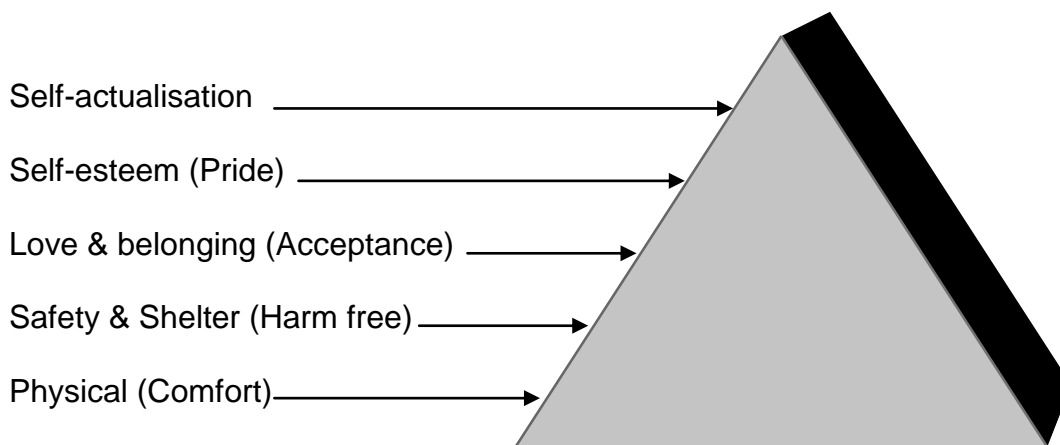**Motivation Theory review**

For

An Academic Audience

This review of motivational theory is aimed at an academic audience, its

purpose is to outline the major motivational theories presented in an essay or

assignment form.

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Motivation Theory Review

Much of the motivation theory available today comes from a very business centred stand point with the likes of Maslow, McGregor, Mayo and Herzberg all working with motivational theory in practice in the workplace. Additional to this a lot of the works previously carried out have come from a transatlantic (American) standpoint. Although I am working on the premise that 'people are people'; at least in the western world.

In the first half of the 20th century sociologist Abraham Maslow proposed that all humans have universal needs and said needs could be categorised into a hierarchical structure. Maslow labelled the five categories as; physical, security, social, esteem and self-actualisation.

Self-actualisation

Self-esteem (Pride)

Love & belonging (Acceptance)

Safety & Shelter (Harm free)

Physical (Comfort)

He theorised that each underlying need had to be satisfied until the subject could move onto what he saw as a more prepotent need. For example it would be almost impossible to achieve success in further education if one was not properly fed and watered in the first place.

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This theory has great impact on educational structure. In order to maximise on the effectiveness of institute-wide and individual classroom teaching programmes teachers in particular must consider students' needs and their hierarchical order. Maslow's work says that this must be a top priority in the development of any programmes so that students have the capability of reaching their highest levels of potential. For instance, if a student has not had breakfast they will be preoccupied with the need for food ahead of being able to learn anything.

Douglas McGregor (1960) however in his Human side of Enterprise works identified what he saw as two theories on an individuals behaviour in the workplace; Theory X and Theory Y.

Theory X assumes that humans have an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if at all possible. Due to this dislike of work, people must be controlled and threatened to work hard enough. Theory X also assumes that the average human dislikes responsibility, prefers to be directed and desires security above all else. Theory Y assumes that humans will direct themselves if they are committed to the goals of the organization. It also assumes that if a job is satisfying, the result will be commitment to the organization and under the proper conditions, humans will seek responsibility.

To this end McGregor suggests that dependant on which type of employee (or in the case of education, learner) you have, this should directly determine the

style of management (teaching) that should be given in order to attain the best results.

Moving on, George Elton Mayo (1927) performed research on human relations and motivation theory at the Hawthorne Works of the General Electric Company in Chicago in the mid 1920's. From his research, he came to find that work is what he called a group activity. The need for recognition, security and sense of belonging is a greater factor in moral than physical conditions of the workplace. Complaints are often symptomatic of disdain over an individual's status and position at work. Social demands both inside and outside the workplace, the latter being uncontrollable, contribute to the attitude, effectiveness and thus motivation of an employee.

