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### On Motivation

In the quiz we had last class about motivation, I got pretty consistent scores. For self-actualization, esteem, social, safety and security, and physiological, I got scores of 4, 8, 8, 4, and 8, respectively. I guess this means that I am pretty evenly and moderately motivated by the different levels of needs.

Personally, I don't know what level of Maslow's hierarchy I lie at. The lines really don't seem very clear cut, but perhaps that is because I am still in school and the overwhelming motivators seem to be related to school. I feel that I have the lower two levels of needs met. I don't feel that my life is in danger, and economically and physically feel somewhat secure. In terms of the upper three levels, it becomes less clear. I feel that my motivation to be socially recognized, to have high self-esteem, and to have focus on self-esteem are more or less on the same level. I like to consider myself as an academic, and I believe that academics have the stereotype of leaving aside social and personal needs in order to advance their intellectual capacity and better humanity (self-fulfillment); however, this is probably a bit idealistic and definitely not entirely true for myself at this stage. I would like to achieve a state where I am so focused on working towards a goal that would enlighten myself while helping others, but I don't think I'm at that state yet.

I think a good way to think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is to consider the average school project. There is some motivation due to being able to pick project partners: this is a social need to strengthen the bond with friends or network with peers. However, this motivation is not often very great because (at Cooper) there is a small pool of potential teammates and the social or networking

aspect of projects is relatively insignificant. I think esteem plays a bigger part in motivating many school projects. The textbooks defines esteem to be “tied to feelings of achievement, competence, knowledge, maturity, and independence” (455). In general, school projects increase all of these; they increase many skillsets (academic, technical, communication, etc.), expand our knowledge, and simply help us build more experience so we can be more competent and confident. For the most part, the motivation ends here, because of the tough time constraints of schoolwork; we don’t often have the mental bandwidth to try to achieve mental fulfillment, but occasionally there is the chance to really excel and maximize our creative and mental capacity. I believe this is where academics and research tends to strive towards, and this is where I strive towards.

We also discussed in class how sometimes needs have to be reconsidered if lower needs on the pyramid are not met. This happens often with school projects as well: while we are trying to achieve technical competence and maturity (esteem needs), we run into a dozen different deadlines at finals time and then begin to lose sleep and time for hobbies or clubs. This then threatens our lower-level needs: we may even endanger our health in order to keep up satisfactorily with school. For a short term, this may be acceptable and we may override our lower-level needs in order to power through a tough time at school, but a prolonged period will force a student to reconsider their classes. Then they may have to drop a class or settle for less in a project, lowering the higher-level needs in order to make sure the lower-level needs are set.

I feel that the above tradeoff is the same for anything when we talk about time management. Time management is all about managing our needs; in the end, we only have a limited number of hours in the day, and our health (physiological needs) will suffer and force higher-level needs to be diminished in order to simply survive.