

— QUALITY OF LIFE — IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Glasser Quality School: Process in Action

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BACKGROUND

The Glasser Quality School Committee appointed by the William Glasser International has been looking for current and improved ways to foster the systemic application of Choice Theory in schools throughout the world. The process, until now, has focused on the training of teachers and staff in Choice Theory through the traditional Basic Intensive and Practicum, Advanced Intensive and Practicum, and Certification. This new model is more cost effective for schools and focuses on systemic improvement. It offers each school more autonomy in declaring itself either a Glasser Quality School (GQS) or a Choice Theory School (CTS). Either nomenclature is considered a reference to the same model. The name adopted by the school will be the school's choice. Autonomy is understood as the capacity of the school to govern itself, taking into account relevant factors, such as William Glasser's books about education, William Glasser International's guidelines for schools, international rights of students, and innovative methods.

I. JOURNEY TO CO-VERIFICATION AND ENDORSEMENT

Schools interested in the GQS/CTS ideas can apply for William Glasser International membership to access resources based on Choice Theory and the community of educators who are integrating these ideas into their school systems. They can also pursue William Glasser International Quality School status through a process of co-verification. Quality School status requires school membership, but school membership does not require the school to be identified as a GQS/CTS. Membership and status provide a working relationship between William Glasser International and the school. Member schools are then able to network and learn from each other through numerous forms of communication.

MEMBERSHIP

School **memberships** are for one-year, two-year, or three-year terms with specific benefits including research, networking, and innovations. Applications can be made online. A school membership invites schools to network systemic educational structures, issues, and practices. School members have access to the digital version of the International Journal of Choice Theory and Reality Therapy and to the WGI newsletters. William Glasser International provides four [4] individuals with a username and password to access all these resources and the discussion forum.

A GLASSER QUALITY SCHOOL (GQS/CTS) MODEL

- A. Characteristics, which distinguish the Glasser Quality School/Choice Theory School from other Quality School Models,** serve as preliminary steps toward the accomplishment of self-declaration, co-verification, and endorsement.

The Glasser Quality School/Choice Theory School model includes three preliminary steps that are essential to the school in declaring itself as a GQS/CTS. These three approaches encapsulate the original criteria taught by Dr. William Glasser.

These are:

- 1. School environment is perceived as a joyful place based on trust, cooperation, and respect.**

Building and maintaining relationships that support learning are imperative in reducing or eliminating fear and coercion in the school community. Relationships are based on trust and respect whereby all discipline problems, not incident, have been eliminated. As a result, staff, students, administrators, and stakeholders all view the school as a joyful place.

- 2. Students, staff and parents are encouraged to learn Choice Theory and its application at school and in their lives.**

There is an emphasis on self-evaluation and feedback that is frequent, specific and results in making improvements in the learning process. The focus is on advancing communication towards internal control language and intrinsic thinking throughout the school.

- 3. Useful and meaningful work through Total Learning Competency.**

All students are instructionally supported until competency is achieved. All students do some quality work each year that is significantly beyond competence. The school curriculum focuses on the development of meaningful skills and competencies so that students can apply their knowledge to real life situations. By focusing on using and improving knowledge, the students learn to value competent work. In a school culture of learning, where competence is the minimum, students strive to go beyond competence since the focus is on intrinsic motivation. They increase their innovation and creativity which lead to the achievement of quality work.

PROCESS LEADING TOWARD SELF-DECLARATION AND ENDORSEMENT

This model of the journey towards a Glasser Quality School entails the following general phases to foster and facilitate the school's development.

PHASE 1: FAMILIARIZATION

This phase entails several actions by the school community to familiarize itself with the main concepts of systemic change, Glasser Quality school ideas, and the declaration process. Fundamental to the success of this model is that school leaders and a core group or critical mass of staff (hereafter called the Collaborative Leadership Team/CLT) are involved in the familiarization phase so that they can support and sponsor the ensuing phases. It is recommended that the leadership team include representatives of staff from various positions within the school.

