THE BELIEFS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE EFFECT OF STUDENT CHOICE ON ACHIEVEMENT AND BEHAVIOR

by

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A Master's Thesis/Project Capstone

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science in Education

Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education

State University of New York at Fredonia

Fredonia, New York

May 2017

State University of New York at Fredonia

Department of Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled The Beliefs of Elementary School Teachers on the Effect of Student Choice on Achievement and Behavior by Emma Christine Hayes, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.

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ABSTRACT

With educational implementations being utilized in schools, allowing students to make choices in their own learning is becoming a more difficult and daunting task. The purpose of my research is to discover new methods for creating a more student-choice centered curriculum in an elementary setting. I plan to use my research to gain new knowledge on how student-centered classrooms can affect student achievement and behavior. I distributed surveys that asked teachers to read statements that related to student choice in the classroom and respond with the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement. The results of my study found that many teachers in the surrounding area believe that giving students choice in their learning can lead to higher achievement and improved behavior.

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Introduction

With new curricula and modules being introduced into classrooms, students are getting less and less of a say in day-to-day classroom lessons and activities. When students are given a choice of what they are interested in learning, they are not only given the chance to pick a topic that they want to learn more about, but they can take into consideration their learning preferences. Quaglia and Corso (2014) wrote: "Interestingly, the majority of students agree that teachers are not willing to learn from students. We must break that culture of 'Teacher knows best.' Everyone takes their own opinions with the utmost seriousness. How strange then not to consider others' opinions of equal value" (p. 3). William Glasser (2010) believed that students and teachers must use Choice Theory to reach a common ground in establishing a supportive, caring environment and in building healthy relationships that contribute to school success (Cited in, N.A., p. 1). Once they've considered these ideas, they can decide what mode of instruction best suits their needs. Shoemaker (2016) commented: "When teachers give students choices as to how they will show what they have learned, students become better problems solvers, more creative, and more engaged" (p. 6). When students are involved in making decisions in the classroom, such as the topics they learn about or assignments they must complete, it gives them the ability to cater to their own learning preferences In her article, Richmond (2014) quotes a senior from a New Hampshire high school that has turned to a student-centered classroom model who states, "I had to switch from a 'Here's your study guide and here's your answer sheet' to 'How do you want to learn the content, and how can we support you'" (Quoted in Richmond, p. 3)? Helping make decisions also causes students to become more invested in their own learning because they feel involved in the process.

Through my research, I hope to determine how teachers in the surrounding school districts view this idea of student-centered learning. Teachers often balk at the idea of a student-centered classroom because they fear that giving students different choices will take away their authority (Turner, 2010). However, there are many ways to give students choices in their learning without giving away the teacher's role as head of the class. For example, when a teacher is nearing the end of a unit on the American Revolution, rather than have the entire class complete the same project, the teacher could create a list of various final projects that the students could choose from. This would allow students to pick a final project that fits their needs and interests and gives them the chance to show what they have learned in a way that is comfortable for them. My research will help me discover different and effective ways to give my students a choice in the ways in which they are assessed.

For students in any grade, learning is a social act. Teachers and students work together to create knowledge when students are given the option of choice, rather than teachers droning on about content and information, which will not give students a reason to pay attention to the material or the teacher. Alber (2014) notes: "Co-constructing knowledge means giving up the 'myself and them' role of teacher and students and fully embracing the wonder and journey of us" (p. 1). Involving students in their learning allows them to gain real-life skills and independence, as well as the responsibility to be in charge of their own learning. Brown (2015) found that students spend almost an equal amount of time in the classroom as teachers, yet have little to no say in what goes on in them. She commented: "Policymakers must listen to students if they want to help schools get better faster" (p. 1). Engaging students in school discussions about curricula and other school matters will allow the students to feel heard and the school can understand student perspectives. At SXSW, an educational conference in Austin, Texas,

Subramaniam (2015) observed a panel called, "The Right to be Heard," during which the panel discussed ways to involve students who feel as though their voice cannot be heard and the ways in which schools can better listen to the needs and educational requests of its students (p. 2). This panel is an example of what should be happening in all of our schools, students and educators working together to create an environment where students are invested in their education and feel as though they have some control over their own learning. In order for this to happen, students need to feel comfortable sharing their ideas with their teachers and other educators. Maintaining an open and positive environment is the best way for students to feel like their ideas and opinions matter.

According to the research done by Felder and Brent (1996), many teachers and students are often uncomfortable with the idea of the students making [classroom] decisions because, since the first grade, teachers have been telling students what to do. When students are given choices about lessons or activities, it requires the teacher to design instruction using a variety of course materials such as videos, text-based resources, podcasts, hands-on modules, or human interactions (Shoemaker, 2010). Not every student is a visual or auditory learner, in student-choice centered classrooms, teachers must provide learning and assessment tools for many different types of learners so all students have an equal opportunity to show their growth. Hammond (2017) found that when students are exposed to a new concept, allowing them to have physical manipulatives can engage them and cause them to be more interested in the topic. For example, when beginning a unit on maps, allow students to look at and explore different maps, globes, and books about maps to peak their interest on the topic prior to the first lesson (p. 2).

Another aspect of student choice in the classroom that I will be delving into is classroom arrangement (e.g. desk formation, conventional desks or alternative seating, etc…) and whether

allowing students to choose their seating arrangement affects student behavior or achievement. Although turning to a student-centered environment can seem overwhelming, there are ways to change even the arrangement of the classroom that allows students to choose where they sit in order to give them the best opportunity to learn effectively. One way to do this is to provide alternative seating arrangements for students to utilize, like beanbag chairs, pillows, exercise balls, or kids wobble seats (chairs with one leg). In his review of Pleasantville elementary school, Svejkovsky (2016) found that this school has turned to alternative seating in hopes of finding ways for students to get up and moving in the classroom. Since trading desks and chairs for benches, stand-up desks, and stability balls for seating, teachers in this school have seen an increase in student focus and class involvement (p. 1). Teachers can still provide typical desks and chairs for students that prefer the standard seating arrangement. Providing this variety of options gives students the freedom to choose a seat that will best fit their needs.

