Assessing Coverage of Maslow's Theory in Educational Psychology Textbooks: A Content Analysis

Steven R. Wininger & Antony D. Norman, Western Kentucky University

Although Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (HNT) is one of the most prevalent theories in psychology, the authors argued that it is also one of the most misinterpreted or misrepresented, particularly in educational psychology textbooks. Therefore, after carefully reading Maslow's writings on HNT they conducted a content analysis of 18 educational psychology textbooks to ascertain the accuracy and depth of coverage of Maslow's HNT. Overall, the results of this content analysis revealed some disappointing trends. A primary concern is the inaccuracy in the presentation. A secondary concern is the minimal attempt to apply the theory meaningfully to educational contexts. The potential origin of these inaccuracies as well as additional problems with coverage of motivation as a whole in educational psychology textbooks are discussed.

First espoused in 1943 and further developed over several decades, Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation continues to resonate in various academic and business professions. A quick *Google Scholar* search of books, articles, and presentations published during the years from 2000–2009 with Maslow in the title yields over 150 entries. From these entries, one can find evidence that his ideas touch a broad range of fields including business (Conley, 2007; Dye, Mills, & Weatherbee, 2005; Kelley, 2002; O'Connor & Yballe, 2007; Primeaux & Vega, 2004; Stum, 2001), psychology (Coy & Kovacs-Long, 2005; Hanley & Abell, 2002; Rathunde, 2001), education (Anderson, 2004; Denton, Doran, & McKinney, 2002), sociology (Tanner, 2005), technology (Jahn, 2004; Johnson, 2003), medicine (Ventegodt, Merrick, & Andersen, 2003), and even prison administration (Jones, 2004). Nearly all approach Maslow's ideas positively as still current and relevant to understanding human nature.

Further evidence of Maslow's popularity in business and management can be found in Miner (2001). He asked 100 management scholars, 47 of whom responded, to identify the most important and useful theories in management or organizational functioning. Of over 110 theories nominated, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was among the top five.

From a more personal context as a psychology professor, after finishing teaching motivation in my undergraduate Educational Psychology courses, I (Steven R. Wininger) typically ask students, "Which theory/approach did you like best?" Every semester for years, the students have consistently selected Maslow's hierarchy of needs more frequently than any other theory or approach. Lest the reader think that I cater to Maslow's hierarchy, I do not— my favorite theories are those related to self-determination, goal orientation, and attribution.

More important for this study, several years ago I read a post on the Teaching in Psychological Sciences

(TIPS) list serve, which challenged and ultimately led to a change in my interpretation of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. I was always under the impression that lower needs must be met before higher needs would even emerge.

That I had been misinterpreting Maslow's theory for years alarmed me but not quite as much as a more recent experience. A graduate student was presenting on Maslow's hierarchy in a research practicum. When I challenged his interpretation of how the hierarchy worked, I was surprised to find that most of the faculty in the practicum agreed with the student, that is, lower needs must be completely met prior to higher need emergence. One faculty member went so far as to argue that my interpretation (that each need varied in terms of its strength at various times) was illogical. I knew better than to publicly inform my colleague that this is how Maslow explained the hierarchy in his original paper and book that followed.

As I shared my enlightenment about Maslow's hierarchy and recent experience with my colleague, Antony D. Norman, we became curious about the presentation of Maslow's hierarchy in academic texts, particularly, undergraduate educational psychology textbooks. If an educational psychology course represents one of the few opportunities for teacher candidates to be exposed Maslow's ideas, then it becomes important to investigate the prevalence of Maslow's hierarchy in these textbooks. Second, it becomes even more important to investigate the accuracy of their description of Maslow's hierarchy. As Pinder (1998)

noted, Maslow's hierarchical theory of human motivation is "one of the most familiar theories among academics and practitioners" yet it is also "probably the most misunderstood and the most frequently oversimplified and misrepresented" (p. 60). Thus, our study tested Pinder's assertion to answer the question, "Is Maslow's theory misunderstood, oversimplified, and misrepresented?" Before describing the methodology and results of our content analysis, however, we provide a brief, and we believe accurate, review of Maslow's theory to establish the context for our work.

