintain an environment that helps to ensure student success.

Caring nature. Sarah, Mary, Jason and Kevin all suggested that ensuring that students felt cared for was an important characteristic of an effective teacher. For example, Mary believed that caring for students is what being a teacher is all about. Jason further noted that some students do not feel cared about outside of school, and that it is important that they come into a classroom where they are cared about. These perceptions reinforce Glasser's (1998a) belief that students need to know that their teachers care about them.

Personal reflection. Each participant reflected throughout the interviews. For example, at the end of the first interview, Sarah commented that "...these are good

questions...they...really make you think a lot about different things that you sort of take for granted...”(March 5, 2007). Jason was also reflective when he commented that reading over the transcript of his first interview motivated him to “...think more philosophically and ethically, humanistically...” about the concept of choice. This reflection relates to Glasser’s (1993) belief that professionals need to be open to change: “...how a professional accomplishes the job is up to that person. This does not mean that you are not open to suggestions and learning new and better ways to practice your profession, but it does mean that you are not compelled to follow anyone’s lead except you own” (p. 9).

Summary

This chapter described the five participants and the findings and interpretation of the study. Based on the findings of the study, I explored the relationship between participants’ perspectives and Glasser’s (1998a) choice theory. Through discussion of four themes (goals of classroom management, strategies for classroom management, teachers’ perceptions of the reasons or misbehaviour and teachers’ perceptions of the positive characteristics of effective teachers) participants’ perspectives were illuminated. Although only one participant was familiar with Glasser (1998a), participants perceptions and practices regarding student choice are consistent with choice theory as conceptualized by Glasser (1998a).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS & DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate how five secondary school teachers employed Glasser's choice theory in their classroom management strategies and/or alternative approaches.

Four key themes emerged from the analysis of data: goals of classroom management; strategies for classroom management; teachers' perceptions of the reasons for misbehaviour; and teachers' perceptions of positive characteristics of effective teachers. Each of these themes consisted of several categories, many of which corresponded to important aspects of choice theory discussed in the review of the literature. Although participants did not specifically use choice theory, it became apparent that they did use some elements that are consistent with Glasser's (1998a) theory.

In this chapter I revisit the research questions in light of the findings. Second, I explore the implications and recommendations of the study in relation to theory, practice and research. Third, I discuss the conclusions of the study.

Revisiting the Research Questions

The researcher explored the following research questions:

1. How do the participants utilize Glasser's (1998a) choice theory in their classroom management strategies?
2. How do the participants implement Glasser's choice theory in response to classroom management issues?
3. How would classroom management strategies based on Glasser's choice theory foster student responsibility?

4. What alternative approaches are participants taking to classroom management? How consistent are these approaches with Glasser's theory?

Reflecting on the findings of the study, I respond to the research questions in the following ways:

Regarding the first research question, it has been demonstrated that participants used elements of choice theory. The participants in this study also noted benefits to embracing similar attitudes and behaviours to Glasser (1998a). For example, similar to Glasser (1998a), participants noted the importance of building a strong teacher/student relationship, promoting student success, maintaining positive feelings, promoting student choice, facilitating student responsibility and committing to several of Glasser's (2002) connecting habits, including encouragement, support, caring and negotiation. The use of these elements promoted student responsibility, increased student engagement, decreased misbehaviour and promoted student success.

Regarding the second research question, since only one participant said they had any knowledge of Glasser (1998a) prior to the data collection, it is difficult to answer this research question specifically. My assumption that participants would be familiar with Glasser's (1998a) choice theory proved to be a significant limitation in addressing this question since participants could not explain how they used choice theory when they had had no previous knowledge of it. Having a preliminary focus group on choice theory with my participants prior to the interviews may have proven useful in addressing this question. A future researcher may benefit from this suggestion. What has become apparent as a result of this study is that teachers may not have extensive knowledge of the different theories relating to classroom management. Participants did not specifically

implement Glasser's (1998a), theory but did exhibit important aspects of choice theory. I am not convinced this research question can be answered without the focus group before data collection.

