



Courtesy Roosevelt School, Detroit

A Study of Needs Fulfillment _____

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This representative case of a fifth grade child indicates some processes involved in needs fulfillment. Kathryn Feyereisen, associate professor of education at Wayne University, Detroit, reports the work attempted in releasing the emotional tensions in one situation, with pointers and findings which teachers may apply in varying situations to enrich a child's living and learning.

WITH INCREASING CONCERN teachers, principals, and supervisors seek help in making organized efforts to meet the emotional needs of children and youth in school living. They see the effects of failure to meet basic human needs manifested in behavior problems, sterile learning situations, boredom on the part of some individuals, and outright resistance to learning in others. They sense the relationship of needs to learning and accept the idea that behavior is purposive and directed toward goals. They accept the notion

that goals are set in terms of meeting needs for achievement, belonging, affection; freedom from overburdening fear, guilt, and economic insecurity; sharing in decisions; and extending common concerns.

Teachers have come a long way in their understanding of these basic premises. The area of indecision seems to lie in method or process by which needs may be identified and met to a greater degree in the life of the school. Further, teachers desire evidence in research that conscious efforts to meet emotional

needs may indeed result in significant gains in the learning of reading and mathematical skills, in social acceptance, mental maturity, and general school effectiveness.

RESEARCH GIVES SOME ANSWERS

The Des Moines Study of the emotional needs of pre-adolescents¹ was fruitful of suggestions for releasing emotional tensions and devising means for meeting needs in selected classroom situations during the year 1946-47. In-service teacher education programs in Oakland County and Pontiac, Michigan, extended the study into approximately six hundred classrooms as teachers worked over a period of two years with the staff of Wayne University's College of Education. The Citizenship Study in the Detroit public schools has given similar leadership and guidance to teachers in elementary and secondary schools in that city. Questions most frequently asked by teachers at the outset of the work are pointed in the direction of locating the children who are most seriously blocked in their learning due to the continued thwarting of emotional needs, and dealing with both groups and individuals in needs fulfillment.

A STUDY OF ONE CHILD

Experience has shown the validity of the well-informed teacher's opinion in *locating children in need of treatment*. For example, teachers can identify children who show extremely aggressive behavioral tendencies, they can lo-

cate those who tend to withdraw or escape into solitary activities, and they recognize psychosomatic complaints. Through supplementing teacher opinion with evaluative measures and techniques, it has been possible to make more accurate diagnoses as a basis for treatment.

The case of Larry, an eleven-year-old boy in the fifth grade, may be illustrative in this connection. In November Larry's teacher was asked to comment briefly upon the behavior of each child who seemed to need special treatment for the removal of learning blocks. She wrote these observations regarding Larry:

Larry is a slow worker who has difficulty in skill subjects. His great-grandmother, with whom he lives, encourages him to spend much time doing homework. His frequent contributions in discussion and class activities lack relevance and purpose. He is seldom chosen for group activities—apparently because he accomplishes so little work and spends time in vague planning.

Larry dwells unduly on national calamities. He complains of severe stomach aches at recess and after school. He spends most of his time at recess in the boy's rest room playing with children of the lower grades.

Data obtained from the *Ohio Social Acceptance Scale* in November revealed that Larry was rejected by seventy-two percent of the boys and ninety-five percent of the girls. Two boys and none of the girls chose him for a good friend, five boys and two girls chose him for a friend, eight boys and two girls gave him a rating of "OK," one boy and three girls indicated they did not know him, two girls indicated they did not like him, and one boy and five girls said they disliked him very much.

¹ Kathryn Feyereisen, "Improving the Learning of Pre-Adolescents through Emotional Needs Therapy," Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1947.

The *Who's Who* test showed that Larry was mentioned by only three girls, and these were in connection with desirable traits—good at hand work, tries hard, and like to visit in his home. Six boys listed his name for desirable traits including good in games, very brave, tries hard, good leader, and like to visit in his home. Eight boys named him as selfish, a “copy-cat,” not good on committees, a snob, poor in a gang or club, and a brag. In committee choices he received four votes for serving on any of three committees.

Larry's grade equivalent for reading achievement was 3.7 and arithmetic achievement was 4.0 in November. His I.Q. was ninety-four. Both in language and non-language factors, according to scores on the *California Test of Mental Maturity*, Larry ranked in the fortieth percentile. Other percentile rankings were:

Memory	60 percentile
Spatial relationships ..	60 percentile
Logical reasoning	80 percentile
Numerical reasoning ..	40 percentile
Vocabulary	20 percentile

According to these indices, Larry's ability in the aspect of vocabulary did not rank as high as his ability to do logical reasoning, perceive spatial relationships, and control memory factors. The teacher felt that it would be possible to raise Larry's potential in vocabulary by giving him meaningful experiences.

The *Self Portrait* or needs test revealed an outstanding need for economic security and a confused pattern in the category of freedom from overburdening guilt. There was confusion, too, in the area of fear and sharing in

decisions which concerned his welfare. According to his needs pattern, Larry was not much concerned about the need for belonging, achievement, or love and affection.

