

Maslow's Hierarchy

Planning Adult Learning to meet diverse learner needs

The Distance Education
Instructional Designer Project



In this section, we'll take a look at Maslow's Hierarchy and how we can use it in designing and implementing educational programs.

Many of us have heard of Maslow's Hierarchy – most likely from general psychology courses that we had in college. Abraham Maslow proposed this Hierarchy many years ago (in 1943) as a means of determining what motivates people to do certain things and to behave in certain ways. Motivation is an inner psychological state that predisposed each of us to pursue or to avoid certain activities or goals. It is also concerned with the present, where a person is striving toward an outcome.



Abraham Maslow has identified five categories of need that people are motivated to satisfy, and they apply to everyone. These needs are sequential – starting with the most basic needs and building up to more complex.

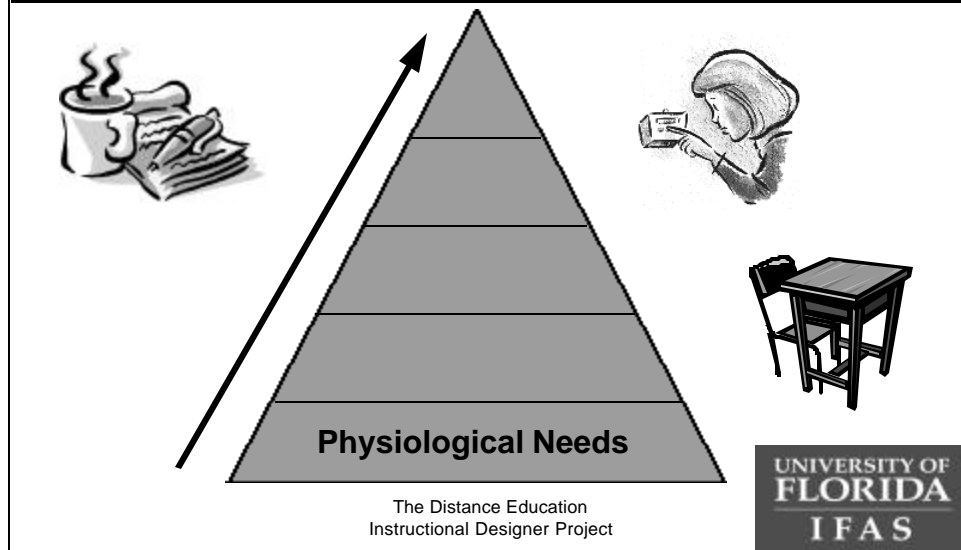
- The Hierarchy of Needs

- a. Physiological needs (food, water and air).
- b. Safety needs (security, stability, and freedom from fear or threat).
- c. Social needs (friendship, affection, acceptance, and interaction with others).
- d. Esteem needs (personal feelings of achievement or self-esteem and need for recognition or respect from others).
- e. Self-actualization (self-fulfillment or realization of one's potential) - become everything that one is capable of becoming.

- Applying Maslow's Hierarchy to educational programming

- This Hierarchy has been effectively applied to educational program development, and each of these levels must be considered as we design and implement programs.
- The levels build upon one another, and lower level needs must be satisfied for learners before they are motivated to move onto higher level motivators.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



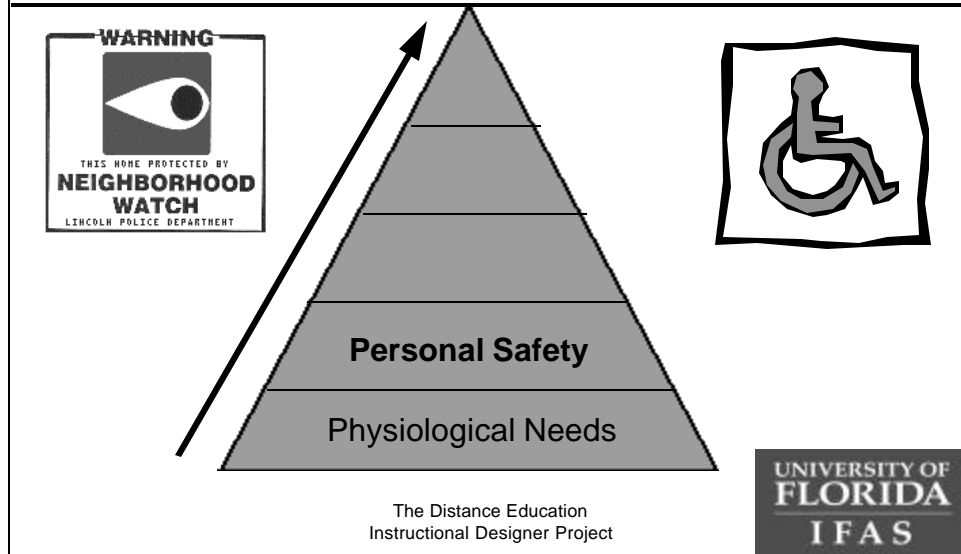
The first level are physiological needs. This includes things such as:

- The room environment – temperature, comfort of chairs, room arrangements, equipment, and lighting

- Needs of hunger and thirst:

- For example, if we held a morning program for people who had to travel in a long way and did not provide refreshments for them, their lowest level psychological need would be unmet at that time. This would cause them to not fully participate and learn because their minds and bodies would be elsewhere.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

