Implementation Of Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy Of Needs In The Classroom

Introduction

“A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself” (Acevado, 2018, p. 744). This is a quote by Abraham Maslow, the creator of hierarchy of needs. Maslow’s theory is that humans are motivated by five needs in order to do well: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Kellerman, 2014). In order for a person to be at ultimate peace with themselves, they are motivated by the five stages that will lead them to success. Because of his theory, we know the importance of human needs, how they affect us, and how teachers can use his theory in a classroom.

Five Hierarchy Needs

Physiological

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is drawn out as a triangle. It is big at the bottom and gets smaller at the top. Whereas, the needs at the bottom have to be reached before the needs at the top. On the outside left of the triangle is physical space. On the outer right side is virtual space. The difference between physical and virtual is that physical is actually happening, while virtual is implied. At the bottom of the triangle is physiological needs. Examples of physiological needs are: food, water, sleep, and air (Kellerman, 2014). Students are going to be more concerned with their physical well-being before they meet their social needs (Omrod, 2014). If there is a student who is not getting the proper care at home, they will be stuck at the bottom of Maslow’s triangle. Under the physical space for physiological is supply of all needs. Under virtual space is support of supply through IT and information (Kellerman, 2014). This is the support that a school can assist with. A school can provide a few of these physiological needs such as: free lunches, heat in the winter, and air conditioning in the hotter months.

Safety

Above psychological on the triangle is safety. Safety is a critical part of every human’s life. For one to do well, they must be in a safe environment. In some cases, the only place that a student goes to that is safe is school. “Safety, too, in the sense of securing the human body and material property, is basically provided in physical space, but its management, as well as its control, can be based in virtual space” (Kellerman, 2014, p. 542). Schools can practice lockdowns, tornado, and earthquake drills. While practicing these drills, they can help a student know that his or her school has a plan in case of an emergency.

Love and Belonging

When climbing up the triangle of human needs, the next stop is love and belonging. Once a student has reached their physiological and safety needs, they are ready to open up to relationships. (Acevadeo, 2018). “When it comes to love and belonging, virtual space becomes

more crucial as a channel for those accessing it" (Kellerman, 2014. p. 542). Students are going to need those relationships to help motivate them. An example of this could be that a student's teacher encourages her to do well on her test. Because of their close relationship, the student tries her best so she can get that assurance from the special relationship. "Love is not simply biological drive, fanciful feelings, instrumental value, indifferent tolerance, or convenient separation. It entails willing the proper human good of the beloved for his or her own sake, and acting accordingly" (Acevadeo, 2018). If humans are not given the proper amount of love, they will not be motivated for success. Every person who turns out successful has that one supporter. Whether it be their mom, dad, brother, grandmother, or best friend, they had that person that believed in them. Having love and support will help that person reach success.

Esteem

Getting closer to the top, the next step is esteem. This relates back to love and belonging. When humans have relationships with the right people, they will build each other up and help them with building confidence. This is where confidence turns into self-esteem. "Esteem might further constitute a social need, and virtual space has become a significant arena in this regard" (Kellerman, 2014 p. 543). Esteem can be seen in the work-place or from a student's view, the classroom. It can also be shown on the internet (Kellerman, 2014). With technology where it is today, most people will post an accomplishment on the internet. The reactions of other people boost their self-esteem. It is important that students have self-esteem because they are more willing to try and succeed. "As teachers, we're more likely to encourage students to tackle realistically challenging tasks---and thus enhance their sense of competence taking risks and making mistakes. We can also provide greater rewards for succeeding at challenging tasks than for achieving easy success" (Omrod, 2014, p. 370). By encouraging students' progress, whether their task is simple or hard, their self-esteem will rise.

Self-Actualization

At the very top of the triangle is self-actualization. In order for a person to have self-actualization, they have to build up to it. This is why Maslow's hierarchy of needs is in the shape of a triangle (Kellerman, 2014). When a person has reached all four of the basic needs, they get to have the last need, self-actualization. This is where all of the needs tie in together and build off of one another. As a person goes up the triangle, the physical space gets smaller, and the virtual space becomes larger. "Thus, in the lower levels of the hierarchy virtual space offers mainly complementarity to physical space, which constitutes the crucial arena for the satisfaction of needs, moving to competition for the satisfaction of needs, moving to competition with physical space in the higher levels of the hierarchy, and eventually substituting for physical space at the highest level of hierarchy" (Kellerman, 2014, p. 545). This quote explains the importance of how the needs stop becoming physical but instead virtual. When a person reaches the top of the triangle, they are ready for success. They have reached all of their needs and are now fully motivated. The order of Maslow's needs can be flexible. It does not matter the order or how long it takes, but when it is achieved. "Failing to do so ultimately contradicts the very essence of business as human activity and of management as human calling" (Acevadeo, 2018, p. 761). This quotes states that if you cannot reach the top of Maslow's triangle, then you have not done what you're supposed to do as a human.