A Brief Review of Maslow's Key Ideas

Although Maslow wrote articles prior to 1943 that described various aspects and ideas of his then unformed theory, it was his 1943 article published in *Psychological Review* that revealed his comprehensive theory of human motivation. He continued to refine his theory based on the concept of a "hierarchy of needs" over several decades (Maslow, 1943, 1968, 1987). Maslow's writings indicated that he attempted to formulate a positive theory of motivation that would satisfy a self-imposed set of 13 theoretical demands. At the same time, by using clinical observations and empirical data and readily acknowledging that he borrowed ideas from James, Dewey, Wertheimer, Goldstein, Freud, Adler, and Gestalt psychology, Maslow outlined what he called the *basic needs*: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. He also referred to these needs as basic goals of human beings.

In regard to physiological needs, although Maslow provided exemplars (e.g., hunger, sex, thirst, sleep, and

maternal behavior), he noted that it would be impossible and useless to make an exhaustive list of fundamental physiological needs. The need for safety refers to feeling nonthreatened, for example, by wild animals, extremes of temperature, criminals, and so forth. Maslow added that for children, this need includes having order and stability in life (e.g., a schedule or routine, a degree of predictability). If these first needs are fairly well gratified, then love–affection–belongingness (shortened in most texts to *love needs*) needs emerge. Maslow suggested that a thwarting of love needs is the most common cause of maladjustment and psychopathology. Love needs are followed by esteem needs, which Maslow classified into two categories: the desire for achievement or adequacy and the desire for reputation or respect from others. The last human need Maslow described as self-actualization, a desire "to become everything one is capable of becoming" (Maslow, 1987, p. 64).

Although most are aware of Maslow's five needs, fewer know that Maslow espouses preconditions that exist for basic needs, as well as cognitive needs, to be satisfied. As Maslow (1987) stated, "These conditions are not ends in themselves but they are *almost* so since they are so closely related to the basic needs" (p. 64). The most frequently noted of these preconditions includes freedoms related to autonomy (speaking, actions, and expression); freedom of inquiry and expression, such as seeking knowledge; and freedom to defend oneself and seek justice. In addition to being a precondition, "seeking knowledge" is also listed as the first of the two cognitive needs. This first cognitive need is outlined in the original 1943 article and in subsequent writings. The second cognitive need, "aesthetic needs," is not proposed until later writings.

In regard to the human movement along the hierarchy of needs, Maslow purported that the basic needs are organized in a hierarchy of prepotency. Physiological needs are the most prepotent of all needs, that is, "in the human being who is missing everything in life in extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any others" (Maslow, 1987, p. 87). However, one should note Maslow's use of "extreme" and similarly strong terms to describe the level of these needs. Maslow further argued that emergency conditions (e.g., war, natural catastrophes) almost by definition are rare in a normal functioning society. Thus, Maslow suggested that the average American is experiencing appetite rather than hunger when he says, "I am hungry." Maslow continued on to clarify that satisfaction of the needs is not an "all-or-none" phenomenon, admitting that his earlier statements may have given "the false impression that a need must be satisfied 100 per cent before the next need emerges" (p. 69). Instead, Maslow asserted "most members of our society, who are normal, are partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time" (pp. 69–70), and he provided a hypothetical example of an individual whose needs are satisfied to the following degrees: physiological, 85%; safety, 70%; love, 50%; esteem, 40%; and self-actualization, 10%.

In regard to the structure of his hierarchy, Maslow proposed that the

order in the hierarchy "is not nearly as rigid" (p. 68) as he may have implied in his earlier description of the hierarchy. Hence, he allowed for the possibility of exceptions to the order of needs, even speculating that for some people the order of specific needs might be reversed. Examples include self-esteem being more important to an individual than love, and an individual whose drive to create or uphold an ideal takes precedence over all of the other needs. Maslow went so far as to suggest that certain needs may lose value or even die out in some people. Thus, chronic satisfaction of a need may lead to the devaluation of that need so that a more basic need is deprived for a time while a less basic need is pursued, or a person who is regularly rejected by others might cease to seek out love and be satisfied with physiological and safety needs alone. However, Maslow noted that after an extended period of deprivation individuals tend to reevaluate both needs and switch the importance back to the original order. Finally, Maslow cautioned the reader to differentiate between behavior and desires because behavior may not always reflect an individual's desire. He also pointed out that most behavior is multimotivated and noted that "any behavior tends to be determined by several or *all* of the basic needs simultaneously rather than by only one of them" (p. 71).