In the category of greatest need, according to the Self Portrait results, Larry checked such items as: Our family has so little even though my parents work hard; I would be happier if my father could get a better job; my family should be able to get more of the things they really need; our family should have a better house; my parents have worries about money; and others.

In the guilt category, Larry indicated that he took advantage of other children, carried a grudge, did not have a clear conscience, thought he'd better change his ways or he'd get into trouble, treated other people badly, liked his memories—good and bad, and was never ashamed of his family. In the fear category he indicated that he hated to think about death; but that he was not afraid of being hurt, or of bugs, snakes, and dark places. He was not afraid of the future.

Studying his responses, the teacher hypothesized that Larry was indeed very fearful and that in many cases he had tried to “cover up” in checking the items on the test. She felt that he harbored deep-seated guilt feelings. She thought it interesting that Larry did not sense rejection on the part of his classmates.

Why He Is What He Is

Information was obtained through a case study in order to make hypotheses regarding the causal factors operating to block growth in certain areas. Some of the data follow.

The home and family background revealed that Larry and his eight-year-old brother had been separated from their parents through divorce. Both parents had remarried and passed their responsibility for the children to the maternal great-grandmother. She sent the boys to church every Sunday and then they spent the remainder of the day with their mother and step-father. Larry belonged to the YMCA and Cub Scouts; he had a job taking care of horses at the fair grounds, and became attached to the caretaker and his wife. Preferring the companionship of adults, Larry has no companions his own age in the neighborhood.

Infancy and pre-school history revealed that Larry was born prematurely and had nutritional difficulties before a satisfactory formula was found for his nourishment. According to his great-grandmother, the father frequently abused the mother and children and, on some occasions, came home drunk and swore in a loud voice. Larry had always feared his father. He welcomed the arrival of his brother, and from the time of his birth lavished affection on him.

Larry had attended two schools since kindergarten and received good ratings in health and conduct but poor grades in scholarship. He had not learned to read and write well and avoided both whenever possible.

His school behavior was poised and gentle. He could be observed staring into space then coming back to tell a long story in a low voice. His expression was sad and serious. When amused he did not laugh heartily but smiled slightly then lapsed into a serious mood.

Larry was sturdy in build, had blue eyes, and sandy hair combed in a pom-

padour. His posture was slightly stooped and he moved leisurely. His skin was fair and his face pallid. Fingernails were bitten to the quick, and he had two large warts on his fingers. His appearance lacked pep and vigor, and at times his hand shook as he held a paint brush or pencil. Somatic complaints were frequent and consisted of stomach ache, nose bleed, and dizziness. When playing games with a group of children he threw the ball with terrific force at boys but would not throw at the girls. His excuse for lack of interest in physical activities was that they made him dizzy.

Frequently Larry left the classroom to go to the toilet, telling the teacher he had taken oil. His trips were made more often during reading period than discussion time. Observable nervous habits were continuous batting of eyes, rocking back and forth in his seat, scraping his feet, stretching arms, biting fingernails, fingering hair, and hunching one shoulder. Larry's favorite class was art, where he illustrated horses in every medium possible—water colors, charcoal, pencil sketches, plaster of paris, and clay. When asked what he would choose to represent in free-choice, he replied, "Horses, of course."

Finding a Place to Start

Larry's need for economic security seemed to be overburdening. He was aware of the fact that his parents did not want him in their homes, and he feared that his great-grandmother would not live long. His need for freedom from guilt was probably intensified through the rigid and absolute values he learned at the church to which he was sent. His great-grandmother's constant admonition to "re-

member you are a Christian" may have caused conflicts in values which were contributory to his guilt feelings. She had told him that if he continued to masturbate he would go insane, and had exercised close supervision over him in that respect. His stories in school revealed an interest in sex through an emphasis on breeding and "carrying the young." He showed concern whenever a mare at the fair grounds did not foal.

It was evident that Larry had some deep-seated fears. Whenever he sensed failure in his work, he left it unfinished saying, "I just don't want to work on it anymore." He was afraid to join the other children in rough games and preferred to remain in the classroom at recess. His eight-year-old brother took care of physical combat that ensued from quarrels with other children. When larger boys were in the group, Larry seldom had anything to say. He found excuses to avoid the music class when he received a rating of "Unsatisfactory" in music.

Utilizing the Data at Hand

The teacher designed non-directive therapy for Larry in an attempt to help him "get things off his chest," then gradually used value-analysis treatment to help him see what he was doing and what he was trying to achieve. She utilized environmental therapy to draw him into group activities and give him a feeling of belonging and of being accepted by other children. In direct needs treatment she became well acquainted with Larry's great-grandmother, who appeared interested in his welfare. The teacher kept daily logs of situations in which Larry widened participation in classroom experiences.

He brought his guinea pigs to school and shared his knowledge of them with the class. In free writing situations he revealed his conflicts and doubts. On one occasion the children were asked to write what they would do to change things if they were principal. Larry wrote, "If you really want to know, I'd keep all the teachers after school."