Regarding the third research question, the participants implemented classroom management strategies that have commonalities with Glasser's choice theory. Such strategies foster responsibility by allowing students to make choices, creating and maintaining a positive teacher/student relationship, promoting student success and creating and maintaining an effective learning environment.

Regarding the last research question, since only one participant said she had had any previous knowledge of Glasser's theory it is highly likely that the strategies, although holding many commonalities with Glasser's choice theory may not be Glasser's theory. I found that my question about which theorist the participants identify with resulted in confusion. Teachers do what they observe works best through teaching experience. A teacher may not be aware of specific classroom management theories and the procedures they use and the perceptions they have may not fit into one specific theory over the other. Elements of separate classroom management theories are likely to overlap, as is the case with Glasser's (1998a) and Gordon's (1989) focus on student needs, or Glasser's (1998a) and Kohn's (1991) mutual contempt for the use of punishments and rewards. To conclude that any of the participants strictly practice choice theory would be incorrect. However, to conclude that participants shared similar perceptions that are consistent with choice theory would be correct. It would also be accurate to state that many of the teacher's practices that Glasser (1998a) advocates, the participants also used and have found success implementing in their classrooms.

The findings related to participants' perceptions of the reasons for misbehaviour, suggested that the issue of motivation was unclear. Although participants clearly articulated that misbehaviour is motivated in some way, it was unclear whether they believed misbehaviour was motivated externally or internally. It can also be argued that participants believed that having a negative teacher/student relationship *caused* misbehaviour (external motivation). It is difficult to conclude that participants agreed with Glasser (1998a) that misbehaviour is internally motivated.

Through participants' perspectives several strengths and limitations to Glasser's (1998a) theory became evident. Table 4 summarizes the strengths and limitations of Glasser's (1998a) choice theory as was illuminated by this research study.

Table 4

Strengths and Limitations of Choice Theory as was Illuminated by Participants

Strengths and Limitations of Glasser's (1998a) Choice Theory as it was Illuminated by the Research Study	
Strengths	Limitations
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offers a non-coercive, simple and successful way to create a strong teacher/student relationship. 2. Helps promote student discipline without the use of threats, punishment or rewards. 3. Does not have to be implemented all at once. 4. Can be implemented in a variety of classrooms, regardless of subject being taught. 5. Emphasizes that students only complete useful work. 6. Places emphasis on ensuring that students enjoy school. 7. Emphasizes and shows how to cultivate a caring learning 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problems with Glasser's classifications (need for fun inadequately defined, some language used may seem harsh, eg. "deadly habits"). 2. Full commitment to the Glasserian model requires a significant change to the Ontario educational system. 3. Requires considerable professional development in choice theory to implement fully, that the average teacher does not possess. 4. Very little empirical research completed in the Ontario educational system.

<p>environment.</p> <p>8. Focuses on promoting student responsibility.</p>	
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Glasser believes the entire educational system needs to be changed. If schools were to apply all of Glasser's (1998a) theory at once, the sudden change to the education system would likely be problematic. Student grades would drop and topics required to be taught by the ministry of education would be missed because teachers would likely run out of time. For example, Jason commented that even when students choose an assignment there is always the possibility that what motivated them initially will cease to motivate them overtime. This illuminates a flaw in Glasser's (1998a) system: what are the consequences when what motivated a student initially, no longer does and the due date is fast approaching?

Implications for Theory, Practice and Research

In conclusion, my examination of links among research, theory and practice generated the following recommendations:

Implications for Theory

Glasser's (1998a) concept of the quality world is a key concept. All participants emphasized the positive effects that a strong teacher/student relationship and a good connection with students can have. Glasser offers a valuable concept that can be applied to minimize discipline problems. In implementing this concept, teachers will be able to create an effective classroom environment, a stronger relationship with students and have greater influence over their students' choices. The greatest advantage of Glasser's theory

to education is its emphasis and potential to promote a strong relationship between teacher and student and its emphasis on promoting responsible behaviour through this relationship.