Giving students choice in the classroom has been made more and more difficult in recent years. New curricula like the Common Core Standards (CCSS) and its accompanying modules have made it almost impossible for students to have any voice in their learning. According to Lisa Leith, PhD, from the School Improvement Network, the purpose of the CCSS is to, "Take time to know and understand every students' strengths and needs, communicate the highest level of expectations, set clear goals and targets, hold students accountable for their behavior and academic progress, and allow learning progression to drive teaching, learning, and RTI" (p. 3). The CCSS were created to define the specific reading and math skills at each grade level that students should be able to complete. However, after monitoring a group of students who had been taught using the CCSS from 5th grade until their graduations in 2016 (Singer, 2016), the results of their tests showed that, "The average performance of high school seniors dropped in

math and failed to improve in reading from 2013-2015. Performance was also down on both tests from 1992, the first year that similar tests were used" (p. 2). The CCSS, among other educational implementations, is just another example of how little choice exists in today's educational sphere.

When students are not invested in the topics they're learning in school, they become uninterested in their education. Wiggins (2013) found that when students are made to repeat the same tasks every day with different material, they get bored very quickly. One student that was interviewed stated, "I never really learned anything in [a 7th grade class]. I just memorized information, took a test on it and forgot everything. Imagine that cycle for an entire year. It was tremendously boring" (p. 1). If students do not see a connection between what they learn in the classroom and how they can relate it to their lives, they will lose interest in the topic. Being a substitute teacher for several school districts, I have a first hand look at how students are becoming less and less invested in their own learning. Once, in a first grade classroom, I was reading a dialogue that went along with pictures portraying the Battle of 1812 from a lesson in the Common Core module. The dialogue was a story in which a grandfather told his grandchildren about this particular war. Even though the story was grade level appropriate, halfway through the reading, the students began to get restless and ask how much longer until lunch or until the story was over or if they could go to the bathroom. It was easy to see that the majority of the students were no longer engaged in the lesson. I have been in many classrooms in many different grade levels and taught similar lessons and I have noticed the same disengagement as in that first class. As I taught each lesson, I also noticed that I was wasting a lot of lesson time to call students back to attention or keep them from distracting others since many had mentally "checked-out" of the lesson themselves. It wasn't until I came across the

research of William Glasser and his Choice Theory that I realized that forcing these topics on students gives them little to no opportunity to make a connection with the lesson or gain interest in learning about it. Whether they're third graders learning about Machu Pichu or first graders learning about monotheism, if the students don't have a choice in choosing those topics, they will have little to no interest to learn about them.

With the educational implementations being utilized in schools, allowing students to make choices in their learning is becoming a more difficult and daunting task. Through this research, I hope to gain insight on the ways in which teachers currently employed in elementary schools feel about the idea of student choice centered classrooms and whether they are effective in improving student achievement and behavior. This research project seeks to provide teachers with information regarding the ways that student choice centered classrooms effect student learning and achievement. I also plan to use my research to guide my own teaching methods. Providing students with an open and comfortable place to learn is my goal as an educator and, through this research, I will be able to get a glimpse into whether teachers are incorporating student choice into their classrooms and, whether they do or do not, the ways in which student achievement and behavior are affected.

Review of Literature

The purpose of my research is to determine how teachers in the surrounding school districts view the idea of student-centered learning. As I outlined in the previous section, I plan to use my research to gain knowledge about the ways in which student-centered classrooms can affect student achievement and behavior. Students do not have a lot of choice when it comes to their education, the curriculum they are taught, or even the way they learn the material. Richmond found, after studying a student-centered learning environment, that, before the switch

from teacher-centered school, "'There used to be a lot more teachers talking at you- it didn't matter if you were ready to move on. When the teacher was done with the topic, that was it (p. 1).'" If students are not invested in their educations, they have less incentive to care about what it is that they are learning. To lead my research, I will review studies done by other researchers in order to observe what knowledge has previously been collected. I must find studies that relate to student-centered classrooms, student-centered management, student achievement and behavior in student-centered classrooms, and Choice Theory and how it has been integrated in the classroom.

Choice Theory

Glasser's (1998) Choice Theory outlines the five basic needs that each person seeks to satisfy. These needs are survival, freedom, power, belonging, and fun. In many schools, fulfilling their need for freedom, power, and even fun is nearly impossible due to the lack of student choice in the classroom. In my personal experience as a substitute teacher, I have seen many elementary students walk into the classroom and say that they feel like they are in prison and that they cannot wait to leave because they do not enjoy the activities or lessons that they are learning. They lack the ability to satisfy their desire for power because every day, they are told what to do and where to go and they have no real say in the goings on in the classroom. Because they cannot fill these needs, it is unlikely that they will fill their need for fun because if they aren't interested in what they are being told to learn, they will not be engaged in the lessons. Gambrell (2011) lists choice as one of 7 factors leading to increased student engagement in reading. Louis (2009) believed that emotion is another major component when seeking to satisfy ones' needs, and thus emotion is a major component of learning. Students will feel strongly about a topic they are learning if they are interested in it. It is the job of the teacher to lead students towards having a positive outlook on their education. By giving students the opportunity

to make choices about their education, they can satisfy their need for freedom and power because they have control over their learning and that will cause them to become engaged.

Giving students choice is a difficult task in the classroom. In order to create an environment where students have the opportunity to make choices, teachers must get used to teaching in a student-centered classroom. This can be a daunting task due to the amount of preparation that must be done. However, Lasry, Charles, and Whittaker (2014) observed eight teacher-centered instructors teach in student-centered classrooms. They found that, while a couple of the teachers preferred a conventional classroom, many of the teachers observed had no problem modifying their teaching practices. When asked, half of the instructors responded that they felt more inspired to find new ways of teaching after being in a student-centered classroom. Student-centered classrooms benefit the students because they can make choices in their own education but this arrangement also benefits the teacher. When students are enjoying a lesson or activity, it can cause the teacher to be inspired to create more engaging tasks. One instructor that was observed in the study noted the vast change between teacher-centered and student centered environments, "[Now] It's completely different… when I get them to do an activity it's not like you have to encourage them to actually do it. They just go right in. In fact it's hard to stop them. The problem now is that once they get going they don't want to stop. Um so, so yeah there's been a complete difference (Quoted in Lasry, et al., p. 7)." In a teacher-centered classroom, students are conditioned to submit to the rules and regulations of the teacher. They are conditioned to raise their hands, wait to be called on, ask to go to the bathroom, etc… These procedural interactions can cause students to become passive and resigned (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979). When students are engaged in their learning, they will have more desire to participate and learn in class.

