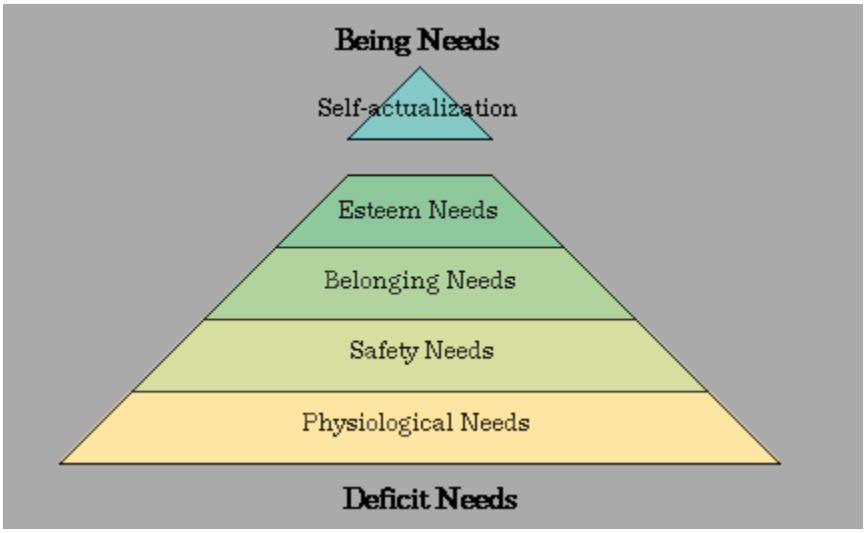
# Module One

## Understanding the Learning Process

## Handout

**Maslow's Motivation Theory**




Abraham Maslow is considered to be the father of Humanistic Psychology, also known as the "Third Force". Humanistic Psychology incorporates aspects of both Behavioral Psychology and Psychoanalytic Psychology. Behaviorists believe that human behavior is controlled by external environmental factors. Psychoanalytic Psychology is based on the idea that human behavior is controlled by internal unconscious forces. Although he studied both Behavioral and Psychoanalytic Psychologies, Maslow rejected the idea that human behavior is controlled only by either internal or external forces. Instead, Maslow's Motivation Theory states that a person's behavior is controlled by both internal and external factors. In addition, Maslow's Theory emphasizes that humans have the unique ability to make choices and exercise free-will.

Maslow showed little interest in animal or laboratory studies of human behavior. He chose instead to collect data for his theories by studying outstanding individuals. His studies led him to believe that people have certain needs that are unchanging and genetic in origin. These needs are the same in all cultures and are both physiological and psychological. Maslow described these needs as being hierarchal in nature, meaning that some needs are more basic or more powerful than others and, as these needs are satisfied, other higher needs emerge.

**The Importance of Maslow's Theory in Education**

The most important educational goal is for students to learn. Another important goal is to make newly gained knowledge and information purposeful and meaningful to the students so that it may be retained and useful throughout their lives. An essential factor involved in meeting these goals is motivation. If students are unmotivated in one way or another, it is likely that they will not learn much or that newly gained knowledge will not be retained.

This theory has had great impact on educational structure. To maximize on the effectiveness of school wide and individual classroom teaching programs, administrators and teachers must consider student needs and their hierarchical order. Needs must be met in this order: first physiological, then safety, and so forth through self-actualization. This must be a top priority in the development of these programs so that students are given the chance to reach their highest levels of potential. For instance, if a student has not had her breakfast before she comes to school, she will not be concentrating on learning; she will be preoccupied with the need for food. School systems should meet this need for a proper breakfast by providing breakfast programs.

**Suggestions for the Application of Maslow's Theory to Education**

Schools and teachers should meet the following physiological and safety requirements to optimize learning conditions:

***Physiological***

- Provide reduced or free meal programs.
- Ensure comfortable temperatures in the classroom.
- Schedule bathroom and drink breaks.

***Safety***

- Plan lessons well and conduct them in an orderly fashion.
- Control classroom behaviors.
- Plan, discuss, and practice emergency procedures.
- Discipline fairly.
- Maintain consistent expectations.
- Be accepting and nonjudgmental, pleasant, and no threatening.
- Provide praise for correct responses instead of punishment for incorrect responses.