Glasser's (1998a) emphasis on fun and its relationship to completing useful or meaningful work has been underscored in this study. The importance of having a safe and structured learning environment has also been established. Giving students choices and the opportunity to satisfy their needs for power, freedom and love and belonging are likewise important elements to consider in facilitating responsible behaviour.

Participants also offered several perceptions that may inform Glasser's theory, as it relates to classroom management. First, as a result of data analysis, a concept I refer to as the choice – control continuum arose and may prove beneficial to classroom management strategies. Choice and control are not dichotomous concepts but are better understood as dialectic. Our present system requires that teachers have some control in the classroom. However, thinking of choice and control as dialectic ensures that students and teachers can work in a system of structure, consistency and fairness but still be free to exercise their need/right to choose. A teacher may be in charge of organizing consequences for breaking classroom rules but the class, working as a collective unit, could be in charge of creating the rules and the appropriate consequences for breaking them. Furthermore, a teacher may be in charge of creating units and several assignments for students to complete and the students may be in charge of choosing the assignments that they connect with the most. As was illustrated in this study, choice is important within the system. Students would benefit from recognizing that some control is necessary to ensure structure and teachers would benefit from realizing that student

success and responsibility is often dependent on the choices students are encouraged to make.

One perception offered by a participant that may add to Glasser's (1998a) theory was the idea of alternative forms of assessment. This practice of evaluating students differently is related to Glasser's (1998a) concept of human creativity. In school, teachers often attempt to encourage creativity from students but may offer only one type of assessment. Alternative strategies for assessment are important because creativity is not limited to any one task and can be shown in many different ways, depending on the student. For example, athletes are creative in their respective sports, where as musicians are creative in their respect art. The practice of having only one method of assessment significantly limits creativity. Alternative forms of assessment motivate creativity by attempting to encourage students to build on their actions, thoughts, and interests. As Kevin noted, there are different degrees of success, a student may find he/she can achieve success easier one way than another. A student should not be penalized because he/she can not show success in terms of a teacher chosen assessment strategy. The same skill may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, limited only by the students' creativity.

Another concept that may inform Glasser's (1998a) choice theory is peer teaching. With the increasing versatility of computers and new electronics that can be used in the classroom, students have access to more information. Some teachers may be unable to offer the same kind of knowledge, as peers. Furthermore, there are numerous ways to teach any concept and not all will be successful for every student. Where a teacher may have difficulty explaining a concept to a student, a peer teacher may be able to assist the student.

Jason believed that choice is earned through competence. He believed that, as the right to choose may be earned; so too, could it be lost through undesirable behaviour. He also noted that once students have a set amount of competence, then he would offer them choices within the unit. Jason's attitude regarding choice and competence is contradictory to Glasser (1998a). Where Jason interpreted choice as an externally controlled stimulus (controlled by the teacher), Glasser (1998a) claims choice is an internally motivated need. Although Glasser (1998a) does suggest that students need to show competence, he does not suggest that choice should be used as a leverage tool as Jason noted. The perception offered by Jason is significant in that choice often works better when the person making the choice has enough competence to make responsible choices. However, removing choice from a student because he/she has made the "wrong choice" (as interpreted by the teacher) is contradictory to Glasser. A choice may cease to be a choice if the teacher has already determined which choice is "right" and which is "wrong" and attempts to control the students' behaviour to motivate the "right" choice.

Implications for Practice

The findings suggest that students be given more choice within the curriculum guidelines. Participants used choice to decrease irresponsible behaviour and increase student commitment, engagement, responsibility, and success.