With the shift in instructional approach, going from a teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered classroom, Garrett (2008) says that a shift in classroom management is also necessary to maintain a balance between teacher and students. This person-centered management would be orientated toward classroom management featuring shared leadership, community building, and a balance between the needs of the teacher and students. In a student-centered environment, students help to create their classroom rules and guidelines, they can be responsible for different jobs around the classroom or throughout the day, and they can have the freedom to move around the classroom (e.g., using to the bathroom, sharpen a pencil). Giving students jobs or including them in making classroom rules can cause them to feel responsible for their own education and become engaged in their learning. Garrett (2008) states that, after observing five elementary school, student-centered classrooms, the student-centered instruction directly caused a more positive learning environment. "Students who are participating in challenging and meaningful activities have little need or opportunity to be off task or distracted (p. 9)." To implement more student-centered management, teachers must work with students to foster self-regulation and problem solving skills. In a student-centered classroom, students must learn to solve their own problems without tattling to the teacher because, in this environment, the teacher is meant to be a facilitator of learning (p. 39).

The teacher's role in the typical classroom is one of authority, telling students what is to be done at any point in the day. In a teacher-centered classroom, teachers rely on direct guidance to get the information across to the students. According to Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006), direct guidance refers to "providing information that fully explains the concepts and procedures that students are required to learn as well as learning strategy support that is compatible with human cognitive architecture" (p. 75). If teachers give students information without having them

discover it for themselves, they will not retain it long term. Students will have no interest in learning more about a topic if they are not engaged in the way that they are being exposed to the material. Ding and Xiaobow (2014) found that, in student-centered classrooms, students should lead discussions with teachers guiding students through topics and towards main ideas (p. 370). This shift in instruction means that teachers will have to give up some of their role as total leader and let students have more responsibilities in the classroom. "Research has reported that when teachers successfully implement facilitating guidance, such as using talk moves flexibly (Chapin et al. 2009), appropriately orchestrating classroom discussions (Stein et al. 2008), and eliciting student explanations (Webb et al. 2009), student learning can be enhanced (p. 2)." Rather than implementing direct guidance, teachers should facilitate guidance and lead the students through the lessons as opposed to just giving them all the information at once. Teachers should guide discussions and ask students questions to obtain deeper meanings (Harris et al., 2011). When students are allowed to explore and find out new information for themselves, it causes them to try to find new and alternate ways to solve a problem based on their informal understanding (Carpenter et al. 1996; Franke and Kazemi 2001). Explaining their ideas in detail or challenging another students' explanations engages students in classroom discussions, which will result in a deeper understanding of the concepts.

After reading current studies regarding William Glasser's Choice Theory and student-centered classrooms, I have found that the majority of studies find that these student-centered classrooms help to create a positive classroom environment, as well as cause students to become more engaged in their learning. While reviewing the literature related to my topic, I found that there is a lack of knowledge about the correlation of the implementation of Choice Theory in the classroom and student behavior or achievement. Many of the studies I have reviewed discuss

engagement in a student-centered classroom, but none have questioned these aspects of Choice Theory. This gap in knowledge will guide my research towards answering the question, how is student behavior and achievement affected by the implementation of Choice Theory in the classroom? In the next section, I will discuss the methods that I will use in order to assess the overall opinion of elementary school teachers in local schools about Choice Theory and student-centered classrooms.

Methodology

In the previous section, I reviewed studies that focused on the idea of student choice in the classroom. I found that the majority of studies find that these student-centered classrooms help to create a positive classroom environment, as well as cause students to become more engaged in their learning. In order to answer my primary research question – what are teachers' beliefs about the implementation of Choice Theory in the classroom? – I contacted current classroom teachers and asked them about whether they utilize this strategy, what their thoughts are about it, and if they believe implementing Choice Theory is an effective technique in increasing student achievement and positive behavior. The purpose of this study is to determine how teachers in the surrounding school districts view the idea of student-centered learning. I plan to use my research to gain new knowledge on how student-centered classrooms can affect student achievement and behavior. To collect all of this data, I sent out a survey to teachers, posing statements about which teachers must determine whether they agree or disagree as well as the degree to which they feel about their response.

Research Frameworks

Given the needs of the primary line of inquiry of how student choice in the classroom effects student achievement and behavior in my study, I utilized a mixed methods design to

collect my data. In order to get an overall sense of teacher's beliefs about student choice in the classroom, they were asked to respond to a series of statements to which they could strongly agree, agree, remain neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree. This quantitative data allowed me to determine how teachers in differing schools and grade levels felt about the effect of student choice on achievement and behavior. The teachers were asked to write a response where they could explain whether they believed that allowing students to have a say in the classroom could affect student behavior and achievement. This qualitative data allowed me to understand the reasoning behind why the teachers responded in the way that they did in the first section of the survey.

Research Settings and Subjects

In order to cover a wide range of teachers in differing grade levels teaching students with differing abilities, I sent the surveys to three schools for whom I substitute teach, these schools will henceforth be referred to as Schools A, B, and C. The first school to which I sent the surveys was School A. School A is an urban school with high student needs in relation to district resource capacity. It is made up of 249 students, grades K-5, and the average class size is about 22 students. Of the total 249 students; 0.8% are American Indian, Alaskan, Asian, or Pacific Islander, 12.0% are black (not Hispanic), 53.0% are Hispanic, and 34.1% are white (not Hispanic). Of the total students, 12.9% of students are eligible for reduced lunch while 53.0% are eligible for free lunch.

School B is a suburban school that caters to 518 students grades K-4. 263 of these students are male while 255 are female. Of the total number of students, 1% are black/African American, 12% are Hispanic or Latino, 1% are Asian or Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 82% are

white, and 4% are multicultural. 4% of the K-4 students are English Language Learners, 13% are students with disabilities, and 45% of students are economically disadvantaged. 39% of the student population is eligible for free lunches and 3% are eligible for reduced priced lunches. The teachers that participated in this survey included both general and special education classrooms. This would give me data from the perspectives of teachers of differing age ranges, grade levels, and years of experience.

School C is an urban school with 236 students, 119 male and 117 female. Of the total number of students, 6% are black or African American, 46% are Hispanic or Latino, 42% are white, and 7% are multiracial. 12% of students are English Language Learners and 6% are students with disabilities. 72% of the total number of students are economically disadvantaged. The average class size of School C is 21 students.