Actions like reading and discussing Dr. Glasser's books on education, engaging in presentations/workshops about Glasser Quality Schools based on Choice Theory are some of the first steps. The school shall select a William Glasser International GQS Consultant who has a close relationship to the school community. The GQS Consultant facilitates dialogue and helps with the Preparation Phase.

An initial on-site or virtual visit by the GQS Consultant may be arranged during this phase. This visit is to collaborate with the school in assessing the school needs and then to support the CLT in the development of a specialized plan which may serve as a guide for the declaration process.

PHASE 2: COMMITMENT

This stage involves the school's collaborative leadership team to indicate in writing its interest in seeking GQS status. A letter includes the school's Vision Statement for the next 3-5 years that is aligned with a GQS/CTS model. The WGI GQS consultant, connected to the school in phase 1 of the declaration process, may continue to be available to support the school leadership team during this second phase and subsequent phases as well.

PHASE 3: DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

This phase entails training the collaborative leadership team with a minimum of the 3-day basic intensive course entitled, Teaching with Choice Theory, which emphasizes the initial development of Glasser's criteria for a Glasser Quality School outlined above. This basic

intensive training leading to Endorsement focuses on systemic changes required in the educational system to sustain the Glasser Quality School model

Teaching with Choice Theory includes:

- a. Understanding Choice Theory at a personal level in the context of student, staff, and parent relationships.
- b. Teaching Choice Theory to the school community.
- c. Applying Choice Theory in the learning environment, including the core ideas in lesson planning, and incorporating the concepts in personal relationships within the school community.
- d. Fostering personal well-being and mental health through Choice Theory language and communication.
- e. Establishing and maintaining trusting relationships that support learning for all.

- f. Creating and maintaining a friendly, joyful, trusting, and non-coercive environment in school. This may include class meetings, class contracts or agreements, respect and courtesy, focus on the caring relationship habits, and establishing need-fulfilling learning opportunities.
- g. Facilitating self-evaluation for students, colleagues, and parents through the process of listening, negotiating, and using dialogue consistent with Choice Theory.
- h. Practising role-play situations using CT/RT with students, colleagues, and parents.
- i. Implementing the Competence Based Classroom, including curriculum based on useful learning.
- j. Designing plans for grading in accordance to the GQS criteria and the implementation of meaningful formative and summative assessment tools and techniques.

ACTIONS

- A. CORE LEADERSHIP TEAM
- B. COLLABORATIVE COACHING
- C. MENTORING
- D. SUSTAINING GQS FROM WITHIN

A. CORE LEADERSHIP TEAMS

The core leadership team (CLT) meets frequently, a minimum of once a month for no less than 2-hour sessions, under the leadership of the CC facilitators that have taken the additional two-day training. At least 20 contact hours or 10 two-hour sessions throughout the year are recommended for this practicum learning. It is recommended that the CLT documents the dates, attendees, and substance of these meetings to provide relevant topics for discussion and learning with the WGI consultant.

- a. These sessions include the development of skills and non-coercive ways to be used immediately within the classroom to engage students. During this phase, CLT's begin applying the concepts in their classrooms and about the school, teaching children Choice Theory, collaboratively redesigning the environmental conditions, building community, and extending curriculum.
- b. The CLT develops a rubric for measuring school improvement and collecting baseline data for specific indicators of progress. The GQS Consultant guides the CLT and co-verifies accomplishments.
- c. The CLT and/or the CC facilitators discuss with the GQS consultant monthly via Skype or other means of communication.
- d. The GQS consultant serves to promote a cohesive and competent CLT throughout the first year with constancy of purpose and continuous support.

- B. Collaborative coaching, core leadership teaming, and mentoring options are ways to encourage teacher participation, collaboration, and integration of the main practices and application to school life.

After the 3-day basic course, a few participants from the core leadership team may offer their encouragement and support by becoming collaborative coaches (CC).