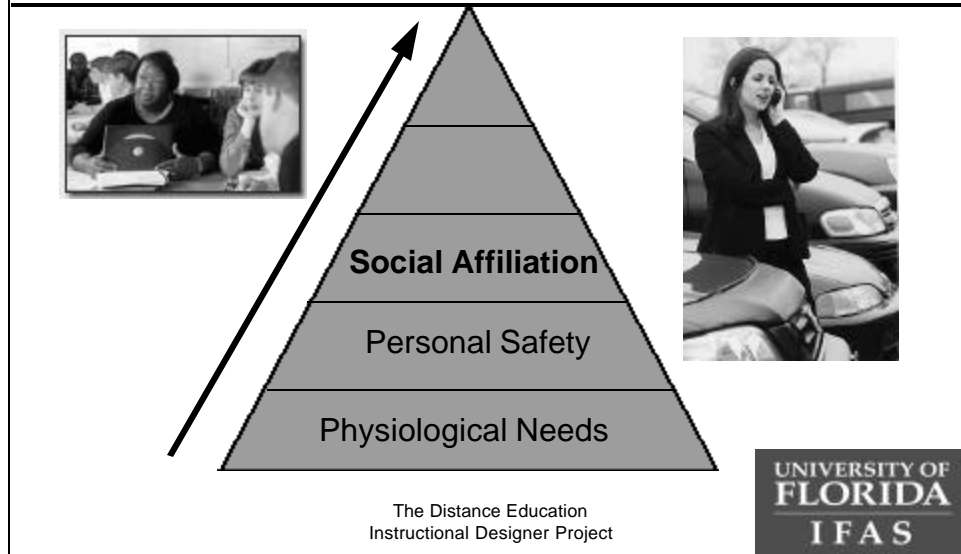


The second level is Personal Safety

For this level we need to be cognizant of where you are holding programs.

- Related to personal safety, we need to be concerned about where we hold educational programs to ensure that they are held in areas that are safe and accessible for our targeted audience.
 - For example, you would not want to hold a meeting at night on the bad side of town.
- Hold programs in areas where the particular targeted clientele feel safe and welcome
- Consider accessibility for people getting to and participating in programs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

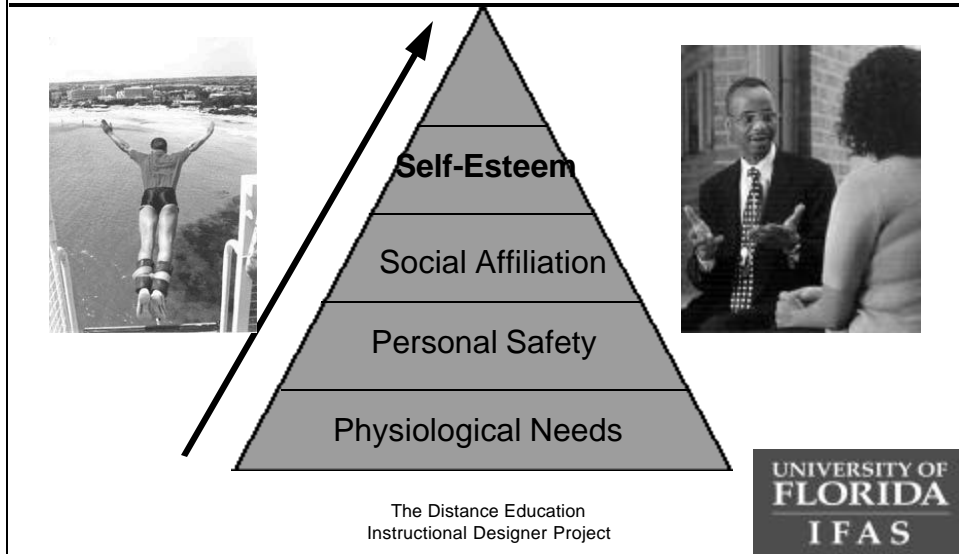


The third level is Social Affiliation:

This related to how well your learners related and get along:

- Do they like being together?
- Can they learn from and share with one another?
- For social affiliation, ensure that people are open and willing to engage and work with one another. Use ways to break down barriers (if any exist) in order to create a strong "learning community."
- An instructor needs to help facilitate this through adequate interaction and building rapport.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



This leads into the fourth category – Self esteem.

Are your learners comfortable enough to open up and express their TRUE feelings, beliefs and values?

-In other words, can they FULLY participate and engage?

An instructor needs to encourage the involvement of everyone and encourage diverse and open dialogue among everyone.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Lastly, the fifth category is Self-actualization.

This can be referred to as “be all that you can be!”

-It relates to the ability of learners to apply newfound knowledge, information and skills.

-To better themselves which then in turn leads to the betterment of communities and society.

-This then leads to people giving back and becoming involved and engaged.

As an instructor, what are you doing to encourage and facilitate this through feedback, encouragement and follow-up?

Applying Maslow's Hierarchy to Educational Programming

- Learners progress sequentially through the hierarchy – starting with their physiological needs
- We need to understand learners and factor their needs into program design and implementation

The Distance Education
Instructional Designer Project



In summary,

Learners progress sequentially through the hierarchy – starting with their physiological needs

We need to understand learners and factor their needs into program design and implementation

Tips to remember:

- As educators we need to be cognizant of our clientele and their needs. In order for learning to be most effective, we need to take these needs into account to create the most effective learning environments and situations.
- Take these things into account during both program design and implementation.

•Key principles of the Hierarchy:

- Lower need must be met first. Once this lower need is met – then a person has a desire to fulfill their need on the next level.
- The strength of any need is determined by its position in the hierarchy and the degree to which it and all lower needs have been satisfied.
- The satisfaction of a need, however, triggers dissatisfaction at the next higher level. This sequence continues until the highest level of the hierarchy is reached.
- A person can go down as well as up. For example, a person may pretty much be at the top of his/her world with lots of things going their way. A situation, tragedy or incident may occur that completely changes everything, i.e. natural disaster (such as a hurricane or tornado), divorce, death of loved one, etc. Because of this unfortunate circumstance, this person will now be concentrating on much lower needs.