Sampling Procedures

After receiving approval from the Human Subjects Review Committee, I contacted the principals of each school that I was attempting to survey. Following the confirmation from said principals allowing my research, I distributed a letter of intent explaining the research and why it was pertinent that each teacher fill out and return the surveys (See Appendix C). Included in this letter was an explanation of Choice Theory and how it can be used in the classroom. The surveys (See Appendix D) were distributed based on school to keep the data from getting mixed-up, otherwise, they were completely. In order to collect the surveys, an envelope was left with a secretary in the main office where teachers could drop them off to be picked up on April 7th. The only criteria that I used to select these participants for this study was that the participants had to be an employee of the school who regularly worked with a group of students, K-5.

Data Collection

By distributing the surveys to each school, I was able to determine the overall opinion of teachers about Choice Theory and its implementation in the classroom. According to the Child Care and Early Education Research Connection (2016), "Survey sampling is a cost-effective and efficient way to collect information about a population. [This method] makes it possible to accurately estimate the characteristics of a target population without interviewing all the members of the population" (p. 1). However, a disadvantage of using surveys is that, the researcher is not able to develop an intimate understanding of individual circumstances that might be the cause of their particular opinions. In order to address this downside and continue my research, I could evaluate the teacher responses to the surveys and interviewed the teachers who responded the most negatively and the most positively towards Choice Theory. These interviews could provide me with qualitative data regarding the specific reasons that teachers do and do not implement this method in their classrooms. Kajornboon (2016) stated that, "Interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people and are another way to collect data from individuals through conversation" (p. 2). In addition to individuals being able to express their ideas through their own point of view, interviews allow participants to discuss their perception and interpretation in regards to a given situation.

In the survey, teachers were asked to read 10 to 15 statements and respond as it relates to their current classroom experience. The statements included in this survey were related to different aspects of teaching with and without Choice Theory in the classroom. Statements such as the following were included in the survey:

- "I feel comfortable allowing my students to choose their own seats in the classroom during direct instruction"

- "At the end of a unit, I prefer to have students each complete the same final assessment"

- "At the end of a unit, I like to provide students with options of final assessments to choose from"

Based on these questions, teachers chose from the following options to determine the varying levels of agreement that they felt towards these statements: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree. The teachers were then asked to write two to three sentences describing whether they believed that allowing students make choices in their learning leads to increased achievement and improved behavior.

Data Analysis

Once the surveys were collected, the teachers' responses were graphed by question according to the frequency of teachers that chose each option. This data was used to determine teachers' feelings and beliefs about the implementation of Choice Theory in the classroom. After the surveys were collected, I graphed the responses to each statement by the number of teachers that chose each option, "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," "Neutral," "Agree," "Strongly Agree." The teachers' written responses were evaluated and compared to the responses from the teachers at the remaining two schools.

Conclusions

When determining the type of approach I wanted to take while researching my primary research question, I thought about the kind of information I wanted to collect and about the best way to use that data in order to answer my research question. One option I considered was going into classrooms that did and did not implement Choice Theory in their day-to-day activities. I would assess the behavior and achievement of the students and teachers to determine the impact

of this method of teaching. Since the research question is determining the ways in which teachers feel about student-centered learning, I determined that this approach to research would not allow me the broad reach or variety of responses about the topic that I was looking for with this research. Another method I considered was the Ground Theory Resources method by creating my own theory about Choice Theory in the classroom and implementing it myself. With this approach I could assess the impact of this teaching style with the students' achievement and overall outlook on learning. However, due to time restraints and a lack of a class to properly conduct this experiment, I decided to take my research in a different direction. The ultimate reason I chose to conduct my research through a survey was that sending out many surveys to several different schools might allow an increased likelihood to 1) have a larger response from teachers and 2) get a wider variety of data from schools in different districts and different economic areas.

By surveying teachers in the area about their beliefs on the impact of Choice Theory on students' achievement and behavior, I have been able to gain a deeper understanding of the pros and cons of using this method in the classroom. Through my research, I have also had the opportunity to explore more methods for creating a student-centered learning environment. The survey determined the popularity of this technique in each school district and the written responses gave insight as to the reasons that teachers feel one way or the other about implementing Choice Theory in the classroom. In the following section, I will discuss my findings and the data from the surveys once they are collected and reviewed. I will also discuss any limitations or conflicting data that I came across in my research to determine elementary school teachers' beliefs about student choice in the classroom.

Results

In the previous section I discussed the research frameworks, data collection, and analysis procedures that I planned to put in place in this study of teachers' beliefs regarding student choice in the classroom. I distributed surveys that asked teachers to read statements and respond with the level to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement. I decided to return two weeks after I had disseminated the surveys in order to give the teachers ample time to complete them. After I collected them on the final day, I sorted the surveys first by school, then by grade. I charted the data displayed in Tables 2, 3, and 4 below by tallying the responses to each question by the number of teachers from each grade level for each school individually, then as a whole group as seen in Table 5. The teachers surveyed were also asked to write short responses to two questions at the end of the survey. In this section I will summarize the responses to these short answer questions, as well as, discuss the results of the data collected in the first section of the survey and any conflicting data or limitations that I encountered in this process.

Survey Data

Table 1 below is a comprehensive list of each question asked on the survey. The teacher responses to each question were counted and charted on Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Table 1

Q.1- I prefer to choose the seating arrangement in my classroom

Q.2- Students learn more effectively when the curriculum is taught as mandated by the state

Q.3- Students learn more effectively when they work in groups with their peers

Q.4- Hands-on activities help my students gain a better understanding of the material

Q.5- Students learn more effectively when they work independently

Q.6- Students are allowed to choose their method of assessment (i.e. video projects, short stories, posters, etc…)

Q.7- My classroom has firm guidelines that all students must obey

Q.8- Students should be given a choice in topics they are taught

Q.9- Students retain information long-term by taking tests and quizzes

The results collected from School A can be seen in Table 2 below. The data from these surveys showed that that, although the majority of these teachers favored hands-on, group activities, only one of four (25%) teachers strongly agreed with Q.8 found in Table 1. One teacher (25%) strongly disagreed and the final two (50%) remained neutral. Items such as Q.3 and Q.4, which skew towards a hands-on, whole group centered classroom received a positive response with Q.3 receiving 25% of teachers strongly agreeing, 25% agreeing, and 50% remaining neutral to the statement. Q.4 received 50% of teachers strongly agreeing and 50% agreeing with the statement. However, questions such as Q.6 and Q.8, which were Choice Theory based statements, received more of a variety of responses. 50% of teachers remained neutral to Q.6 while 25% agreed with the statement and 25% disagreed. Q.8 showed 50% remaining neutral while 25% strongly agreed with the statement and 25% strongly disagreed. Conflicting data such as this proves that teachers in different grade levels can have differing perspectives on the teaching style that works for the groups of students that they work with. Q.2 showed that 50% of teachers disagreed with this statement, 25% strongly disagreed, and 25% remained neutral. Q.5 and Q.9 both showed that 50% of teachers disagreed with each statement and 50% remained neutral. Based on the responses to the survey, it is clear that these teachers mostly prefer student centered learning environments; they prefer to retain control of the classroom and the topics and assignments that are implemented.

