

Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the classroom context



This analysis intends to introduce Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and to then describe how this theory can be applied in a beneficial way in the classroom context, taking into consideration different aspects of a pupil's school experience, their family life and the management of the school. Maslow's intention was to help identify and awaken every individual's full natural potential, regardless of their social and cultural background. His purpose was to promote, with an equality of opportunities, the individual's integration self-fulfillment leading to a better society.

Maslow's stages of basic needs will be applied as guidelines, onto the process of a child's development. Maslow's hierarchy of need or "the theory of human motivation" (Maslow 1946, cited by Hoffman, 1996) shows, a sequence of five human needs in ascending stages, from the most basic physiological need, through the needs of safety, love and belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization. Once a person's need is accomplished, the motivation for a need of a higher level arises. Nevertheless "All needs are interrelated and interdependent, ... hierarchy of relative prepotency" (Maslow 1946, cited by Hoffman, 1996), therefore different aspects of these needs could be accomplished depending on the motivation arisen, during the constant process of the person's development. Maslow believed that the unaccomplished need could be positively transformed into the motivation for self-improvement. Learning to love and to be loved, having self-respect and self-fulfillment, are only possible to achieve once the most basic needs, such as physiological and safety needs been fulfilled.

Good nutrition, indoor climate control, hygiene and sufficient rest are some of the first needs met in the classroom. Children are highly influenced by the <https://assignbuster.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-in-the-classroom-context/>

values and habits of their families. Improving nutrition would not be possible without providing children and parents with appropriate support and information. According to the Centre of Research on the wider Benefits of Learning, without a balanced glucose level and sufficient rest, the vulnerability of children's immunity systems could lead to absences in school. Also, their learning or cognitive development would be affected.

Any physiological needs can cause a lack of concentration, unsettled states and possible deficit disorders leading to negative outcomes in their behaviour and their curricula's performance, consequently affecting their relationships and self-esteem (Sorhaindo & Feinstein, 2006). As a result, according to section 512ZB of the Education Act 1996, Authority maintained schools, provide meals as well as milk and refreshments to those children from families with limited incomes. Once all physiological needs are met, children are capable of dealing with the next level of needs in the hierarchy, safety.

According to legislation, schools' policies act responsibly towards the needs for safety in the classroom. Potential dangers in the classroom, related to tools, technical equipment, fire and safety need to be anticipated and managed. Necessary procedures need to be established, documented and efficiently communicated. The learners will feel not only cared for, but they will also be urged to accept responsibility for themselves and eventually develop their concern for others' safety (Raymond, 1999/2005).

Furthermore, young people need to feel trustworthy and encouraged to make their own life decisions. (Gill, 2007). This poses a question regarding

the dilemma between children being given responsibility and their level of maturity. A child cannot learn how to be responsible unless given the chance to put it into practice (Kellmer Pringle, 1972, cited by Gill , 2007). If a child feels either too vulnerable or too protected, emotional conflicts could arise. Relationships such as family and friends play an important role in the child's development of self-esteem.

Performing with self-autonomy motivates the child enough to engage in further challenges and tasks with an intention of co-operation, shifting from self-centredness towards considerations for others, as an individual being part of a group. (Plummer, 2001) states that the educator's positive and clear communication, showing respect and moral values, with a non-critical attitude towards children's opinions and participation, but praising the child's positive outcomes, increases the child's self-awareness and ability to express feelings.

This leads to positive self-evaluation, the ability to establish and attain realistic goals, overcoming difficulties. With self-respect and confidence, and being respected by others, the child can feel motivated to improve and achieve his or her potential. The educator can apply different views and theories depending on the specific needs and potentials of the learner. In view of this, according to the recipient's social and cultural background, manners, views, thoughts, and language, a specific way of communicating knowledge is required.

A developing educational curriculum needs to reach all individuals in all groups of society as a whole (Freire, 1993, cited by Van Hook, 2008).

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Gardner's approach broadens the means of integration and application skills in his theory of " Multiple Intelligences", proposing that if learners have "... varied strengths, interests and strategies... curricular materials could be taught and assessed in a variety of ways" (Van hook, 2008, pg. 9, cited Gardner, 1999, pg. 167). Developing thinking skills is a current emphasis in education's constant evolution.

Awakening curiosity in learners, promoting active learning through purposeful imagination and gaining awareness of the process, " creative thinking" can lead to a much richer, personal curricular outcome (Fisher, 2005), encouraging learners to become resourceful enough to apply their skills even in unexpected circumstances. Consciousness of a global community, interacting efficiently with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, and promoting tolerance and equality of opportunity (Gardner, 2008) are some of the important values for educating a better society.

To conclude, Maslow's Hierarchy of needs can be applied in the classroom in a number of ways. The physiological need is fundamental for the child's personal and cognitive development. When the need for safety is met in the classroom, children can be encouraged to take more responsibility not only for themselves but for others. Feeling trustworthy enough, children are able to interact with others, and develop relationships. Through this process the child achieves a positive self-evaluation and value-system. The need for self-fulfillment motivates the child to accomplish the curricular material with a collaborative intention.

The curricular material could be provided by the teacher in various ways, according to the learner's stage and potentials. In the whole, this is a useful framework to support the teacher, the school, the child's development, and ultimately, society. Bibliography Gardner, H. (2004). How Education Changes: Considerations of History, Science and values. Retrieved from <http://pzweb.harvard.edu/pis/hg/htm> Gill, T. (2007, February 15). Room for improvement. The Guardian. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2007/feb/15/unleashingchildhood> Hoffman, E. (1989). The right to be human: a bibliography of Abraham Maslow.

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