In summary, from our review of Maslow's theory, we gleaned five key ideas that guided our content analysis: (a) human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs; (b) preconditions and cognitive needs exist that affect human motivation; (c) needs are organized in a hierarchy of prepotency in which more basic needs must be *more or less* met (rather than all or none) prior to higher needs; (d) the order of needs is not rigid but instead may be flexible based on external circumstances or individual differences; and (e) most behavior is multimotivated, that is, simultaneously determined by more than one basic need. In addition, our analysis included whether the textbook used a triangle, pyramid, or another figure to illustrate Maslow's theory (something Maslow never did); whether the textbook included current research related to Maslow's theory; and whether the textbook provided practical application of Maslow's ideas to the school or classroom setting.

Method
Selection of Textbooks

Eighteen educational psychology textbooks were selected for analysis. To gather a list of potential textbooks, major textbook publishers were contacted and asked to identify their most requested textbooks designed specifically for educational psychology courses or courses with similar titles, content, or both. We also requested that the publishers send their most current edition of these textbooks. In the reviewing of textbooks for possible content analysis, the objective was to ensure inclusion of best-selling and other frequently used textbooks. Thus, the goal was not an exhaustive list of textbooks, but one that clearly represents textbooks used in the typical educational psychology course in the United States. The final list consisted of the textbooks identified in Table 1.

Table 1. *Textbooks Used for Analysis*

Authorship	Title	Publication year	Publisher
Alexander	*Psychology in Learning and Instruction*	2006	Pearson Education
Eggen & Kauchak	*Educational Psychology: Windows on Classrooms* (8th ed.)	2010	Pearson Education
Elliot, Kratochwill, & Cook	*Educational Psychology: Effective Teaching, Effective Learning*	2000	McGraw-Hill
Fetsco & McClure	*Educational Psychology: An Integrated Approach to Classroom Decisions*	2005	Pearson Education
Gage & Berliner	*Educational Psychology* (6th ed.)	1998	Houghton Mifflin
Henson & Eller	*Educational Psychology for Effective Teaching*	1999	Wadsworth
Jordan & Porath	*Educational Psychology: A Problem-Based Approach*	2006	Pearson Education
Lefrancois	*Psychology for Teaching* (10th ed.)	2000	Wadsworth
O'Donnell, Reeve, & Smith	*Educational Psychology: Reflection for Action* (2nd ed.)	2009	Wiley
Ormrod	*Educational Psychology: Developing Learners* (6th ed.)	2008	Pearson Education
Parsons, Hinson, & Sardo-Brown	*Educational Psychology: A Practitioner-Researcher Model of Teaching*	2001	Wadsworth
Santrock	*Educational Psychology* (4th ed.)	2009	McGraw-Hill
Seifert	*Constructing a Psychology of Teaching and Learning*	1999	Houghton Mifflin
Sharpes	*Advanced Psychology for Teachers*	1999	McGraw-Hill
Slavin	*Educational Psychology* (9th ed.)	2009	Pearson Education
Snowman, McCown & Biehler	*Psychology Applied to Teaching* (12th ed.)	2009	Houghton Mifflin
Sternberg & Williams	*Educational Psychology* (2nd ed.)	2010	Pearson Education
Woolfolk	*Educational Psychology* (11th ed.)	2010	Pearson Education

Coding

Two seminal texts on content analysis were consulted to design the methodology for the review (Holsti, 1969; Weber, 1990) and to the content analysis protocol (see the Appendix). Both authors, educational psychologists each with nearly 10 years of undergraduate education psychology teaching experience, initially coded each textbook separately. To develop and refine the protocol, one textbook not selected for the review was used as a test case. After meeting to discuss scoring challenges and protocol ambiguities, we revised the protocol and coded two additional textbooks. Again, after meeting to compare results and discuss any final ambiguities, we refined the analysis protocol a final time. We independently coded all remaining textbooks and then met to discuss each textbook and reach consensus on final scores and codes.

Results

Coverage

The first question addressed was, "How many of the textbooks covered Maslow's theory?" Our review revealed that 16 of the 18 textbooks that were reviewed cover Maslow's theory. A secondary question was, "Of the textbooks covering Maslow's theory how many pages were devoted to it?" We found that the average coverage was 1.94 pages ($SD = 0.99$).

Accuracy

Six questions were assessed to determine the degree of accuracy with regard to Maslow's theory. First, we assessed whether the textbook's list of needs was consistent with Maslow's basic list (physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization). All 16 included the five basic needs. In addition, 12 of the 16 included other needs: intellectual or need for knowledge and aesthetic appreciation, both of which Maslow described as preconditions. Next, we assessed whether Maslow's list of needs was presented in the form of a triangle, pyramid, or some other figure. Eleven of the 16 presented the hierarchy as a triangle. Additionally, one textbook presented it as steps, another as overlapping bars, and a third as an arrow shape similar to a ladder. Two did not use any type of figure. One textbook mentioned that the representation of the hierarchy as a triangle was not Maslow's idea and that it is misleading.