Collaborative Coaching in this context is a teacher-to-teacher classroom based activity. The professional relationship of coach and inviting teacher is non-hierarchical, non-coercive, and non-judgemental. The goal of collaborative coaching is for the coach and the inviting teacher to agree upon observation criteria resulting from an in-depth discussion about the teacher's beliefs about learning and teaching, the coach to gather the data through observation in the classroom, and subsequently to enable the inviting teacher to self-evaluate. Role reversal provides self-evaluation opportunities for both the coach and inviting teacher.

Selected by the CLT, the coaches take part in two [2] additional training days. These days focus specifically on how to facilitate GQS study groups formed from the core leadership team (CLT) and other interested staff, with the following in mind:

- a. Refine through extended practice the skills developed during the 3-day course ***Teaching with Choice Theory***.
- b. Learn to facilitate these skills with the rest of the leadership team and others.
- c. Develop skills as collaborative coaches for helping others learn to self-evaluate effectively.
- d. Develop facilitating skills for support, concept clarification, and open dialogue with staff as they attempt to implement the GQS model.

PHASE 4: ADVANCED TRAINING AND FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION

Once the CLT has successfully implemented the concepts and is ready to bring more interested staff on-board, the ***Master Teaching with Choice Theory*** course may be elected by this group. This course is an adaptation of the current Advanced Intensive Training to further develop the ideas in a more profound way. An approved WGI Master Instructor specialized in the GQS model will be arranged by the WGI Consultant. The ***Master Teaching with Choice Theory*** course emphasizes the following:

- a. Handling more complex classroom/counselling situations.
- b. Using lead management on purpose in all aspects of restructuring.
- c. Teaching Choice Theory to students, parents and the community.
- d. Becoming competent in using the Basic Concepts Chart of Choice Theory to explain any teaching or learning scenario.
- e. Using advanced tools and activities for the Competence Based Classroom model, integrated thematic learning, self- or student-directed study, cooperative learning, and student-led conferencing.
- f. Developing skills in conflict resolution, mediation, and negotiation using CT.
- g. Using advanced techniques for providing useful collaborative coaching and/or mentoring.
- h. Facilitating more effective self-management of students, colleagues, and parents.
- i. Fostering leadership skills in students.
- j. Preparing individual or group research projects that will indicate successful implementation.

C. MENTORING

The Collaborative Leadership Team members mentor staff who are interested in the ideas and who request support through modelling and the sharing of information.

This expands interest, invites and involves other staff members to actively participate in the school's vision and mission. Through Mentoring and/or Collaborative Coaching, staff and school community members will be encouraged to implement Glasser Quality School concepts in all aspects of school life.

D. SUSTAINING GQS FROM WITHIN

After the ***Master Teaching with Choice Theory*** has been completed, the CCs take part in two [2] additional days of training to develop project management skills on how to serve the school community in the restructuring process. This advanced training is aimed towards preparing leaders who are competent in sustaining the model over time within the school . Included are:

- a. More advanced skills and understanding of the change process presented in the ***Master Teaching with Choice Theory*** course.
- b. Implementation of the GQS model across all aspects of the school community.
- c. Understanding how to sustain the model in light of changes that impact the school community.

The CLT meets once or twice a month under the leadership of the designated CCs. At least 20 contact hours or 10 two-hour sessions throughout the year are suggested to insure continuous improvement. CCs may be asked to train additional staff, parents, community members, and also help other staff become competent collaborative coaches for their colleagues.

Staff continues to collect data for the rubric which measures school improvement and for the research indicators. Monthly meetings with the WGI GQS Consultant provide the constancy of purpose and support that the school requests.

TRAINING OF NEW GROUPS

The intention of this phase is to have more and more staff trained in Choice Theory. This new group begins at Phase 3 ***Teaching with Choice Theory***.

Because research guides the school's development, each participant of the CLT is encouraged to define a research project and methodology that documents continuous improvement. The school board and management collate and analyze the data throughout the first two years of implementation with the support of the WGI selected GQS consultant.