Table 2- School A

Q.1	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade					1
Second Grade					
Third Grade				1	
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades				2	

Q.2	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade			1		
Second Grade					
Third Grade	1				
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades		2			

Q.3	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade			1		
Second Grade					
Third Grade					1
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades			1	1	

Q.4	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade					1
Second Grade					
Third Grade				1	
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades				1	1

Q.5	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade			1		
Second Grade					
Third Grade		1			
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades		1	1		

Q.6	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade		1			
Second Grade					
Third Grade			1		
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades			1	1	

Q.7	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade					1
Second Grade					
Third Grade				1	
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades				2	

Q.8	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade			1		
Second Grade					
Third Grade					1
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades	1		1		

Q.9	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					
First Grade		1			
Second Grade					
Third Grade		1			
Fourth Grade					
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades			2		

The data collected from School B can be seen in Table 3 below. The data from these

surveys showed that that the majority of teachers surveyed believed that students should have a

choice in their learning with four of five (80%) teachers strongly agreeing with Q.8 and one

teacher (20%) remaining neutral. Items such as Q.3 and Q.4, which skew towards hands-on,

whole group centered classrooms, received a positive response with Q.3 receiving 100% of

teachers agreeing with the statement. Q.4 received 60% of teachers strongly agreeing, 20%

agreeing, and 20% strongly disagreeing with the statement. However, questions such as Q.6 and

Q.8, which were Choice Theory based statements, received a mixed response from the teachers.

100% of teachers remained neutral to Q.6, while Q.8 showed 80% agreed with the statement and

20% remained neutral. This shows that even though these teachers believed that students should

have a choice in what they learn, the teachers prefer to have the final say in the methods of

assessment. Q.2 showed that 80% of teachers disagreed with this statement, while 20% strongly

disagreed. Q.5 received 40% of teachers disagreeing with this statement, 40% remaining neutral,

and 20% in agreement. Q.9 showed that 60% of teachers disagreed with the statement, 20%

strongly disagreed, and 20% agreed. The responses to these questions show that overall, the

teachers in School B prefer a student-centered learning environment.

Table 3- School B

Q.1	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten				1	1
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade			1		
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades			1	1	

Q.2	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1	1			
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade		1			
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades		2			

Q.3	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten				2	
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade				1	
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades				2	

Q.4	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten				1	1
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade					1
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades	1				1

Q.5	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten		1	1		
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade		1			
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades			1	1	

Q.6	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten		1	1		
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade			1		
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades			2		

Q.7	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten				2	
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade			1		
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades		1		1	

Q.8	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten				2	
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade			1		
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades				2	

Q.9	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten		2			
First Grade					
Second Grade					
Third Grade					
Fourth Grade	1				
Fifth Grade					
Multiple Grades		1		1	

The data collected from School C can be seen in Table 4 below. The data from these

surveys showed that there was variety of responses to the question of whether students should

have more choice in their learning with four of eight (50%) teachers agreeing with Q.8, 12.5%

remaining neutral, 25% disagreeing and 12.5% strongly disagreeing. Items such as Q.3 and Q.4,

which skew towards hands-on, whole group centered classrooms, received a positive response

with Q.3 receiving 50% of teachers agreeing with the statement, 12.5 strongly agreeing, 12.5%

remaining neutral, 12.5% disagreeing, and 12.5% strongly disagreeing. Q.4 received 37.5% of

teachers strongly agreeing with the statement, 50% agreeing, and 12.5% remaining neutral.

However, questions such as Q.6 and Q.8, which were Choice Theory based statements, received

a mixed response from the teachers. 12.5% of teachers agreed with Q.6, 37.5% remained neutral, 25% disagreed, and 25% strongly disagreed. Q.8 showed that 50% agreed with the statement, 12.5% remained neutral, 25% disagreed, and 12.5% strongly disagreed. This shows that even though these teachers believed that students should have a choice in what they learn, the teachers prefer to have the final say in the methods of assessment. Q.2 showed that 25% of teachers agreed with this statement, 37.5% remained neutral, 25% disagreed, and 12.5% strongly disagreed. Q.5 received 37.5% of teachers disagreeing with this statement, 37.5% remaining neutral, and 25% in agreement. Q.9 showed that 25% of teachers strongly disagreed the statement, 50% strongly disagreed, and 25% agreed. The responses to these questions show that overall, the majority of teachers surveyed prefer a student-centered classroom, but continue to retain control over class assignments. The conflicting data in this survey came from a teacher who most likely works with a group of students who require a more strict, teacher centered environment, proving that teachers must change their management and teaching styles based on the different groups of students with which they work.