Our third question about accuracy assessed whether the definition of each need was consistent with how Maslow defined them (see the "Coding Protocol" for our definitions). Most textbook authors gave definitions that were consistent with Maslow for physiological needs, safety needs, and self-actualization. The two needs commonly misrepresented are love (giving and receiving) and esteem. Most textbooks neglect the multidimensionality of these two needs, failing to capture the complexity outlined by Maslow. Our next question with regard to accuracy was whether textbooks presented the preconditions, which are (a) freedom of autonomy and (b) freedom to defend oneself or seek justice; and the two cognitive needs, which are (a) knowing and understanding and (b) aesthetics**.** Two of the 16 textbooks (Fetsco & McClure, 2005; Snowman, McCown, & Biehler, 2009) listed them and described them

accurately. Ten of the 16 included some of them but presented them as additional needs. Four textbooks did not list these preconditions at all.

Whether textbooks explained the prepotency of the basic needs was assessed next. Fourteen of the 16 textbooks inaccurately presented prepotency as "all or none." Only two textbooks (Slavin, 2006; Snowman, McCown, & Biehler, 2009) presented prepotency as degrees of satisfaction. Finally, we assessed whether exceptions to prepotency were noted. None of the 16 textbooks noted any exceptions to prepotency.

Textbook coverage of the topic humanistic psychology was not part of our original questions about accuracy. However, a reviewer of our work suggested that lack of or inaccurate coverage of Maslow might be mitigated by textbook authors' discussion of this topic, especially if authors emphasized its philosophical underpinnings that intentionally focused less on scientific measurement of behavior and more on understanding the nuances and complexities of human experience. Such a discussion, they argued, might provide the context for why authors were not as precise in their writing about Maslow as we might have expected. Hence, we revisited each textbook and its coverage of humanism.

Ten of the 18 textbooks did not contain any coverage of humanism. Five of the textbooks contained between one to three sentences either defining or briefly describing humanism as a lead in to their presentation of Maslow or sometimes Carl Rogers. Only three textbooks discussed humanism as a

school of thought beyond a simple introduction. Two (Lefrancois, 2000; Snowman, McCown, & Biehler, 2009) of these stand out by their particularly thorough discussion of humanism. In his chapter entirely devoted to humanistic education, Lefancois (2000) pointed out humanistic psychology's emphasis on individual uniqueness, its links to existential philosophy, and its general disdain for science that "tends to dehumanize people" and the "technological orientation of approaches such as behaviorism" (p. 239). In their discussion of humanism, Snowman et al. (2009) included sections on humanism as an approach to teaching, key figures and their ideas, teaching from a humanistic orientation, the humanistic model, research on aspects of humanistic education, and using technology to support humanistic approaches to instruction. Our review of textbook coverage of humanism led us to conclude that most textbooks rarely used the less scientifically rigorous ideas of humanism to provide a rationale for an imprecise presentation of Maslow—or if they did so, they failed to explicitly acknowledge the rationale to the naïve reader.

Research and Application

Our last two questions assessed whether textbooks reviewed research on Maslow and whether they provided applications of Maslow's theory to classrooms and teaching. Only one textbook (Sharpes, 1999) briefly mentioned any specific research on Maslow's hierarchy, but it does not indicate whether it supported the theory. Concerning our attempt to ascertain whether textbooks provided applications of Maslow's theory to the classroom, one textbook (Snowman et al., 2009)

outlined how to apply the theory in a manner that correctly interprets Maslow's theory. Two textbooks explained how to apply the theory but in doing so perpetuated some of the misinterpretations of the theory. Nine of the 16 provided a mixture of educational implication or illustrations rather than direct applications; 2 provided no classroom application of the theory. It should be noted that in most textbooks this is where authors posed disclaimers about the problems associated with a strict interpretation or application of Maslow's idea. For example, Ormrod (2008) noted, "Humanistic theories are grounded more in philosophy than in research findings. . . . Nevertheless, they provide useful insights into human motivation" (p. 388), later adding, "Unfortunately, Maslow's hierarchy of needs was based on little hard evidence; thus, many theorists continue to regard his theory as being more conjecture than fact. Nevertheless, it provides a helpful reminder for us as teachers." (p. 389). Others described Maslow as "intuitively sensible and appealing" (Eggen & Kauchak, 2004) or as providing "rich general insights into human behavior" (Elliot, Kratochwill, & Cook, 2000).

