



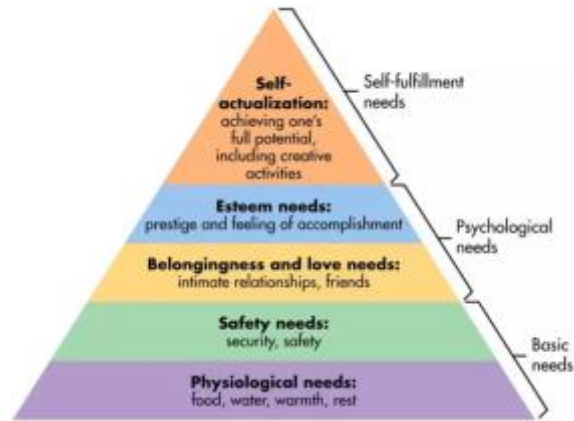
Maslow's Before Bloom's: Strategies to mitigate student anxiety

Introduction

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been increased chatter about Maslow's Before Bloom's. Here we discuss how those two pyramids work together, and what we can do to help our students navigate and belong.

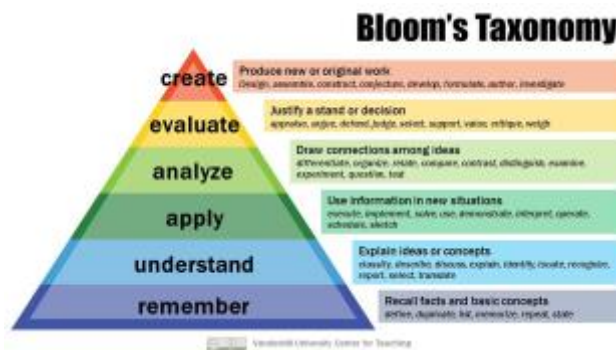
Maslow

Maslow's, as you may recall from psychology lessons, refers to **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**. A theory regarding our needs as humans, and how the needs higher on the pyramid can't be met until the basic and psychological needs are 'more or less' satisfied (Mcleod, 2007).



Bloom

Another pyramid that we love to reference in teaching is Bloom's, a.k.a. **Bloom's Taxonomy**. Just like in Maslow, as you go up the pyramid the stakes are increased. For Bloom's, it is the level of critical thinking that increases.



Mitigate Anxiety



"Anxiety reduces **executive function**, which is mostly handled in the frontal lobe of the brain. Reduced executive function leads to a

- *depletion of cognitive capacity,*
- *trouble focusing,*
- *trouble remembering,*
- *irritability,*
- *difficulty in making decisions,*
- *lowered motivation, and*
- *a shorter attention span.*

Students with mood disorders or developmental disorders such as ADHD may be very familiar with these symptoms."



Self-Care



Self-care is the broad array of strategies we do to promote health (“What do we mean by self-care?,” 2019).

Not only will self-care allow you to be the best you possible, but it will also model healthy habits to your students.

Centering



Centering in a classroom (brick-and-mortar or virtual) might be an exercise done before or during the meeting with the intent to get into the right mindset for learning.

Some examples from Raab (2020); breathing exercises, guided meditation, gratitude journaling.



Connection



Even if we are not in the same physical space, we can still connect! Share personal stories, and invite students to share the same either in class or in office hours. You can create an online community by providing space for sharing and doing. e.g. weekly motivation challenge.

Use breakout rooms, icebreakers, virtual backgrounds, and even "bring your pet to class" days to create a close-knit group of students.

Inspiration



Students look to their instructors as role models. Inspire them by sharing stories of resilience from your own journey. You have the power to uplift your students through stories and attitude.

*"There is no secret to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure."
- [General Colin Powell](#)*

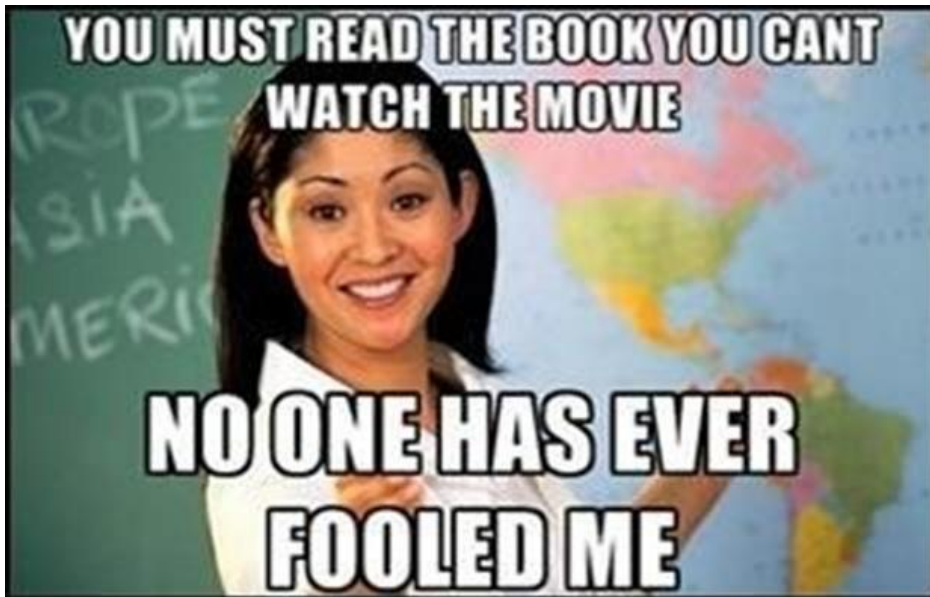
"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day. Never lose a holy curiosity. ... Don't stop to marvel." - [Albert Einstein](#)

"Perseverance is failing 19 times and succeeding the 20th." - [Julie Andrews](#)

Humor



Are you the type who posts funny memes in your Brightspace course? Do you like to lead study sessions in a round of Jeopardy? Do you ever use the Zoom whiteboard to play Pictionary? If so, you might be the type of instructor who uses humor and fun to alleviate stress.



**YOU MUST READ THE BOOK YOU CANT
WATCH THE MOVIE**

**NO ONE HAS EVER
FOOLED ME**

CHALLENGE

ACCEPTED

"How's studying for finals going?"



Predictability



A routine for how you conduct your course will go a long way in setting your student's mind at ease. From the very beginning, let them know what the expectations are, and how they may succeed in your course.

Pacing



Check-in with your students using Zoom chat, Zoom polls, Zoom reactions. In Brightspace set up weekly discussion board check-ins, or an occasional survey or poll, to gauge for understanding. You might find you have to go a little slower, and leverage asynchronous learning so students can go at their own pace.

Flexibility



We provide flexibility by posting recorded lectures, so students can go back and re-listen if they had a bad day, or zoned out during class. Some faculty will change the course policies to allow for more flexibility in late work or absences. Others still will offer ample opportunities for points, and drop the lowest quiz or assignment grade to help their students succeed without constant high-stakes assessments.

Thank you.

This course was made using Microsoft Sway. If you would like help trying Sway for a module in your course, contact us at lit@wit.edu.

References

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