

## SYNTHESIS OF SOCIAL, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

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### ABSTRACT

When developing quality curriculum programs, a holistic approach must be considered. Foundational to any program considerations in the following areas must be examined: social forces, human development and learning. The balance of this discourse will provide the groundwork for each area, include a personal synthesis of what is meant by such, and cap it off with practical application.

**KEYWORDS:** Synthesis of Social, Social Forces

### INTRODUCTION

First, let's consider the social forces that should dictate the type of education that our schools must consider now and in the future. "All education springs from some image of the future. If the image of the future held by society is grossly inaccurate, its educational system will betray its youth" (Toffler, 1970, p. 363). To protect our youth from betrayal, planning is extremely important. Planning is the GPS that will guide to the exact destination. This reminds me of a time when my family took a cross-country road trip from South Carolina to California. We wanted this trip to be a success by getting to our destination, to be adventurous by visiting vignettes along the way, and be pleasant while riding in the car with our family of four. In order to facilitate the desired results, it was imperative for us to meticulously engage in the process of planning.

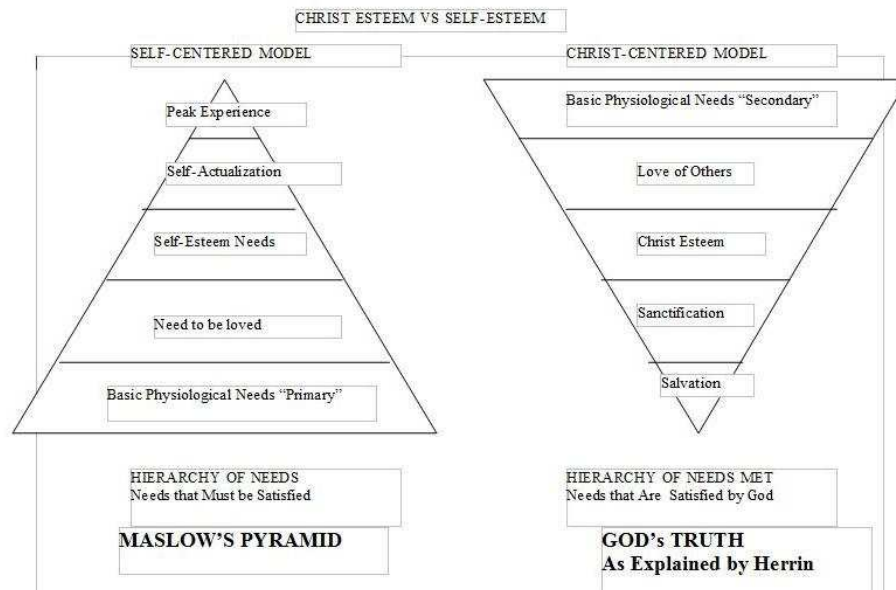
In order for curriculum development to best benefit our society and youth, deposits into a futures planning bank should be frequent and ongoing. As educators preparation of a current curriculum should be one that is forward thinking. This can be a considerable challenge. However, the difficult work in knowing what the future needs of students should be is almost impossible. "Futures planning is the process of conceptualizing the future as a set of possibilities and then taking steps to create the future we want (Parkay, Anttil, & Hass, 2014, p. 56). Therefore, to objectify the process of what should be included in a futures curriculum a great start would be to consider the learning objectives that should be included.

The practical aspects of what should be included in such a curriculum should be ones that address the moral and character of our students, taking care of planet Earth, how to maneuver the consequences of global interdependence and negotiate a vocation that will allow students to evangelize in preparation for heavenly living. Every curriculum should be infused with implementing ethnic and cultural diversity. After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" Revelation 7:9-10 NIV.

We live in a wonderful world and strong emphasis should be placed on students formulating a plan of environmental awareness. God desires us to take care of this world. Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of

Eden to work it and take care of it, Genesis 2:15. Taking a look at the news underscores the fact that students must be able to negotiate the changing morality and global interdependence in a productive manner. We must educate students on how to deal with those with lifestyles that do not mirror their own. The answer cannot be to shoot and kill over 50 individuals in a nightclub as CNN reported just yesterday. These social forces are real and menacing and must be a priority.

Second, human development is an intimate part of curriculum development. Maslow's classic hierarchy of human motives can serve as a starting point for this discussion. However, it must not be considered without looking through the lens of Christ. Consider the Figure below (Herrin, n.d.).



**Figure 1**

These ideas are ones that Jesus seemed to convey when he was on this earth. However, the focus is not on self-esteem but esteem that is Christ centered. Integrating the use of Maslow pyramid with the goal of accepting Christ should become the priority in education. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? Matthew 16:26 NIV.

Third, learning should be a priority. Not learning of a learning style, but pure unadulterated learning. Educators sometimes are paralyzed with trying to figure out a child's learning style as if this is the overarching goal, however, isn't the purpose of curriculum to have students all students learn. From observation, we all learned how to walk and talk from practicing, doing, redoing, observing, working hard, working more, and repetition, despite "learning style." These words do not really fit into a learning style conversation. Yes, some folks are more talented than others and may have a propensity to excel give adequate preparation and time devotion. However, learning should be a priority.

Furthermore, there is a theory that has become popular, which asserts that the brain exhibits neurological plasticity. It grows when stimulated by new neurological connections and thoughts that are prompted not by intelligence by hard work (Dweck, 2006). Moreover, when students are labeled as smart but find a task difficult, they may start to believe that they have lost their smarts and stop working. The same concept applies to the "dumb". They may never try to accomplish anything because they would think, "Why even bother." Howard Gardner asserts "The challenge confronting educators is to figure out how to help individuals employ their distinctive intellectual profiles to help master the tasks and

disciplines needed to thrive in the society” (Gardner, 2014, p. 248).

Practically speaking, educators should teach the neurology of learning from the perspective that the brain is plastic. Meaning it is capable of expanding and creating new neurons the more it works at a problem. Classrooms should become more about engaging in the process of learning and less about grades. How can we make this a reality? The entire system would have to be reworked. However, each teacher can make a small contribution in the classroom, by learning to award the process. In the end, when the process is mastered, the sky is only the beginning!

## CONCLUSIONS

The forces that are highlighted in this paper, social, human development and learning all have a tremendous impact on a viable curriculum development. The three strands of each area will make the process stronger.

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