Discussion

Overall, the results of this content analysis reveal some disturbing trends. A primary concern is the inaccuracy in the presentation of one of the most prevalent motivation theories. A secondary concern is the minimal attempt to apply the theory meaningfully to educational contexts. Most of the textbooks that were reviewed (89%) covered Maslow's theory with the average amount of coverage being two pages. We expected that most textbooks would cover Maslow's theory as it is traditionally included in educational psychology textbooks and continues to be one of the most popular theories of human motivation, at least in popular culture if not in the research literature.

Our questions related to accuracy revealed the most interesting findings. We were surprised to see that 12 of the 16 textbooks included additional needs, intellectual or need for knowledge and aesthetic appreciation, beyond the five outlined by Maslow. Apparently, many authors are now treating what Maslow termed "preconditions" as additional needs and not designating them as preconditions or cognitive needs. It would be interesting to know which textbook started this trend and when it occurred. We were also troubled to see so many textbooks present Maslow's hierarchy as a triangle or pyramid, because not only did Maslow never use such a figure, but also it perpetuates misunderstanding of Maslow's idea of prepotency.

In regard to prepotency, only two textbooks accurately presented it as degrees of satisfaction. That so many textbooks presented this phenomenon inaccurately was not surprising, as our own misunderstanding of this phenomenon is what sparked our study. In a similar regard, none of the textbooks noted any exceptions to prepotency. Ironically, some authors (Eggen & Kauchak, 2004; Woolfolk, 2004) acknowledgedthat Maslow's hierarchy is often criticized for failing to recognize that persons may be able tofulfill higher needs even when lower needs remain unmet.

Some other minor inaccuracies included most textbooks neglecting the

multidimensionality of the love and self-esteem needs, thus failing to capture the complexity outlined by Maslow. Additionally, most did not acknowledge Maslow's preconditions of freedom of inquiry and expression, and to know and understand.

What are some possible explanations for why Maslow's theory is inaccurately presented? Rowan (1998) simply stated that inaccuracies occur because Maslow's theory is often badly presented, suggesting two modifications to the usual presentation of Maslow's theory. First, he suggested that it be made clear that Maslow outlined two different types of esteem needs: esteem for oneself (dignity) and esteem from others (respect or reputation). Rowan cited Maslow's writings where Maslow indicated that the need for respect or reputation is most important for children and adolescents and precedes real self-esteem or dignity. Second, he suggested that writers discontinue presenting Maslow's theory as a triangle or pyramid, instead recommending that if a figure were to be used then a ladder would be more appropriate because it does not suggest an endpoint.

Another possible reason for inaccuracies is because, as Eckerman (1968) noted in his review of management textbooks, many writers take considerable liberty in naming and defining the needs in Maslow's theory. He stated that the needs are most often stated in management as safety, physical, social, ego, and creative, which generally, but not completely, correlate with Maslow's list of physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization.

To Rowan and Eckerman's speculations, we have added our own. We contend that Maslow's theory is not only misrepresented in textbooks but also is misunderstood by educators, psychologists, and the public because of its brief historical presentation in textbooks, its intuitive appeal, the borrowing of ideas among textbook writers, and its minimal research base. First, as our own research demonstrates, most textbooks devote no more than two pages to their coverage of Maslow, typically within the broader context of learner motivation and a few within the context of humanistic approaches to motivation. The possibility of a theory that Maslow refined over decades and described in several articles and books being accurately described in a couple of pages seems unlikely. In his writings, Maslow often painstakingly explained nuances in his theory and attempted to anticipate and clarify possible misconceptions of his ideas. Again, capturing these complexities in a brief summary would be nearly impossible.

Second, Maslow's theory, like so many humanistic theories, has "mass" intuitive appeal by the very fact that the theory is humanistic—the ideas resonate with what it means to be human and the uniqueness of the human experience. As such, most people believe, rightly or wrongly, that they understand Maslow's theory because they can easily, if perhaps superficially, interpret their own experiences through the hierarchy. Many of the textbooks actually mention this aspect of Maslow's theory but seem to contribute to misinterpretation by their imprecise portrayal of his ideas. In addition, because Maslow refined his theory over time the portrayal of certain elements of his theory are contingent on

the source one reads. In Maslow's 1943 article, he outlined preconditions and the cognitive need to know, yet there is no mention of the cognitive need for aesthetics. Subsequent writings include both cognitive needs: need to know and need for aesthetics.