More opportunities were made for Larry to express aggressive tendencies and to show his feelings. His awakening interest in other people was shown one day when he brought several valentines for Albert, and explained to the teacher that he noticed Albert wasn't getting any. A new boy, he explained, was getting more than Albert. Larry wrote the names of several other children on the valentines he provided for Albert.

Behavioral Changes Are Apparent

Over a period of five months, conscious efforts and organized attempts were made to help Larry with his problems. At the same time the teacher gave group therapy to the whole class of thirty-six, and individual treatment to four selected children whose problems were considered to be overburdening. Space limitations prevent detailed reporting of the work attempted, but it is hoped that the fairly representative case of Larry may indicate some processes involved in needs fulfillment in his situation.

Regarding changes in Larry's behavior in school, in April the teacher wrote the following brief report:

Larry has enlarged his circle of friends but, on occasion, he still rebuffs their efforts to help him. The children include him in games and assign responsibilities to him. He is eager to share information and experiences with the

group, though his interest is still in a limited field. His interest in reading has expanded, especially in finding information relative to pets. He enjoys reading parts of stories to others in small groups.

During the past month Larry has shown more aggressive tendencies and may become engaged in scraps. At such times he is more apt to engage in name-calling than in actual combat. He can defend his interests verbally, where in the past he would say nothing. He talks freely about his worries and troubles and feels at ease in those situations.

One of the most noticeable gains in his case is the improvement in his relations with great-grandmother. He told how much she liked the teacher and was proud of the fact that she thought the school was one school that "really helps kids." Recently Larry said that he and his brother were doing more jobs around the house because they were going to take good care of great-grandmother.

The Proof Is in the Tests

Test results in April showed that Larry had gained seventy-six points in Social Acceptability. Ten boys and four girls wanted him for a friend, six boys and nine girls considered him "OK." None of the boys and two girls indicated dislike for him at that time. He was chosen for committee work by ten children whereas in November he had been chosen to serve on committees by four. Although the class as a whole showed significant gains in reading achievement, Larry's achievement in reading performance as measured by a standard test remained about the same. According to the mental maturity test results, Larry's I.Q. in April was ninety-seven—a gain of three points. The greatest gain in factors previously cited with regard to mental maturity was in non-language factors where there was a thirty-six point increase.

According to results obtained from the *Self Portrait* in April, Larry's needs pattern had changed noticeably in three areas—the need for economic security, freedom from overburdening fear, and world outlook. The need for economic security was drastically reduced while the needs for freedom from fear and a world outlook were increased. Whereas in November Larry had shown confusion in the category of fear, he showed a clear-cut pattern of fear in April. This may be attributed to the permissive environment in which Larry was allowed to show fear. It may further indicate clarification of feelings regarding fear. Too, it is possible that Larry's failure to gain in reading skill might be attributed to the presence of need for freedom from overburdening fear which the pattern showed. Needs which were reduced were: freedom from guilt, sharing in decisions, and belonging. Greater fulfillment of need was indicated in the categories of achievement, love, and affection. One of the most significant changes was an increase in the need to develop common concerns and extend interest to other people. This was in keeping with the study-wide findings regarding the need for a world outlook.

ENRICHED LIVING FOR EACH CHILD

While the case of Larry is but one of the many that might be cited in the study of needs fulfillment, it may serve to indicate the necessity for continuous re-evaluation in the work of needs satisfaction. As teachers work on a cause-and-effect basis with children through formulating hypotheses regarding causes of non-learning and as they devise treatment aimed at the removal of learning

blocks, they come to see that collective needs patterns may give general direction but that the vital directional clues are obtained from the individual needs patterns of each child. It would be a fallacious policy to design treatment for needs satisfaction for every individual on the basis of group averages or even group trends.

Experimental groups of third, fourth, and fifth grade children in the Des Moines Study showed significant gains in reading and arithmetic performance, mental maturity, general school effectiveness, and social acceptability. Comparable groups in which there was no conscious effort to meet needs showed no consistent trend in terms of increases from lower to higher levels of

accomplishment. The most significant change in the needs patterns of experimental groups was an increase in the need for a world outlook. This was consistently higher in all experimental groups.

While the findings from such studies are not conclusive, their validity may be established as teachers and supervisors combine their efforts to design processes for needs fulfillment in many situations under varying conditions. The evidence thus far obtained supports the hypothesis that cause and effect operate in learning and non-learning, and that learning can be improved and enriched as teachers function in the classroom in terms of those relationships.

A Laboratory for Studying Behavior

MILDRED WEIGLEY WOOD

One mark of the emotionally and socially mature individual is his ability to evaluate objectively his own behavior and that of his associates. Mildred Weigley Wood, supervisor, Home Economics Education at Phoenix Union High School, Arizona, describes learning opportunities through which high school students can achieve an understanding of human behavior that makes for improved living with themselves and others.

OBSERVATION of young children by high school students serves more than one purpose. Its generally accepted goal is to help high school students understand children in order to better guide those children with whom they come in contact. In itself this is a

worthwhile purpose. There is, however, an additional goal reached that is less generally recognized—that of enabling the high school student to gain some understanding of human behavior.

Talking about human behavior is one thing. *Seeing* it in real situations as a

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