PHASE 5: SCHOOL DECLARATION AND MASTER GQS CERTIFICATION

Once the school believes it is in alignment with the new GQS model and agrees to be declared a GQS, then the school requests co-verification through William Glasser International. The GQS Consultant reviews the documentation and arranges a three [3] day school visit by the GQS Consultant and two [2] other instructors chosen by the school. The request includes a report based on the approved school rubric developed in phase 2 as a guiding document. This report will be written and may be accompanied by supporting evidence such as video reporting, interviews, survey results, to mention a few.

The staff, who have completed ***Master Teaching with Choice Theory***, are invited to demonstrate their research project directly related to school practices. Each staff member self-evaluates personal growth and continuous improvement. Upon completion of their demonstration and self-evaluation during the three [3] day school visit by the GQS Consultants, William Glasser International provides each member with a Master GQS Teacher Certificate.

During the three [3] day school visit, the WGI faculty members shall:

- a. Meet with the school board and initial core group to review data collected about the school's progress using the approved school's rubric.
- b. Meet with the initial core group participants for 2 to 3 days to co-verify their progress and provide useful feedback on their research projects and CT integration.
- c. Visit classes of the grade levels where the CTS model was implemented.
- d. Interview the students, faculty, and parents of the students involved in the Choice Theory implementation.
- e. Provide useful feedback to the school board, administration, and both the initial core group, and those school members involved in the second round of the Basic training about continuing their progress and improvement.
- f. Provide opportunities for staff who have completed ***Master Teaching with Choice Theory*** to demonstrate and self-evaluate their competencies in leadership of the systemic change process.
- g. Award certificates and celebrate success.

The WGI faculty members then send their report to the WGI GQS Committee for acknowledgement and feedback. The school receives a package from the WGI Executive Director, including a letter recognizing their Glasser Quality school status, along with a wall plaque as recognition of the school's accomplishment.

STATUS FOLLOWING DECLARATION AND ENDORSEMENT

Every two years the GQS school sends a report on their advancement, renewing their GQS/CTS status. Further training for new teachers and staff, advancement in their rubric, innovations, self-evaluation methodologies, and research data are included in this report. The school may request a face-to-face or online meeting with their WGI consultant at any time.

CONCLUSION

Although one Glasser Quality School Model has been provided, it does not preclude invitations to share other models and/or rubrics that have proven successful. Schools are welcomed to submit their own successful endeavours to William Glasser International, the specific processes that have created effective systems change, and the procedures they used and wish to share with the global community.

REFERENCES

The CRITERIA for a Quality School from *Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom* [page 282]. At a minimum, these are the six criteria for a Quality School.

1. All disciplinary problems, not incidents, will be eliminated in two years. A significant drop should occur in the first year.
2. At the time the school becomes a Quality School, achievement scores on state assessment tests should be improved over what was achieved in the past.
3. Total Learning Competence TLC means all grades below competence, for which is now a B, will be eliminated. Students will have to demonstrate competence to their teachers or to designate teachers' assistants to get credits for the grades or courses. All schooling will be eliminated and replaced by useful education.
4. All students will do some quality work each year – that is, work that is significantly beyond competence. All such work will receive an A or higher grades. This criterion will give hard-working students a chance to show that they can excel.
5. All staff and students will be taught to use Choice Theory in their lives and in their work in school. Parents will be encouraged to participant in study groups to become familiar with Choice Theory. A few of these groups will be led by teachers to start, but parent volunteers will be asked to take the groups over once they get started.
6. It will be obvious the end of the first year that this is a joyful school.

RECOMMENDED READING

Books by William Glasser, MD

Schools Without Failure

ISBN 0-06-090421-6

The Quality School

ISBN 0-06-095286-5

The Quality School Teacher

ISBN 0-06-095285-7

Choice Theory in the Classroom

ISBN 0-06-095287-3

Every Student Can Succeed

ISBN 158275051-3

For Parents and Teenagers

ISBN 0-06-000799-0

Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom

ISBN 0-06-093014-4

Booklets

CREATING THE Competence Based Classroom

[Available upon Request through William Glasser International]

The Glasser Quality School: A new approach to character education