Third, we argue that Maslow's theory is misinterpreted because of the borrowing of ideas among textbook writers. Although not part of our research, we believe we are safe in assuming that at some time in the past, one textbook author chose to depict Maslow's hierarchy by using a triangle or pyramid. With the passage of time as other authors wrote or updated their textbooks, they borrowed this idea from the originator. A more recent example of likely borrowing is that two thirds of the textbooks we reviewed all make the same mistake of including Maslow's preconditions as though they were additional needs in Maslow's hierarchy.

Fourth, Maslow's theory has a relatively thin research base. Thus, its mass appeal, lack of research, and, very likely, even its roots in humanistic and existential philosophies that rejected overly prescriptive explanations of human behavior, gives it more of a pop psychology status that can be more loosely explained and applied. The last issue addressed by this study was the presentation of research to support Maslow's theory and attempts to apply the theory meaningfully to educational contexts. Only one textbook mentioned any research on Maslow's hierarchy, and this mention was brief without any indication of whether the research supported the theory or not (Sharpes, 1999). Perhaps the same lack of research that affected accurate presentation

mentioned earlier also partially explains why less than half of the reviewed textbooks apply Maslow's theory to the classroom in a meaningful manner and only one does so in a manner consistent with the Maslow's theory. However, this failure to apply Maslow's theoretical ideas to education is particularly disconcerting in light of Maslow's book, which addresses the ideal goals and processes of education, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, in which he argued that a humanistic educational approach would develop people who are

"stronger, healthier, and
would take their own lives
into their hands to a greater
extent. With increased
personal responsibility for
one's personal life, and with
a rational set of values to
guide one's choosing,
people would begin to
actively change the society
in which they lived".
(Maslow, 1971, p. 195)

As a final closing observation, that so few textbooks meaningfully demonstrate how to apply Maslow's theory in educational contexts raises another issue—coverage of motivation in educational psychology textbooks. Most textbooks followed a rather fragmented approach to teaching motivation, such as organizing theories by various schools of thought (e.g., behavioral, humanistic, etc.), with few providing an overarching framework to bring together various motivation theories and concepts. Such presentations likely portray motivation as a fragmented field with no order or sequence to how, when, or why these theories may influence or may be used to influence the classroom environment. Thus, a framework that organizes and

synthesizes motivation theories and research should lead to a more accurate representation of the ideas of Maslow and others, improved student understanding of these theories, and a more cohesive understanding of how motivational concepts apply to the classroom and larger contexts. Our own discussions of this dilemma have led us to identify a potential solution. In our recent roundtable discussion session at the American Psychological Association's Teaching of Educational Psychology preconference (Wininger & Norman, 2009), we proposed organizing motivation concepts within the framework of Zimmerman's Social Cognitive Theory of Self-Regulation.

Prior to outlining our final conclusions it is necessary to ask and answer a bigger question: Is Maslow really relevant for teachers with regard to student motivation? We feel that Maslow is relevant for classroom teachers. Maslow's theory prompts teachers to think about potential deterrents to learning as well as motives. We feel that most of the lower needs, if mostly unmet, would clearly undermine a child's ability to maintain attention and focus on learning (e.g., if a child is hungry, tired, scared, feels reviled, and is socially isolated). On the other hand it is common practice to attempt to motivate a child through opportunities for them to foster their self-esteem and delve into contexts that reflect their own personal strengths and interests.

So what does our analysis suggest for educational psychology textbooks? Should Maslow's theory be taught in educational psychology? If so, to what extent should his ideas be presented? It seems that most textbooks are ambivalent about Maslow—on the one hand, unwilling to remove his theory entirely from their textbook and, on the other, unwilling to devote the space necessary to address potential misconceptions and to help students accurately apply Maslow to the classroom setting. However, this "middle of the road" approach does more harm than good.

On the basis of our belief that Maslow continues to make a significant contribution to fostering effective teaching, and, thus, should remain in educational psychology textbooks, we suggest the following for textbooks. First, review the accuracy of the presentation of Maslow, separating out what Maslow actually proposed and inaccuracies that have entered into textbooks based on what other textbooks have said about Maslow. Second, provide an overview of Maslow's hierarchy within the context of a humanistic philosophical approach that concerned itself less with precision than with describing aspects of human experience. In addition, if textbooks want to use this context to interpret Maslow more loosely, then make this intention explicit to the reader. Third, acknowledge that Maslow's thinking evolved over time. Fourth, acknowledge that the theory's intuitive appeal leads to potential misconceptions and describe the most common misconceptions. Finally, provide potential applications (and misapplications) of Maslow's theory to student motivation and the classroom setting. Such an approach should not require a large expansion in coverage of Maslow in most textbooks, especially if authors were to replace inaccurate photographic depictions of his

theory with a more thorough explanation of his ideas.