Jason noted that, "...some students are comfortable with everything being done for them...some want choices. And I have to recognize where and when" (March 7, 2007). This attitude expressed by Jason is relatively unexplored by Glasser. However, since choice theory indicated that every choice we make is an attempt to satisfy an unmet need and teachers should not force students to do anything, it may be argued that students

should not be forced to choose, but they should have the option. Mary expressed a similar attitude when she said,

... I have to recognize, when a student says, "Can I do it this way," I have to understand why they are asking me to do that, perhaps that choice is the best, better choice for them in that situation. It's going to show their talents, their ability to achieve, so I have to be open to that (March 6, 2007).

If the teacher is able to recognize when choices may benefit the student this practice could help create the structure that students require. Teachers would benefit from listening to their students and attempt to understand when student choice may be beneficial.

As was apparent in this study, a positive teacher/student relationship often decreased irresponsible behaviour and promoted responsible behaviour. Participants noted that establishing a positive relationship can decrease misbehaviour and increase a student's commitment to school work and student success. I recommend that:

- Teachers adopt a leadership role in the classroom. It was illustrated in this study that when the participants understood that school is a place where everyone is more successful when they work together, it often resulted in more student responsibility;
- Teachers take into account that alternative strategies for assessment motivate student commitment, engagement and success. While one participant stressed this strategy and it has proven successful to him as reasonable alternative to more traditional assessment techniques;

- Teachers take into account that students' peers offer another means of teaching students who are having trouble. Two participants in this study noted the positive effects that peer teaching has on: student engagement, commitment, and success;
- Local school districts offer professional development to promote discussion of classroom management concerns.
- Teachers consider ways to make the classroom more need-satisfying to each student instead of ways intended to control their students' behaviours. Responsible behaviour is a choice. Kevin noted that a student may act out in one class but not another. Glasser (1998a) also claims that, "Any program that focuses on changing the student instead of the system is not a choice theory program" (p. 267). What Kevin and Glasser (1998a) are saying is the environment needs to be changed in such a way that a student can satisfy his/her unmet needs in responsible ways.

Implications for Research

The following recommendations may provide a focus for future research in regards to theory.

This small study was conducted with five participants in a secondary school in Ontario. Further research might investigate teachers' perceptions of choice theory in other elementary and secondary schools.

It would also be interesting to observe the effects of choice theory in the classroom. The study would have been more complete had I observed how choice theory may or may not be utilized within and across classrooms.

This study looked at the perceptions of the teachers. In order to fully understand the effects choice theory has, it is also important to listen to the students. A follow up

study concerning the perception of students and how they interpret the classroom management issues explored would be beneficial. In fact, the main limitation to understanding the entire issue is that the students' perceptions were not explored first hand but through the perceptions of their teachers.

It might be instructive to compare essential classes to advanced classes in terms of whether or not there is a difference between how students choose to satisfy unmet needs.

One of the difficulties I encountered in this study was that only one participant was familiar with Glasser's choice theory. A follow up study might incorporate professional development for teachers followed by implementation in their classrooms.

Conclusion

Elements of choice theory implemented by the participants illustrated the power of choice theory in that as teachers negotiated the tensions of classroom management they indeed did use a lot of Glasser's (1998a) ideas. Although participants and Glasser (1998a) shared similar perspectives, the way these perspectives were conceptualized often differed. Participants rarely spoke of themes in relation to students needs, except when discussing a positive learning environment. Participants were much more likely to discuss topics in terms of causal relationships. For example, student success ensures student engagement.

The majority of participants articulated the benefits of offering students choices. They noted that offering student's choices within the school system resulted in a better commitment to schoolwork, more creative work and more student success. When students are committed to work and are taught and encouraged to make responsible choices, then

disruptive behaviours are less frequent. Similarly, when students are engaged in a task that they have chosen, they are less likely to engage in irresponsible behaviour.

According to participants there are benefits to having a fun, safe, consistent, negotiable, engaging and caring environment. These include less disruptive behaviour, better motivation to schoolwork, more student success, more creativity and more responsibility.