Table 4- School C

Q.1	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten					1
First Grade					
Second Grade				1	
Third Grade					1
Fourth Grade				1	
Fifth Grade					1
Multiple Grades		1		2	

Q.2	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1				
First Grade					
Second Grade			1		
Third Grade				1	
Fourth Grade			1		
Fifth Grade				1	
Multiple Grades		2	1		

Q.3	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1				
First Grade					
Second Grade				1	
Third Grade			1		
Fourth Grade				1	
Fifth Grade		1			
Multiple Grades				2	1

Q.4	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten			1		
First Grade					
Second Grade					1
Third Grade				1	
Fourth Grade				1	
Fifth Grade				1	
Multiple Grades				1	2

Q.5	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten		1			
First Grade					
Second Grade		1			
Third Grade			1		
Fourth Grade		1			
Fifth Grade			1		
Multiple Grades			1	2	

Q.6	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1				
First Grade					
Second Grade		1			
Third Grade	1				
Fourth Grade			1		
Fifth Grade				1	
Multiple Grades		1	2		

Q.7	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten				1	
First Grade					
Second Grade				1	
Third Grade				1	
Fourth Grade				1	
Fifth Grade				1	
Multiple Grades				1	2

Q.8	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1				
First Grade					
Second Grade				1	
Third Grade		1			
Fourth Grade			1		
Fifth Grade		1			
Multiple Grades				3	

Q.9	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1				
First Grade					
Second Grade		1			
Third Grade			1		
Fourth Grade		1			
Fifth Grade		1			
Multiple Grades	1	1	1		

The comprehensive data collection from all three schools can be seen in Table 5 below. Based on the responses to the surveys, the majority of teachers surveyed in all three schools implement a student-centered learning environment. The majority of teachers had varying levels of agreement towards statements such as Q.3, Q.4, and Q.8, which skewed towards hands-on and group activities and whether students should have a choice in what they learn. Q.3 showed that 11.76% of teachers surveyed strongly agreed with the statement, 58.82% agreed, 17.64% remained neutral, 5.88% disagreed, and 5.88% strongly disagreed. Q.4 showed that 47.06% of teachers surveyed strongly agreed with the statement, 41.18% agreed, and 5.88% remained neutral. Q.8 showed that 5.88% of teachers surveyed strongly agreed with the statement, 47.06% agreed, 23.53% remained neutral, 11.76% disagreed, and 11.76% strongly disagreed. Questions

that leaned toward a teacher-centered classroom (e.g., Q.2 and Q.5) showed a variety of

responses from the teachers surveyed. Q.2 showed that 11.76% of teachers surveyed agreed with

the statement, 23.53% remained neutral, 47.06% disagreed, and 17.65% strongly disagreed. Q.5

showed that 17.65% of teachers surveyed agreed with the statement, 41.18% remained neutral,

and 41.18% disagreed. In Table 5 below, it is clear to see that grade level had an impact in the

responses of the teachers surveyed. Kindergarten, first and second grade teachers would be more

hesitant to allow their students to choose their curricula because they might feel that students that

young require a more structured environment. The results of the surveys show that the majority

of schools surveyed teach using a more student-centered environment where students are

encouraged to work in groups and have a choice in the topics that that they learn.

Table 5- Whole Group

Q.1	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten				1	2
First Grade					1
Second Grade				1	
Third Grade				1	1
Fourth Grade			1	1	
Fifth Grade					1
Multiple Grades		1	1	5	

Q.2	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	2	1			
First Grade			1		
Second Grade			1		
Third Grade	1			1	
Fourth Grade		1	1		
Fifth Grade				1	
Multiple Grades		6	1		

Q.3	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1			2	
First Grade			1		
Second Grade				1	
Third Grade			1		1
Fourth Grade				2	
Fifth Grade		1			
Multiple Grades			1	5	1

Q.4	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten			1	1	1
First Grade					1
Second Grade					1
Third Grade				2	
Fourth Grade				1	1
Fifth Grade				1	
Multiple Grades	1			2	4

Q.5	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten		2	1		
First Grade			1		
Second Grade		1			
Third Grade		1	1		
Fourth Grade		2			
Fifth Grade			1		
Multiple Grades		1	3	3	

Q.6	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1	1	1		
First Grade		1			
Second Grade		1			
Third Grade	1		1		
Fourth Grade			2		
Fifth Grade				2	
Multiple Grades		1	5	1	

Q.7	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten				3	
First Grade				1	1
Second Grade				1	
Third Grade				2	
Fourth Grade			1	1	
Fifth Grade				1	
Multiple Grades		1		4	2

Q.8	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1			2	
First Grade			1		
Second Grade				1	
Third Grade		1			1
Fourth Grade			2		
Fifth Grade		1			
Multiple Grades	1		1	5	

Q.9	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Kindergarten	1	2			
First Grade		1			
Second Grade		1			
Third Grade		1	1		
Fourth Grade	1	1			
Fifth Grade		1			
Multiple Grades	1	1	3	1	

Short Response Data

The final question on the survey was a short response question: How do you think allowing students to have a choice in what they learn and how they are assessed would affect their behavior or achievement?

In the responses from the teachers at School A, I found that the majority of teachers surveyed were in favor of giving students the ability to choose different aspects of the ways that they learn or are assessed. One third-grade general education teacher wrote that, "I think if a student can choose how they are assessed it will be a more accurate demonstration of what they know. Student choice will also promote student engagement." This teacher also mentioned the possibility that, "choice-based learning cuts down on behavior problems. Less behavior problems leads to higher achievement." Another teacher surveyed added to this idea responding:, "I think participation would increase as well as their skills and being focused which leads into their behavior and achievement." This teacher also wrote that allowing students to choose the topics they want to learn about can make them want to learn and "not bore the students." However, one teacher understood the value of the amount of planning that must go into creating this student-choice centered environment. They responded:

I think there would be increased motivation and desire to learn. However, I also think that

this may leave many opportunities to lose control. I think choice is good but it needs to be

responsible and structured.

Overall, the teachers from School A were in favor of student-centered learning and believed it

can lead to higher student achievement and behavior but understood that this style of teaching

takes planning and structure to be successful.

While surveying the responses to the short answer question from School B, I found that

many teachers agreed with the idea that giving students choice in the classroom can increase

motivation and engagement, therefore increasing achievement and improving behavior. One

kindergarten teacher responded that, "Students would be actively engaged and invested in their

learning. Children would have ownership of their learning (with guidance)." This idea correlates

with the ideal that if students get to choose what they learn, they will feel responsible for their

learning. Another teacher added that,

If students could select topics to learn they would be more engaged in learning because it

is an area of interest. They would be motivated to learn which will increase achievement

and hopefully improve behavior.

The teachers in School B are in agreement that giving students choice in their learning improves

both achievement and behavior. They also added to the idea that giving students choices in their

learning causes them to feel ownership over their education.