References

Anderson, S. B. (2004). How to dazzle Maslow: Preparing your library, staff, and teens to reach self-actualization. *Public Library Quarterly, 23*(3/4), 49–58.

Conley, C. (2007). *Peak: How great companies get their mojo from Maslow.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Coy, D. R., & Kovacs-Long, J. (2005). Maslow and Miller: An exploration of gender and affiliation in the journey of competence. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 83*, 138–145.

Denton, L. F., Doran, M. V., & McKinney, D. (2002). Integrated use of Bloom and Maslow for instructional success in technical and scientific fields. *Proceedings of the 2002 American Society for Engineering, Session 2793.*

Dye, K., Mills, A. J., & Weatherbee, T. (2005). Maslow: Man interrupted: Reading management theory in context. *Management Decision, 43*(10), 1375–1395.

Eckerman, A. C. (1968). A new look at need theory. *Training and Development Journal, 22,* 18–22.

Hanley, S. J., & Abell, S. C. (2002). Maslow and relatedness: Creating an interpersonal model of self-actualization. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 42*(4), 37–57.

Holsti, O. R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Jahn, M., (2004). User needs in a Maslow Schemata. In *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Spatial Data Quality 2004*, Bruck. Vol. 2,GeoInfo Series 28b, Vienna 2004. pp. 169-182.

Johnson, D. (2003). Maslow and motherboards: Taking a hierarchical view of technology planning. *Multimedia Schools, 10*, 26–33.

Jones, M. (2004). Maslow's hierarchy of needs can lower recidivism. *Corrections Today, 66*(4), 18.

Kelley, P. (2002). Revisiting Maslow: Motivation, retention, and performance after Sept. 11. *Workspan, 45*(5), 50–55.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50,* 370–396.

Maslow, A. H. (1968). *Toward a psychology of being* (2nd ed.). New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Maslow, A. H. (1971). *The farther reaches of human nature.* New York: Viking Press.

Maslow, A. H. (1987). *Motivation and personality* (3rd ed.). Delhi, India: Pearson Education.

Miner, J. B. (2001). The validity and usefulness of theories in an emerging organizational science. *Academy of Management Review, 9*, 296–306.

O'Connor, D., & Yballe, L. (2007). Maslow revisited: Constructing a road map of human nature. *Journal of Management Education, 31*(6), 738–756.

Pinder, C. (1998). *Work motivation in organizational behavior*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Primeaux, P., & Vega, G. (2004). Operationalizing Maslow: Religion and flow as business partners. *Journal of Business Ethics, 38*, 97–108.

Rowan, J. (1998). Maslow amended. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 38*, 81–92.

Stum, D. L. (2001). Maslow revisited: Building the employee commitment pyramid. *Strategy & Leadership, 29*, 4–9.

Rathunde, K. (2001). Toward a psychology of optimal human functioning: What positive psychology can learn from the "experiential turns" of James, Dewey, and Maslow. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 41*, 135–153.

Tanner, R. E. S. (2005). Applied sociology and institutionalized professionalism. Some reflections on the pragmatics of child care in developing societies. An adaptation of Maslow's hierarchy and the bureaucratic imperative. *Journal of Social Science, 11*, 15–20.

Ventegodt, S., Merrick, J., & Andersen, N. J. (2003). Quality of life theory III. Maslow revisited. *The Scientific World Journal, 3,* 1050–1057.

Weber, R. P. (1990). *Basic content analysis* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Wininger, S. R., & Norman, A. D. (2009, August). *Why is the coverage of motivation so fragmented? A discussion and proposed solution.* Roundtable discussion presented at the 2009 APA preconference on Teaching Educational Psychology, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Appendix. Maslow Content Analysis Protocol

Text Title:		Author:		
Is Maslow's theory of motivation present in this text?			Yes_____	No_____
How many textbook pages are devoted to Maslow? (Count Figures/Diagrams as part of the page)	Circle <1/4p or Quantify to the nearest 1/4 p (rounding up or down): _____			
Indicate all page nos. that cover Maslow (more than just a citation):				
Which references are given for Maslow's theory within the pages listed above?				
What figure is used to present Maslow's hierarchy of needs?	Ladder	Triangle	Steps	Other	None

Division of needs	Present (yes–no)	Where is the division?			

