

Student Needs That Affect Behavior

Educational programs that are not harmonious with basic human needs cannot achieve their intended results; thus, it is highly important that you and your program meet basic student needs, descriptions of which are presented in this chapter. When students' needs are being met, they willingly cooperate and learn and cause little disruption. Teachers who capitalize on this principle find little need to resort to demands, penalties, and struggles to get students to behave and learn. Meeting student needs is not difficult, as we will see.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Abraham Maslow (1954) is given credit for pinpointing human needs and explaining the role they play in motivation. He depicted his conclusions graphically as a hierarchy of needs (see Figure 6.2), now often referred to as *Maslow's hierarchy*, which has received worldwide attention. The meanings of the various levels in Maslow's hierarchy are evident. Needs at lower levels, especially the first four, must be met in order to provide a platform for addressing higher-level needs.

Dreikurs's Prime Need and Mistaken Goals. In 1972, Rudolf Dreikurs, a psychiatrist and family counselor, proposed that behavior problems in the classroom occur mainly when students are unable to satisfy their prime need of belonging in the class or school. If that need is not met, Dreikurs said, students turn to so-called mistaken goals in an attempt to satisfy it (Dreikurs and Cassel, 1972). Those mistaken goals are typically sought in the following sequence: First, students try for *attention*. If that fails, they try for *control*. If that fails, they seek to enact *revenge*, and failing that, they slip into *withdrawal*. Dreikurs contended that teachers must first and foremost make sure that every student gains a sense of belonging in the class. When that is accomplished, discipline problems will tend to fade away.

Glasser's Five Needs in the Classroom. William Glasser (1998) has done more than anyone else to call educators' attention to student needs and explain why they must be met if teaching is to be successful. He has articulated five needs that all students sense and strive for:

- Students' need for *survival* is met when the school environment is kept safe and free from personal threat.
- Students sense *belonging* when they are involved in class decisions and receive positive attention from the teacher and others.
- Students sense *power* when the teacher allows them to accept responsibility for selected duties and involves them in making decisions about matters pertinent to the class.
- They experience *fun* when able to work and talk with others, engage in interesting activities, and share their accomplishments.
- And they sense *freedom* when the teacher allows them to make responsible choices concerning what they will study, how they will do so, and how they will demonstrate their accomplishments.

Charles's Seven Needs in the Classroom. C. M. Charles (2008) expanded Glasser's list of needs to a total of seven, which he believes must be met if teachers are to have successful programs:

- *Security*, met through a sense of safety without worry
- *Hope*, met through the conviction that school is worthwhile and success is possible
- *Dignity*, met through being respected and considered worthwhile
- *Belonging*, met through feeling a part of things, being valued, having a place in the class
- *Power*, met through a degree of personal control and ability to contribute to the class
- *Enjoyment*, met through pleasure in topics and instructional activities
- *Competence*, met through growth in ability to do many things well, including the expected schoolwork

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