The participants in this study, like Glasser (1998a), emphasized the importance of promoting an environment of togetherness and collaboration. If students truly do learn best when they are working together, as both the participants and Glasser (1998a) noted, then they may benefit significantly from cooperative learning.

This study described participants' conceptions of classroom management issues in a local highschool. Specifically, this study recommends that practical knowledge of participants be recognized within classrooms. Theoretical constructs such as "choice theory" may inform practical knowledge at the discretion of teachers. The findings suggest that teachers manage their classrooms in terms of practical strategies and experience.

In closing, I wish to share the following statement, which Mary offered regarding control, choice and classroom management:

I want them [students] to have control over themselves... You are responsible supervisors, it's like *Lord of the Flies*, everything comes back to *Lord of the Flies*... you need that caring, constant supervision, in order for young people to control themselves. And I think that is what it is all about and ultimately it's about giving them the tools that they can control themselves... I think they [students]

should have choices within...there needs to be a certain amount of leeway, I have to recognize, when a students says, "Can I do it this way?" I have to understand why they are asking me to do that. Perhaps that choice is the best/better choice for them in that situation. (March 6, 2007)

REFERENCES

- Beck, M., A. (1997). Managing the unmanageable student: A choice theory/reality therapy approach to understanding behaviour. *International Journal of Reality Therapy, XVII*(1), 37-41.
- Beck, M., & Dolce-Maule, D. (1998). The development of a quality school: A four-year study. *International Journal of Reality Therapy, XVIII*(1), 23-28.
- Bennett, W. (1998). The place to harvest patriots. *School Administer, 55*(5), 38-40.
- Bogden, R. C., & Biklen, S. (2003). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (4th ed.). Toronto: Allyn & Bacon.
- Coats, K., L. (1991). The impact of reality therapy in a school for emotionally disturbed youth: A preliminary report. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 355690).
- Covey, S. R. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). California: Sage.
- Dreikurs, R. (1964). *Children: The challenge*. New York: Hawthorn.
- Dreikurs, R., Drumwald, B., Pepper, F. (1971). *Maintaining sanity in the classroom*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Edens, R., & Smryl, T. (1994). Reducing disruptive classroom behaviors in physical education: A pilot study. *Journal of Reality Therapy, XIII*(2), 40-44.
- Erwin, J. C. (2004). The classroom of choice: Giving students what they need and getting what you want. Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Glasser, W. (1969). *Schools without failure*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Glasser, W. (1988). *Choice theory in the classroom*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Glasser, W. (1998a). *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Glasser, W. (1998b). *The quality school: Managing students without coercion*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Glasser, W. (2004). *William Glasser, MD presents choice theory in mental health, counseling, and education [DVD]*. United States: And Cut! Video Services.
- Gordon, T. (1974). *Teacher effectiveness training*. New York: Wyden.
- Gordon, T. (1989). *Teaching children self-discipline*. New York: Random House.
- Gough, P. B. (1987). The key to improving schools: An interview with William Glasser. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 68(4), 656-662.
- Hammond, K. J. (2002). Serving student teachers with CTRT. *International Journal of Reality Therapy*, XXII(1), 46-48.
- Houston, P. D. (1998). The centrality of character education. *School Administrator*, 55(5), 6-8.
- Kim, K. (2002). The effect of a reality therapy program on responsibility for elementary school children in Korea. *International Journal of Reality Therapy*, XXII(1), 30-33.
- Kohn, A. (1991). Caring kids: The role of the schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72(7), 496-506.