The responses to this question from School C were much more varied than those from

Schools A or B. Many of the teachers surveyed believed that allowing students to choose would

lead to an increase in achievement and an improvement in behavior. One teacher responded that,

"Students would be interested in what they are learning and therefore would be more engaged and participate more. Behaviors would improve, as well as achievement. This is often seen in science class." Another teacher added that, "selecting topics involves them in the first step of learning… Cooperative behavior and achievements might be more attainable if the student is part of the planning." However, some teachers were skeptical of this method of teaching due to factors such as grade-level. One kindergarten teacher responded that, "It would be chaos and a lot of disruptive behaviors at this grade-level. I also feel that my students would not be able to pick what they learn or how to be assessed in kindergarten." This response conflicts with the data that I've collected thus far, but grade-level could factor into the ability to implement student-centered learning. Another teacher brought up the idea that maintaining an effective student-centered learning environment would be a lot of work for one teacher. This same teacher disagreed with Q.6 and Q.8, as indicated in Table 4 above, saying that they did not believe students should be given a choice of the topics they are taught or how they are assessed. They also agreed with Q.2, showing that they believed that students learn more effectively when they are taught as mandated by the state. Overall, however, the majority of teachers surveyed at School C believed that allowing students to have a choice in the classroom increases motivation and participation, thereby increasing achievement and improving behavior.

Conclusions

Based on the overall responses from this survey, both qualitative and quantitative, I have found that the majority of teachers in this area that were surveyed, believe that student-centered learning environments are beneficial for students, because it allows students to be more engaged, enjoy their learning, and feel ownership over their education. They believed that this environment would lead to an increase in achievement and an improvement in behavior.

However, some data conflicted with the idea that this method leads to student achievement and improved behavior, with teacher responses commenting on the amount of work and planning that must go into creating this environment for students. Grade-level was mentioned as a factor that can exclude certain grades from implementing this method effectively. Though some of this data is conflicting, the majority of teachers surveyed in this area support the idea that student-centered learning environments lead to an increase in student achievement and improved behavior.

Based on the results of my study, I have found that many teachers that were surveyed agree that allowing students to have more choice in their learning leads to higher achievement and better behavior. In the following section, I will compare the results of my study to studies and research that relate to this topic and discuss whether my findings are congruent with the findings of other researchers. I will revisit studies from my Literature Review in order to determine the similarities and differences between my findings and the outcomes of previous studies.

Discussion

In the previous section, the results of my study of teachers' beliefs regarding student-centered classrooms found that many teachers in the surrounding area of Chautauqua County, New York, believe that giving students choice in their learning can lead to higher achievement and improved behavior. Many teachers commented on the idea that, when students can choose the topics they learn or the ways in which they are assessed, it can often lead to increased engagement and motivation causing students to feel responsible for their own educations. The majority of teachers surveyed also believed that hands-on, group centered activities are more effective in engaging students and helping them to retain the material over the long-term. However, some teachers believed that this teaching in a student-centered environment could

prove to be an unrealistic method depending on the grade and ability levels of the students. One kindergarten teacher believed that the demands that come with creating in a student-centered environment would be too much to balance with the demands of teaching a kindergarten classroom. This teacher commented that, "It would be chaos and a lot of disruptive behaviors at this grade-level. I also feel that my students would not be able to pick what they learn or how to be assessed in kindergarten." This and several other teachers discussed the current behaviors of students in their classrooms and didn't believe that allowing them choose the topics they learned or ways that they are assessed would be effective in improving those behaviors. Although these teachers disagreed, the vast majority of teachers surveyed believed that allowing students to have a choice in their learning would lead to increased achievement and improved behavior.

The results of this study show that many teachers believe that, if students are allowed to choose topics they learn or ways they are assessed, it will lead to higher engagement because students will be invested in their learning. This would lead to me to believe that teachers can use this student-centered environment in order to cater to the needs to many different types of learners. By allowing students to choose the ways in which they are assessed, students will be able to accurately show their knowledge rather than be hindered by outside factors, such as test anxiety. If a teacher allows his or her students to have options in the ways that they express what they've learned, students will make a choice based on the means with which they believe they can most effectively express what they've learned. Allowing students to make these choices can also give them independence and make them feel ownership over their learning.

The results of this survey coincide with several other studies that researched the effects of a student-centered classroom on student engagement, motivation, and achievement. In my results, I found that many of the participants believed that when students are interested in the

topics they are learning, they become more engaged and invested in their education. Conversely, Richmond (2014) found that, in a teacher-centered classroom, when a teacher or pre-determined curricula chooses the topics, students become disinterested, meaning they will have less incentive to care about what they are learning.

When asked how student choice can lead to increased achievement and improved behavior, one teacher surveyed responded that, "I have a class full of students who will ask to read a book when they finish their independent work but cannot focus when I read during the Listening and Learning portion of our day." This response correlates with Gambrell (2011) listing choice as one of 7 factors leading to increased student engagement in reading. When students are in charge of picking out an independent reading book, the majority of students automatically look for topics that interest them and that they are excited to read about. In the school surveyed, Listening and Learning is a lesson during the day in which teachers read a story from the Common Core Modules that corresponds with images on a large flipbook that the students can look at as they listen to the story. The stories are often narratives of two children learning about a topic (e.g., the Revolutionary War) through stories told by their grandfather. In my personal experience teaching this subject, students often lost interest quickly during this activity and struggled to retain the information based on comprehension questions asked after the reading. Since the students cannot choose the story or the topic of the story themselves, they don't feel invested in or responsible for their learning.

The results of this study also showed that 82% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I prefer to choose the seating arrangement in my classroom." I found this interesting because Lasry, Charles, and Whittaker (2014) found that teachers that changed to a student-centered classroom felt more inspired to find new ways of teaching due to the new

environment. Although the participants in my survey chose their classroom seating arrangements, this did not correspond with their ability to implement a student-centered environment.

Limitations

Although the results from this study correlated with the questions I was attempting to answer, the results of this study were limited due to the number of schools I was able to survey, the socioeconomic status of the areas, and the grade-levels with which the participants worked. The present results from this study are limited because the schools surveyed were in mostly urban, lower-socioeconomic areas. This study did not research the ways in which student choice would affect achievement or behavior in suburban, rural, or higher socioeconomic areas. The teachers studied were strictly teachers that worked with grades K-5; no middle or upper-level teachers were surveyed. Future investigators can continue this research with students in secondary schools in varying socioeconomic areas.