***Love & Belonging***

**With regard to teacher-student relationships, teachers should:**

- be empathetic, considerate & interested in the individual, patient, fair, able to self-disclose, positive, and attentive;
- use one-on-one instruction;
- use teacher conferencing;
- provide positive rather than negative comments & feedback;
- get to know students (their likes, dislikes, and concerns);
- be available for students in need;
- listen to students;
- be supportive;
- have personal helpers on rotating basis;
- show that they value students' thoughts, opinions & judgments
- show their trust of students by creating situations where trust is necessary (for example, running errands or acting as classroom leader)

**With regard to student-student relationships, teachers should:**

- organize class meetings;
- initiate class discussions;
- establish opportunities for peer tutoring;
- provide situations requiring mutual trust
- schedule show & tell and times for sharing

***Esteem***

**To build students' self-esteem, teachers should:**

- develop new knowledge based on background knowledge so as to help ensure success (scaffolding);
- pace instruction to fit individual needs;
- focus on students' strengths & assets;
- take students' individual needs & abilities into account when planning lessons and carrying them out;
- teach to the multiple modes of learning;
- teach & model learning strategies;
- base new teaching, strategies & plans on learning outcomes;
- be alert to student difficulties (learning difficulties or problems among students) & intervene as soon as possible;
- be available & approachable so students having difficulties feel comfortable coming for help;
- involve all students in class participation & responsibilities;
- discipline children as privately as possible, where such action is needed

**To encourage respect among students, teachers should:**

- develop a classroom environment where students are positive & nonjudgmental;
- identify a star of the week;
- create award programs for jobs well done;
- give positions of status to deserving students;
- have recognition programs for special efforts (e.g., helpful citizens of the week);
- develop & carry out a curriculum to encourage children to be empathetic & attentive to other students;
- employ cooperative learning to develop trust between group members;
- involve students in activities of importance & worthiness (e.g., cleaning up the environment or carrying out a food drive for the needy)

**To help students take pride in gaining knowledge & understanding, teachers should:**

- allow students time to explore areas of curiosity;
- provide lessons that are intellectually challenging;
- plan lessons that connect areas of learning & have students compare and contrast to search for relationships;
- use a discovery approach to learning whenever possible;
- have students approach topics of learning from various angles;
- provide opportunities for philosophical thought & discussion;
- get students involved in intellectually challenging programs or activities.

**To encourage learning through pride in esthetic, schools and teachers should:**

- organize classroom materials in a neat & appealing way;
- display student art work in an appealing manner;
- put up interesting & colorful wall hangings;
- replace overly worn classroom materials periodically;
- create varied appealing & interesting learning centers;
- have rooms painted in pleasing colors;
- have large window areas;
- maintain physical surroundings (e.g., keep walls painted, desks clean & repaired, etc.);
- keep classrooms clean and fresh-smelling.

***Self-actualization***

**Teachers should do the following to encourage self-actualization:**

- expect students to do their best
- give students freedom to explore & discover on their own
- make learning meaningful--connect to "real" life
- plan lessons involving met cognitive activities

- get students involved in self-expressive projects
- allow students to be involved in creative activities & project

**Theory of Multiple Intelligences**

Individuals differ from one another in the ways that they think. We refer to the idea that there are different kinds of human intelligence as the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Below is a list outlining some of the main kinds of intelligence and typical characteristics of people in these categories? Would you be in one of these categories?

- **Linguistic:** Relies on words and language, written and spoken; retains, interprets and explains ideas and information via language; understands relationship between communication and meaning

- **Logical-Mathematical:** Characterized by logical thinking, detecting patterns, scientific reasoning and deduction; good at analyzing problems and performing mathematical calculations; understands relationship between cause and effect towards a tangible outcome or result

- **Bodily-Kinesthetic:** Adept at body movement control; has manual dexterity, physical agility, and balance; has good eye and body coordination

- **Interpersonal:** Able to perceive other people's feelings and relate to others; skilled in interpretation of behavior and communications; understands the relationships among people.

**Principles of Adult Learning:**

- **Adults want to know how the fundamental concepts in the discipline they are learning were established.** Adults need to be shown the process by which these key concepts were reached. What questions were asked? What research was done? Which hypotheses were discarded and why? Why certain concepts were were accepted and why are they so fundamental to the discipline?