- Kohn, A. (1998). Adventures in ethics versus behavior control: a reply to my critics. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 79 (6), 455-460.
- Krathwohl, D. R. (1998). *Methods of Educational & Social Science Research: An integrated approach* (2nd ed.). United States: Addison-Wesley Educational Publications, Inc.
- Levin, J., & Nolan, J. F. (2000). *Principles of classroom management: A professional decision-making model*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Lewis, R. (2001). Classroom discipline and student responsibility: The students' view. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17, 307-319.
- Lexico Publishing Group, LLC. (2006). Dictionary.com. Retrieved November 10, 2006, from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/behaviour>
- Malley, J., Basic, J., Beck, M., Kranzelic Tavra, K., Feric, M., & Conway, J. (2003). Students' perceptions of their schools: An international perspective. *Journal of Reality Therapy*, XXIII(1), 4-11.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Marshall, M., Weisner, K., & Cebula, M. (2004). Using a discipline system to promote learning. *International Journal of Reality Therapy*, XXIV(1), 23-33.
- Morrish, R.G. (2000). *With All Due Respect: keys for building effective school discipline*. Fonthill, Ontario: Woodstream Publishing.
- Palmatier, L. L. (1998). *Crisis counseling for a quality school community*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis Group.

- Parish, J., G., & Parish, T. S. (1999). An examination of teacher caring, underachievement, and at-risk behaviors. *Journal of Reality Therapy, XLIX(1)*, 27-31.
- Parish, T., S., & Parish, J. G. (2005). Comparing students' classroom-related behaviors across grade levels and happiness levels. *International Journal of Reality Therapy, XXV(1)*, 24-25.
- Passaro, P., D., Moon, M., Wiest, D., J., & Wong, E., H. (2004). A model for school psychology practice: Addressing the needs of students with emotional and behavioral challenges through the use of an in-school support room and reality therapy. *Adolescence, 39(155)*, p. 503-517.
- Peterson, A., Chang, C., & Collins, P. (1998). Taiwanese university students meets their basic needs through studying CT/RT. *International Journal of Reality Therapy, XVII(2)*, 27-29.
- Reber, A. S. (1995). *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology: second edition*. England: Penguin Books.
- Ricardson, L. (1994). Writing: a method of inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 516-529). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ryan, K. & Bohlin, K. E. (1999). *Building Character in Schools: Practical ways to bring moral instruction to life*. San Francisco, CA, USA: Josser-Bass Inc.
- Stake, R., E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. California: Sage.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London: Althouse Press.

Wittek, C. M. (2000). Helping children make choices for life: Glasser's choice theory at work in the third grade classroom. *International Journal of Reality Therapy*, XX(1), 30-33.

Young, J. I. (1981). Discipline with a purpose. *Journal of Reality Therapy*, I(1), 22-26.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND FIELDNOTES REFERENCE GUIDE

Interview Questions

Goals and Techniques

1. What are the goals of your classroom management technique?
2. What techniques do you use to regain the effective learning environment that often dissipates with a misbehaving class?
3. When do you find students become discipline concerns? Probe: Is there anything that seems to trigger classroom disruptions?
4. How do you attempt to gain your student's respect?

Teacher Attitude

1. How much control should teachers have over their students? How much choice should students have? In what circumstances is choice important to a student? Why?
2. What do you believe is the purpose of misbehaviour?
3. How does this purpose factor into your classroom management technique?

Students' Basic Needs***Survival***

1. What steps do you take to create a safe learning environment for yourself and your students?
2. Have you had any situations in which a student's physical or emotional need has been in danger? If yes, how did you handle it? If no, How do you think you would handle it? What steps do you take to ensure that this does not happen in the future?

Love & Belonging

1. What steps do you take in an attempt to connect with your students?

2. What are the results of having a successful connection with your students?
3. What are the consequences of not having a successful connection with your students?

Power

1. How do you attempt to make your students feel important in your class?
2. What opportunities are students given to feel empowered?
3. How do you respond to a student who comes to you with a concern that a grade on an assignment is not as high as expected?

Freedom

1. How do you decide who goes into which group during group-work assignments?
What do you do when the group stops working productively?
2. What do you think are the benefits of choosing an assignment for your students? What do you see as limitations?