Make the following judgments about each need listed below:	Present (yes–no)	*Defined/Described (directly– indirectly– not at all)	**Consistent with Maslow (yes–no)	Complete (yes–no)	Comments:
Physiological (hunger, thirst, sleep)					
Safety (A. not feeling threatened AND B. order and stability)					
Belongingness & love (A. feel like one belongs, B. be loved and receive affection, AND C. opportunity to give love/affection)					
Esteem (A. achievement/competence & B. respect from others, held in high esteem)					
Self-Actualization (fulfilling one's potential as a human being)					
Additional needs are included (if yes, list them)					

*For Defined/Described: Answer "Directly" only if the given definition/description is directly connected to the particular need in the section where the needs are outlined. *Indirectly* = the need is defined or described somewhere in the text but not in the section where the needs are outlined (e.g., "a child who is sent to school hungry and thirsty would not be able to learn due their physiological needs being unmet"). *Not at all* = the need is never defined or described anywhere.

**For Consistent with Maslow: Answer "Yes" as	0 (Missing)	1 (Indicator not met)	2 (Indicator partially met)	3 (Indicator met)	Score– Explanation
1.Hierarchy of needs is listed	Hierarchy of needs is missing	Hierarchy of needs clearly inaccurate	Hierarchy of needs is BASICALLY accurate, BUT some needs are called by names other than those provided by Maslow OR additional needs are listed	Hierarchy of needs is CLEARLY accurate, including physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization	
2. Preconditions of freedom of inquiry, knowing– understanding, and aesthetic needs are described	Preconditions missing	Some–all preconditions implied OR are listed as additional needs in the hierarchy	Preconditions are described BUT not clearly reported as cognitive needs that overlap with hierarchy of needs	Preconditions are clearly described AND reported as cognitive needs that overlap with hierarchy of needs	
3. Prepotency of basic needs explained	Prepotency is NOT discussed	Prepotency is described– implied as all or none	Prepotency is described– implied as all of none, BUT the rarity of extreme conditions which would precipitate the occurrence is noted	Prepotency is clearly described as degrees of satisfaction	
4. Exceptions to prepotency noted	No exceptions to the hierarchical nature of needs are noted	Exceptions to the hierarchical nature of needs are inaccurately described	Some exceptions to the hierarchical nature of needs are noted BUT are not clearly tied to Maslow's ideas	Some exceptions to the hierarchical nature of needs are noted AND are clearly tied to Maslow's ideas	
5. Research on Maslow's theory is discussed	No research on Maslow's theory is discussed	Research on Maslow's theory is briefly mentioned with no indication to how it is supportive–not supportive	Some research supportive of Maslow's theory is discussed BUT not unsupportive research	Research both supportive AND unsupportive of Maslow is discussed	

6. Criticism of–Controversy surrounding Maslow's theory is discussed	No criticism of–controversy surrounding Maslow's theory is discussed	Criticism of–controversy surrounding Maslow's theory is discussed in superficial–inaccurate terms	Criticism of–controversy surrounding Maslow's theory is discussed and discussion is thorough, BUT implications related to application or interpretations are not provided	Criticism of–controversy surrounding Maslow's theory is discussed and discussion is thorough, AND implications related to application or interpretations are provided	
7. Applications to classroom are provided	Application to classrooms–school is missing	Applications to classrooms–school are clearly inaccurate OR superficial, lacking clear connection to theory OR *only serve as educational illustrations*	Applications to classrooms–schools are *deliberate*, thoughtful and connected to theory BUT still perpetuate some misunderstandings of theory (e.g., all or none prepotency)	Applications to classrooms–school are deliberate, thoughtful, connected to theory, AND clearly consistent with theoretical implications	

Steven R. Wininger is a Professor of Psychology at Western Kentucky University. He teaches educational psychology, psychology of motivation, and sport psychology. His research interests are in motivation, specifically in teaching people to self-regulate. His research spans three different contexts: exercise, learning, and sport. Antony (Tony) D. Norman is Associate Dean for Accountability and Research and Professor of Psychology in Western Kentucky University's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences. His research interests include the development of comprehensive data systems to measure initial teacher preparation and accomplished teaching, especially in light of how measures of teaching quality relate to student learning.