- **Adults need to learn the types of thinking and inquiry that are valued in the discipline.** Each discipline has its own types of thinking and inquiry. Adults need to be helped learn these. Adults must learn not only *what* to think in Biology, Calculus, or History, but also *how to think* like a Biologist, Mathematician, or Historian so that they can continue to engage in the inquiry of the discipline and keep building their understanding of the material.

- **Adults want to be assured that obtaining a correct answer is not the only goal.** Of course, answering a question correctly is very important, but adults want to learn how to transfer their understanding of a familiar problem, situation, or activity to a new one. To do this, adults must understand the process of reaching solutions in one instance, then recognize the similarities between the familiar problem and the new one, and, finally, adapt the process to solve the new problem.

- **Adults need to be exposed to a variety of teaching methods**. The most practical way to foster thinking skills in the adult classroom is to use a variety of teaching approaches to ensure that the adults are more than passive, receptive learners. Rather, teachers should be independent thinkers, able to choose the appropriate technique for the appropriate situation. Classroom discussions, group work, and classroom debates help foster independent thought.

- **Adults must be asked many open-ended questions.** Open-ended, or higher order questions, cannot be answered with a simple yes, no, number, or date. They require a reasoned response. *When did Thomas More write his biography of Richard the Third?* is a closed question. *How reliable is More's biography of Richard?* is an open question.

  Questioning adults in this way will achieve two important goals. First, you will model the types of questions and the forms of inquiry that are important in your discipline. Second, you will encourage them to engage in independent thinking and to "uncover" the process of that thought by justifying their own answers or evaluating the plausibility of others.

- **Adults need to be able to assess others' thinking.** Adults must be alerted to the assumptions, both implicit and explicit, in their own and others' thinking and writing. They should be able to identify these assumptions. They must be able to evaluate the reliability of a textbook, article, or other source by looking for possible biases in the work and considering, for example, how, where, when, and by whom the information was gathered.

- **Adults need to be rewarded for independent thought.** To encourage adults to think independently, the classroom environment should be a place where reasoned and informed disagreement with the facilitator is encouraged and not penalized. Furthermore, the facilitator should look for, comment on, and reward independent thought. Adults will quickly see through a syllabus that rewards rote memorization.

**In order to fulfill those needs, an effective facilitator could use the following Cooperative and Collaborative Learning strategies and techniques:**

1. **Organize.** The three most important things in setting up a Cooperative-Learning situation are Structure, Structure and Structure. Many group learning situations are ineffective because trainers are not precise about the task, the role of each person in the group, and the relative contribution of the group activity toward the course grade. When this happens, learners get off task and begin to see the group assignments as busy work. So, structure the exercises carefully.
2. **Retain individuality within the group.** Assess the individual contribution of each learner, rather than giving group grades. Deal with each learner as a human being and not as simply as one piece of the whole.
3. **Focus on the *goal*, not the means.** Design creative learning tasks that require learners to *learn* something, not just *do* something.
4. **Make it relevant and keep it in perspective.** Make sure that Cooperative Learning tasks are perceived by learners as relating to course objectives. Practice allows learners to "elaborate" on the newly presented skills.
5. **Form groups with care.** Have the trainer or facilitator assign learners to the groups. Make the groups as heterogeneous as possible based on prior achievement, race, and sex.
6. **Optimize through size.** In general, groups of three to five are best, with four often the ideal number. Fewer individuals results in insufficient diversity of views and also decreases each persons' opportunity to practice the oral skills to be fostered.
7. **Supervise and structure.** Group work is usually more productive than the "question and answer" type of lecture session. Instructors need to monitor the performance of groups in order to resolve academic and social problems and modify the assignment if it is not working.
8. **Adjust your methods.** Typically, less material is covered in Cooperative Learning sessions than would be in more traditional learning sessions. This might necessitate covering some material via homework activities, including handouts, reading, etc. However, learners in cooperatively taught classes learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than they would in other instructional formats, e.g., lectures followed by discussion.
9. **Look for opportunities.** Cooperative Learning may be applied across a wide variety of disciplines. It has been used in many courses and tailored to learners of various intelligence types (recall the Theory of Multiple Intelligences).
10. **Prepare the necessary social skills.** Skills like active listening and helping one another in mastering content often have to be explained in detail in the course syllabus and perhaps even modeled and reinforced during the class. It is a mistake to assume that our learners will demonstrate these skills without building in structures to ensure such behavior.