Fun

1. How do you incorporate fun into your classroom?
2. What kinds of assignments do students respond to with enthusiasm?

The Quality World

1. How do you try to help problem students realize that schoolwork, teachers, and school in general are important?
2. How do you attempt to get to know your students?

Total Behaviour

1. How do your discipline strategies deal with student behaviour?
2. How do your classroom management strategies deal with students' feelings?

Other

1. What is the purpose of classroom management?
2. What elements do effective classroom management strategies have?
3. When you are implementing classroom management, what is your immediate goal?
How successful are your classroom management strategies in achieving this goal?
4. How do you attempt to establish a strong relationship with your students through your classroom management strategies?
5. How do you think differently about a problem student than a student who typically exhibits responsible behaviour?
6. How do you act differently with a problem student than with a student who typically exhibits responsible behaviour?

Responsibility

1. In your opinion, what kind of environment fosters responsibility in students?
2. How do your classroom management strategies promote responsibility?

Fieldnotes Reference Guide

Observation Notes	Theoretical Notes	Personal Notes
Accurate account of the physical environment: how the participants act: my interpretation of my own biases, that is, feelings, thoughts, and attitudes.	Ensure that I take an as open minded view of the issue as I can.	Gain as much insight as possible into my role as a researcher.

APPENDIX B: COVER LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

Dear Potential Participant:

I, Robert Paularinne, a Masters of Education student at Lakehead University, would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting on determining if elements of William Glasser's choice theory are apparent in the perceptions of a group of high school teachers regarding their concerns about behaviour management. Although some studies have been conducted regarding choice theory and classroom management, none have been applied to the Canadian school system.

The intent of this research project is (a) to explore teachers attitude concerning Glasser's choice theory and its usefulness in the classroom managing disputes and, (b) to explore how classroom management strategies based on Glasser's choice theory foster student responsibility. To accomplish this goal, I would like to sit down with you so that I may ask you two series of open-ended questions related to your presently used classroom management strategies and the effectiveness of these strategies in promoting student responsibility. The interview will require approximately 1 ½ hours (two interviews the first interview will last approximately 1 hour and the second interview will last approximately ½ hour each) of your time and will be recorded on tape and then transcribed by the interviewer. The interviewer will also take observation notes, theoretical notes, and personal notes related to the research topic as well as the research process.

There are no foreseeable physical or psychological risks that will occur as a result of the interview questions. Your participation, though greatly appreciate, is completely voluntary. As such, you may at any time choose not to answer one or more of the questions asked in the interview and are permitted to withdraw from the study at any time.

You will be given a pseudonym to ensure your participation in the study confidential. All information you provide will be shared only amongst researchers (myself as well as my thesis advisor, Dr. Karen Reynolds and my committee member, Dr. Mary Clare Courtland) and be securely stored at Lakehead University for five years. However, the findings of this project will be made available to you at your request upon the completion of the project. Your name, or any other identifying information, will not be revealed in any published materials.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (807) 767-1859, or at rppaular@lakeheadu.ca You may also contact my thesis advisor (Karen Reynolds) at 623-3132 or the Lakehead University's Research Ethics Board at 343-8283.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Participant Consent Form

My signature on this sheet indicates that I agree to participate in a study by Robert Paularinne, on determining if elements of William Glasser's choice theory are apparent in the perceptions of a group of high school teachers regarding their concerns about behaviour management and it also indicates that I understand the following:

1. I have received explanations about the nature of the study, its purpose, and procedures.
2. I am a volunteer and can withdraw at any time from the study
3. There is no apparent risk of physical or psychological harm
4. The data I provide will be securely stored at Lakehead University for seven years.
5. I will receive a summary of the project, upon request, following the completion of the project.
6. I will not be named, or identified in any way in any materials published as a result of this Study.
7. My interview will be recorded using a tape recorder and then transcribed by the researcher.

Signature of Participant

Date