Rationale of Selection

While there were so many influential theorists to choose from, I decided that I wanted to pick Abraham Maslow. I enjoyed Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Piaget's four stages of cognitive development, but Maslow's hierarchy of needs was the theory that I want for my future classroom. The whole reason of why I wanted to be a teacher was for me to see students grow and succeed. I want to see students become more confident in their abilities, and that is why Maslow's theory will work great for my future classroom (Kellerman, 2014). I cannot wait to see one of my students have a light bulb moment. I will provide positive feedback and encouragement when students need it the most. Helping others has always been so important to me, and this is ultimately why I chose Maslow's theory.

Another reason why I chose Maslow's theory is that I know some students will not be getting the proper care at home like they should. At the bottom of the triangle are simple needs such as food and water. People do not realize how many students there are that do not know where their next meal is going to come from. "Since, in Maslow's theory, needs or drives are merely biological or physiological the enjoinder facts, the enjoinder to satisfy them lacks sufficient support" (Acevadeo, 2018, p. 749). Food, air, and water are physiological needs, and failure to meet these needs can end in death. If students are not getting the essentials they need, they're not going to climb up Maslow's hierarchy of needs triangle.

Lastly, I want my students to feel safe in the classroom. Maslow's second of out the five physiological needs is safety. (Kellerman, 2014). Safety is very important, especially now with all of the school shootings that are happening in today's society. Schools should put Maslow's theory into use since safety is a big part of his hierarchy of needs. Not only should teachers care about a student's safety but the entire faculty as well. Students need a safe place to learn so they can be comfortable gaining knowledge and climb to the top of Maslow's triangle.

Implementation of Theory

Providing Small Snacks and Food

Since there are five physiological needs, I will make an implementation of theory in my classroom for all five needs. For Maslow's physiological needs, I will provide snacks to my students. I can have a little snack basket with different goodies, such as granola bars, chips, and crackers. I will let them take one snack a day if they choose to take one. If I have any students who I know do not get fed at home, I will privately give them a sack lunch to take home. Another one of the physiological needs is air. On pretty days, I might teach a lesson outside. I believe fresh air is important, and I think it will be a great way for my students to be more interested in the lesson. Rest is another basic need. Depending on the grade that I am able to teach, I will try my best to give my students a few minutes to put their head down and relax. Even if they do not fall asleep, they will have rested their eyes. This can help students clear their minds and relax for a little while. It is important that I will be able to provide certain necessities so that my students will be able to succeed.

Providing a Safe Space

Next up, from the bottom of the triangle is safety. I feel as if safety is a huge factor in a student's success. If a student does not feel safe in his or her classroom or school, he or she will not perform as well as a student who is comfortable in his or her class. As a teacher, I will

inform my students about every safety drill and plan. Another way I can make my students feel safe is to let them know that I am there for them. I want my students to feel like they can tell me anything. Letting my students know that they can talk to me about anything will give them comfort. When my students are comfortable, they will learn best.

Group Work

Above safety on the triangle is love and belonging. Every person needs love and affection and wants to feel loved. I think a strategy that will encourage this is group work. While putting my students into groups, they will get to know their classmates. This could spark new friendships. I will switch my groups up where they are not with the same people in a group every time. This way, everyone can get to know one another. If I allow my students to communicate with each other regularly, they will make friendships. After gaining these friendships, they are getting closer to the top of the triangle.

Positive Feedback

Before you reach the very top the triangle, you stop at self-esteem. Self-esteem is students having confidence in their abilities and being able to do something without worrying of failure. When a student reaches this level, he or she is very comfortable in the class. A strategy that I could use to help raise my students' self-esteem is to give them positive feedback. I will give my students positive feedback when they complete an assignment with their best work or when they answer a question correctly. If I have students who are capable of doing better, I will give them encouragement such as, "You're almost there, just try a little harder" or "That's close, but..." If you give a student negative feedback, they may feel like giving up, but if you give a student feedback with a positive meaning, it will make them want to do better. I will use this strategy to encourage them to be great students.

Showing progress

Self-actualization is the last of the five hierarchy needs. This is where students know their strengths and weaknesses. A way that I can show self-actualization in my classroom is to have my students do an activity at the beginning of the year. Towards the end of the year, I will have them do the same activity. I will then show them the progress they made from the beginning of the year to where they are now. This will make students aware that they are learning, and they can visually see how much progress they have made. It may take a while but once it is finished you get to see how much improvement a student has made. It takes time to build up to each level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, but when it is completed, you are set up for success.

Conclusion

Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows the basic needs on how they motivate students, and the certain steps that teachers have to take for students to be able to reach success. The five needs can be fulfilled by teachers having certain strategies in the classroom. Teachers want their students to succeed, and Maslow's theory shows the exact steps to do so. His theory shows how basic needs can be a step in the right direction. Success is what people strive for. In order to achieve success, people must tend to their basic needs.

References

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