

Quality Educational Programs, Inc.

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Teaching, Learning, And Assessment: Improving Student Achievement

**A Distance Learning Graduate Course
Featuring Dr. William Glasser,
Dr. Jane Bluestein, Dr. Hanoch McCarty,
and senior faculty members of
The William Glasser Institute**

Course Syllabus

This course was created with the cooperation of:

Truckee Elementary School

Glenshire Elementary School

River Oaks Elementary School

Seaquam Secondary School

Placer High School

Colfax High School

Natomas High School

The Oklahoma Education Association

The California Department of Education

The Quality Schools Consortium

The William Glasser Institute

Course Instructors:

Dr. William Glasser is well known for his many books on mental health and education, especially *Reality Therapy*, *Schools Without Failure*, *Positive Addition*, *Choice Theory in the Classroom*, *The Quality School*, and *The Quality School Teacher*, and *Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*. Dr. Glasser is the founder and president of the William Glasser Institute.

Dr. Jane Bluestein is author of *Being a Successful Teacher, Parents, Teens and Boundaries*, *Parents in a Pressure Cooker*, and the critically acclaimed *Mentors, Masters and Mrs. MacGregor*. Dr. Bluestein, an internationally renowned speaker, is on the board of the National Council for Self-Esteem, and specializes in programs that promote positive adult-child relationships.

Dr. Hanock McCarty is author of several books including *A Fourth Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *Acts of Kindness*, and *Growing Pains in the Classroom*. Internationally acclaimed as an author and lecturer, Dr. McCarty has presented thousands of workshops providing training in education, business, parenting, and personal growth.

Additional instruction by:

Robert Hoglund is co-author of *The School for Quality and Learning* and is the president and founder of the Center for Quality Education. He is a senior faculty member of the William Glasser Institute and conducts training seminars in both the education and business arenas.

Al Katz is a senior faculty member of the William Glasser Institute and is a consultant to schools, mental health organizations, and agencies throughout the United States. Formerly, he was an administrator, a school psychologist, a counselor, a classroom teacher, and the coordinator of the Class Meeting Program in the New York public school systems.

Kaye Mentley is co-author of *Quality is the Key* and is principal of Huntington Woods Elementary School in Wyoming, Michigan. She has been an educator for 20 years, is a faculty member of the William Glasser Institute, and provides training to principals and teachers throughout the United States.

Robert Sullo is author of *Teach Them to be Happy*, *I'm Learning to be Happy*, *Inspiring Quality in Your School*, and *New Beginnings: How to Become an Inspiring Teacher*. He is a school psychologist with 24 years experience in public education and is a senior faculty member of the William Glasser Institute.

“Teaching, Learning, and Assessment: Improving Student Achievement”

Rationale

The Challenge:

To truly improve student achievement, experts concur, the student must be the primary focus of all improvement efforts.

– *Improving Student Achievement*,
American Association of School Administrators

Meeting The Challenge:

While there is a rapidly growing consensus on the need to improve student achievement, many questions remain about how achievement is defined, how it is measured, and what factors enhance the possibility that students will choose to cooperate in the learning process. There are, however, certain factors that many educational experts agree are key to improving student achievement. One of those factors, identified in the foregoing statement by the AASA, is that students must be the focus of all improvement efforts. Improving achievement by focusing on students’ individual needs, strengths and interests is the subject of this course.

As the instructors in this course will point out, gaining a better understanding of students and their natural, intrinsic motivation is an important step in the process of improving student achievement. The following excerpt from the *Motivation and Learning* summarizes this view of motivation that is shared by Drs. Glasser, Bluestein and McCarty:

Whenever we feel a desire or need for something, we are in a state of motivation. Motivation is an internal feeling — it’s the

drive that some one has to do something. It is what makes teaching some students a joy and working with others so difficult.

Anyone who has taught knows the importance of student motivation. The best technology, curriculum, and assessments don't make a difference if the students don't want to learn. Great technology and curriculum may help by connecting with student interests, but if the students are more motivated to put their energy into something outside of learning, they will . . .

Almost without exception, every student is motivated to learn something. Unfortunately, many students are more motivated to learn things other than what we're trying to teach them. As teachers, we have seen students struggling to learn how to improve in their favorite sport, how to play a video game, how to drive, or how to solve a problem they're having at home or on the streets. The problem is that many students aren't motivated to learn what we're teaching . . .

If we're asking the question, "What can we do to motivate our students?" we're asking the wrong question. No one can motivate someone else, and yet, for years we've tried to motivate students. We've tried just about every trick that can be imagined . . . awards, points, rewards, demerits, grades, names on boards, honors, scholarships, certificates, time after school, report cards, notes to parents, calls home, stars, ribbons, money, and prizes.