As a contrary to this however, Frederick Herzberg's (1959) theory on human relations and organizational motivation includes two components; hygiene and motivation. Unlike Mayo, Herzberg believed that both approaches must be done simultaneously to achieve the desired outcomes.

Hygiene theory refers to the work environment and includes the organization, its policies and administration, type of supervision employees receive, working conditions, interpersonal relations, status and security. Where as, motivation refers to the actual 'on the job' activities. These include recognition, interest and opportunity for growth. The underlying theory behind this two-pronged approach is to treat employees as well as possible, minimizing dissatisfaction. When

people receive recognition for achievement, it drives interest and a sense of responsibility, allowing the individual to grow and advance in their work.

All of the above literature however, as previously stated, is based upon research undertaken in business within a 'working' environment, and although much of this more humanistic theory has been adapted to the education sector, most notably Maslow's work, there are other bodies of work I would like to explore which have their grounding in Education initially. It can however be said that the majority of this work is grounded in the primary and secondary environments and indeed there is little if any work on motivation and 'capture' of students within a further education environment available at the time of writing.

It does to me seem somewhat inappropriate to use purely the afore mentioned humanistic approach to motivation, therefore on a more behaviouristic note I have looked at the works of Bandura (1982) and the theory of social learning end self-efficacy. This theory looks at the learner's self-regulation. It explores how a sense of 'self' influences the choice of activities to be undertaken, how much time the learner is willing to spend on the activity and how persistent the learner will be in accomplishing the desired end product of the activity.

Another aspect of self-efficacy is attribution theory, this demonstrates that a students internal or intrinsic sense of self belief, in working hard to achieve a goal are the determining factors in whether or not the learner will succeed. Studies have focused on goal orientation and the idea that motivation is determined jointly by the expectation that the effort will lead to the goal and that

as some may say, more importantly, the goal is worth attaining. The 'goal' however can be either a tangible item or more 'extrinsic' feeling of worth or achievement such as those Maslow discusses in his hierarchy of needs, once the physical and security requirements have been attained.

Finally I have looked at the constructivist approach to learning theory and thus learning styles. John Dewey (1938) was one of the first to clearly enunciate this idea that learners 'construct' knowledge for themselves, each learner individually constructs meaning to a subject as they learn. The key principals being amongst others, learning is an active process; the learner needs to have the feeling of doing something or they will not feel as if they are learning. People learn to learn as they learn; we create patterns in our own head explaining what we've learnt and how we learnt it in order for us to repeat the exercise. Learning is a social activity; our learning is intimately connected with all we come into contact with. Where as traditional education has always been very insular it can now be seen that we absorb more of our surroundings along with our learning, leading onto learning being contextual depending on where we are and why we are there.

On top of all of this comes the key component of motivation. Not only is it the case that motivation helps learning, it can be said it is essential for learning to take place. This also includes an understanding of ways in which knowledge can be used, As Knowles (1983) amongst others talks about "Unless we know the reasons **why**, we may not be very involved in using the knowledge that may be instilled in us"; even by the most severe and direct teaching.

In summation, there are hundreds if not thousands of researched papers and books on motivation in various walks of life with the vast majority being based in the business world. I have however looked at, what many others and I, would see as the key theories and the theories that can best be translated into the education sector. Maslow's hierarchy of needs explores the needs of the individual to gain universal needs, whereas McGregor focuses on what he believes is human natures intrinsic dislike of work. Mayo's work believed that security and recognition are all a person needs where as Herzberg's believed that on top of this the person needs the basics of a Maslow like hierarchy to be motivated.

The education specific theorists seem to believe that all of these approaches (in conjunction with each other) can apply to the motivation of learners. However the critically reflective teacher must seek to constantly learn on how best to use existing theory on motivation and classroom management and learning styles for the specific needs of the learners being taught on a day-to-day basis.