If I could continue my research on this topic, I would attempt to interview some participants from my survey in order to gain more insight into their survey responses. I would attempt to determine whether or not they believe that student choice would lead to increased achievement or improved behavior and the reasons that they feel this way. I would contact teachers of differing schools and grade levels that believe students should have a choice in the classroom as well as teachers who disagree with this statement. One kindergarten teacher surveyed commented on the idea that grade-level would affect the ability of teachers to implement Choice Theory in their classroom and another teacher felt very opposed to idea of giving students choice in the classroom. Interviewing these participants would allow me to understand the reasoning that caused them to feel this way. This would also give me a deeper

understanding of the responses of each teacher and the ways that they correlate with other

teachers from their specific school and grade-level overall. If I could continue my research, I

would also attempt to determine whether allowing students choice in their learning would effect

achievement and behavior in students in secondary schools or higher socio-economic areas by

surveying teachers from rural and suburban areas as well as middle and high schools.

Conclusions

In summary, whether or not teachers surveyed were familiar with William Glasser's

Choice Theory, many appeared to implement many ideals of this theory in their classrooms.

Glasser's (1998) Choice Theory outlines the five basic needs that each person seeks to satisfy.

These needs are survival, freedom, power, belonging, and fun. By allowing students to make

decisions in their learning, they are fulfilling their needs for freedom, power, and even fun. Many

of the teachers surveyed responded that allowing students to choose aspects of their learning,

such as the topics they learn or they ways in which they are assessed, encourages them to

become engaged and invested in their education. One teacher commented on the idea that,

"…when students have fun, they are engaged. When they are engaged, they learn." Obviously,

more research must be done in order to answer questions such as: is allowing students to make

these choices more effective in secondary school as opposed to primary school? Do teachers in

rural or suburban areas believe that achievement and behavior will improve if students are given

choice in their learning? Answering these questions and more will help in determining the ways

in which giving students choice in their education affects student achievement and behavior.

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Appendix A

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Emma Hayes (ID: 5075585)
- **Institution Affiliation:** SUNY - College at Fredonia (ID: 273)
- **Institution Email:** haye1415@fredonia.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Curriculum and Instruction
- **Phone:** 5856452903

- **Curriculum Group:** Human Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Group 1
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course

- **Record ID:** 17393736
- **Completion Date:** 23-Sep-2015
- **Expiration Date:** 22-Sep-2017
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 87

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127)	21-Sep-2015	2/3 (67%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490)	21-Sep-2015	4/5 (80%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491)	21-Sep-2015	4/5 (80%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502)	21-Sep-2015	5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503)	21-Sep-2015	4/5 (80%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504)	21-Sep-2015	5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505)	21-Sep-2015	3/5 (60%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506)	21-Sep-2015	4/5 (80%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507)	22-Sep-2015	5/5 (100%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508)	22-Sep-2015	5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509)	23-Sep-2015	5/5 (100%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510)	23-Sep-2015	4/5 (80%)
Avoiding Group Harms - U.S. Research Perspectives (ID: 14080)	23-Sep-2015	3/3 (100%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483)	23-Sep-2015	4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488)	23-Sep-2015	4/5 (80%)
SUNY Fredonia State College (ID: 587)	23-Sep-2015	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/?kb0f9a0a9-acf8-4590-a48b-e1h250b1766e-17393736

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)
Email: support@citiprogram.org
Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

Appendix B

FREDONIA
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

20 January 2017

Emma Hayes
c/o Robert Dahlgren, Ph.D.
Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education
Thompson Hall
The State University of New York at Fredonia

Re: Emma Hayes—Teacher's Beliefs and Opinions on choice Theory and Its Impact on Student Behavior and Achievement

Your research project using human subjects has been determined Category 1, Exempt, under the United States Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Public Welfare, Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, 46.101, Subpart A (b) (1) and/or (2). This document is your approval and your study titled "Teacher's Beliefs and Opinions on choice Theory and Its Impact on Student Behavior and Achievement" may proceed as described, beginning on **January 23, 2017 and ending on February 10, 2017.**

Thank you for keeping the high standards relating to research and the protection of human subjects under the auspices of the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Sincerely,

Judith M. Horowitz, Ph.D.
Associate Provost, Graduate Studies, Sponsored Programs
  and Faculty Development
Human Subjects Administrator

Appendix C

Hello!

My name is Emma Hayes and I am a graduate student in the Curriculum and Instruction Department at SUNY Fredonia. In preparation for my final thesis project, I am gathering data on the experiences of classroom teachers and their opinions and beliefs on the impact of the implementation of student choice, based on William Glasser's Choice Theory, in the classroom and how it affects students' behavior and achievement.

I would like to invite you to participate in a survey that will assess your personal beliefs about Choice Theory and its impact on students' achievement and behavior in day-to-day activities. This short survey will ask for your opinion on student choice based on your personal experiences in the classroom. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you can withdraw from the project at any time. However, if you would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview, at which I will ask more in-depth questions based on your responses to this survey. If you would be interested in this interview, a space is provided on the back-side of the survey to include your name and email address.

While the survey may be filled out on your own time at your convenience, I ask for them to be completed within two weeks of distribution. I will be stopping into the office on **April 7th** to pick up the surveys. Additionally, no form of compensation will be available. Please submit your surveys to the secretary in the main office who will place it in a folder until the pick-up date **(4/7)**. Your confidentiality during the project will be ensured.

I thank you for your understanding and participation in my research and I look forward to reading each of your thoughts on this subject.

Appendix D

Teachers' Beliefs about the Implementation of Choice Theory in the Classroom.

Create your ow
FREE ONLINE SUR

1   What grade level are you currently working with?

2   What grade levels have you worked with previously?

3   Select the option that applies to your current teaching position.

☐ I work primarily with general education students.   ☐ I work primarily with special education students.

Other (Please Specify)

4   Select the option that applies to your current teaching position.

☐ I am a general education classroom teacher.   ☐ I am a teaching aid.   ☐ I am a music/art/physical education teacher.

Other (Please Specify)

5   Are you familiar with William Glasser's Choice Theory?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

6

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I prefer to choose the seating arrangement in my classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students learn more effectively when the curriculum is taught as mandated by the state.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students learn more effectively when they work in groups with their peers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hands-on activities help my students gain a better understanding of the material.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students learn more effectively when they work independently.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students are allowed to choose their method of assessment (i.e. video projects, short stories, posters, etc...)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My classroom has firm guidelines that all students must obey.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students should be given a choice of the topics they are taught.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Students retain information long-term by taking tests and quizzes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7 How do you think allowing students to have a choice in what they learn and how they are assessed would effect their behavior and/or achievement? *(2-3 sentences)*