Over the years, we've discovered extrinsic motivates can be powerful and work for short periods of time. Unfortunately, they soon become either not enough, or demotivators for many students, or both . . .

The struggle is not in how to motivate students to learn but in creating lessons and classroom environments that focus and attract students' intrinsic motivation; thus, increasing the likelihood student will actively engage in the learning.

Spence Rogers, Jim Ludington & Shari Graham,
Motivation and Learning

In this course, student "achievement" is meant to include both behavior and

learning. The instructors in this course look at the student as a “whole,” with the belief being that when students are presented lessons that are need-fulfilling and satisfying, they will have no reason to choose to otherwise fulfill their needs through disruptive behavior. Dr. Bluestein in an article entitled “Great Expectations: Helpful Hints for Beginning Teachers”:

You can create a warm and positive climate in your classroom by identifying and considering your students needs and interests. You can meet students’ needs for belonging and control by involving them in decisions that concern them. For example, allow students to choose which assignment to do first, or even with whom they would like to work . . . Simply being able to make choices may give some of your students a real boost in confidence and often improves chances for cooperation. Plus, making choices is an important step toward developing individual responsibility . . . a classroom that emphasizes responsibility and cooperation, in which you model the positive behaviors you would like them to demonstrate, tends to minimize the resistance that leads to so many classroom conflicts.

The challenge, then, addressed by this course, is how to reach out to students and to present lessons to them in a way that engages them in the learning process and results in responsible behavior and higher academic achievement.

Course Title

"Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Improving Student Achievement"

Course Description

"Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Improving Student Achievement " is a course designed to provide school professionals with the psychological knowledge base related to learning, motivation, and individual differences that contribute directly to improvements in the quality of student achievement and to provide guidance for the design of educational systems that would best support individual student learning and achievement. The course is based on the work of Dr. William Glasser (*The Quality School, The Quality School Teacher, Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*), Dr. Jane Bluestein (*Being a Successful Teacher, Parents, Teens, and Boundaries, Parents in a Pressure Cooker, Mentors, Masters and Mrs. MacGregor*), and Dr. Hanoch McCarty (*A Fourth Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul, Acts of Kindness, Growing Pains in the Classroom*).

Course Goal

The goal of this course is to have participants develop a framework that can guide decisions about content, environment, and opportunities for learning for the student in the classroom and that can help define a dynamic learning context that is continuously improving.

Course Outline

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

Session #1: The Challenge of Improving Student Achievement

Objectives: To have participants explore the challenge of improving student achievement through a student-centered approach to education; to have participant analyze the extent to which their current teaching is student-centered.

Video Program #1: "Improving Student Achievement: An Introduction."

Session #2: Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Objectives: To have participants examine an approach to classroom management that promotes responsibility and student engagement in learning; to have participants design and implement strategies to enhance student engagement in learning.

Video Program #2: "Promoting Responsibility and Learning, Part One."

Session #3: Behavior, Learning, and Boundaries

Objectives: To have participants establish a learning environment that is need fulfilling and success-oriented; to have participants design and implement strategies for improving the learning environment in their own teaching situation.

Video Program #3: "Promoting Responsibility and Learning, Part Two."

Session #4: Strategies for Improving Student Achievement, Elementary, and Middle School

Objectives: To have participants view approaches to creating and teaching engaging lessons at the elementary and middle school levels; to have participants adapt these approaches for use in their own teaching situations.

Video Program #4: "Strategies for Improving Student Achievement, Part One."

Session #5 Strategies for Improving Student Achievement, Secondary School

Objectives: To have participants view approaches to creating and teaching engaging lessons at the secondary school level; to have participants adapt these approaches for use in their own teaching situations

Video Program #5: "Strategies for Improving Student Achievement, Part Two."

Session #6: Connections: The Key to Effective Teaching, Part One

Objectives: To have participants consider Dr. Glasser's theory that making a positive connection with students is a prerequisite for effective instruction; to have participants create and implement a strategy for improving connections with students.

Video Program #6: "Glasser on Making Connections, Part One."

Session #7: Connections: The Key to Effective Teaching, Part Two

Objectives: To have participants evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy implement in the previous session; to have participants utilize information presented in this session to modify and improve that strategy.

Video Program #7: "Glasser on Making Connections, Part Two."

Session #8: Student-Teacher Relationships and Improving Achievement

Objectives: To have participants view strategies for improving student achievement and classroom relationships; to have participants evaluate and adapt these strategies for use in to their own teaching situations.

Video Program #8: "Connecting With Students."

Session #9: The Parents' Role in Improving Student Achievement

Objectives: To have participants learn how to develop connections with parents that foster improved student achievement; to have participants design and implement a plan to improve their connections with parents.

Video Program #9: "Connecting With Parents"

Session #10: Questioning Techniques that Promote Learning

Objectives: To have participants gain an understanding of questioning techniques that promote student involvement, enhance problem-solving skills and promote student engagement in learning; to have participants

utilize these techniques in their own teaching situations.

Video Program #10: "Class Meetings and Improving Achievement."

Session #11: A Student-Created Rubric for Quality

Objectives: To demonstrate to participants how students can be involved in the creation of a rubric for quality classroom work; to have participant guide their own students in creating a rubric for quality.

Video Program #11: "Quality Teacher, Quality Student, Quality Work."

Session #12: New Approaches to Assessing Student Achievement

Objectives: To have participants explore alternatives to traditional assessment techniques such as student self-evaluation, student-led parent conferences and student portfolios; to have participants utilize and evaluate one or more of these alternatives.

Video Program #12: "Involving Students in the Assessment Process."

Session #13: Using Stories to Improve Comprehension and Retention

Objectives: To have participants develop and utilize strategies for utilizing stories to enhance their lessons and improve student comprehension and retention of the information presented; to have students evaluate the effectiveness of these lessons.

Video Program #13: "Chicken Soup for Teachers and Students."

Session #14: An Appreciation of the Teacher's Role in Effective Education

Objectives: To have participants revisit the reasons they entered the teaching profession; to have participants gain an appreciation of critical role educators play in the future of our society.

Video Program #14: "Teachers Make the Difference."

Session #15: Developing a Blue Print for Change

Objectives: To have participants develop, implement, and evaluate a systematic plan that incorporates course concepts and techniques in a comprehensive plan designed to improve student behavior and learning.

Video Program #15: "Planning for Change."

Participant Characteristics

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

Instructional Materials

a.) Text:

The Course of Study will contain articles and chapter excerpts from the works of Dr. William Glasser, Dr. Jane Bluestein, Dr. Hanock McCarty, Robert Hogle, Al Katz, Kaye Mentley, and Robert Sullo.

b.) Course Videos (All videos are approximately 30 minutes in length.)

- Program #1 "Improving Student Achievement: An Introduction."
- Program #2 "Promoting Responsibility and Learning, Part One."
- Program #3: "Promoting Responsibility and Learning, Part Two."
- Program #4 "Strategies for Improving Student Achievement, Part One."
- Program #5: "Strategies for Improving Student Achievement, Part Two."
- Program #6: "Glasser on Making Connections, Part One."
- Program #7: "Glasser on Making Connections, Part Two."
- Program #8 "Connecting With Students."
- Program #9: "Connecting With Parents"
- Program #10: "Class Meetings and Improving Achievement."
- Program #11: "Quality Teacher, Quality Student, Quality Work."
- Program #12: "Involving Students in the Assessment Process."
- Program #13: "Chicken Soup for Teachers and Students."
- Program #14: "Teachers Make the Difference."
- Program #15: "Planning for Change."

c.) Course of Study.

This book contains summaries of course content, pre-video viewing activities, discussion questions, group activities, worksheets, classroom application assignments, and learning reports.

d.) Bibliography.

Learning Activities

Participants will complete activities that include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Submit a final paper.

Course Outcomes

Our courses been designed to provide a learning environment in which participants' individual and collaborative efforts result in positive change in the classroom. The courses are designed to promote a quality graduate educational experience through the attainment of the following outcomes:

To successfully complete the program, participants will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of current quality teaching theory and practices.
2. Work toward positive educational change in collaboration with colleagues, administrators, parents, and the community.
3. Develop, implement, and demonstrate proficiency in teaching strategies and learning activities that promote responsible student behavior.
4. Develop, implement, and demonstrate proficiency in teaching strategies and learning activities that improve student academic achievement.
5. Develop and utilize evaluative skills to critically analyze, adapt and continually improve instructional and managerial skills.
6. Develop skills to incorporate student self-evaluation in an approach to authentic and effective assessment.
7. Acquire the skills in building and utilizing learning networks that they may continue to utilize as lifelong learners.

Course Assessment

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

1. An evaluation of participant's 15 progress reports. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4.)
Each progress report will be evaluated for:
 - Completeness and quality of responses.
 - Accuracy of information.
 - Appropriateness of classroom application.
 - Quality of reflection.
2. An evaluation of participant's professional paper. (Outcomes 5, 6, and 7.)
The professional paper will be evaluated for:
 - Inclusion of required components.
 - Synthesis and analysis of course concepts.
 - Presentation in an organized, professional manner.

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