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Christina J. Hartje
Hamline University, chartje01@hamline.edu

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STUDENT NEEDS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

ACCORDING TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

by

Christina Joy Hartje

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education

Hamline University

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Primary Advisor: Trish Harvey
Secondary Advisor: Kaleb Hartje
Peer Reviewer: Nicole Dimich Vagle

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Prelude to the Study

Public schools in the United States have the monumental challenge of helping every student succeed, regardless of their race, culture, socioeconomic status, language, religion, or home environment. Students arrive at school bringing with them a host of challenges, some carrying more baggage than others. As a teacher, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and helpless when faced with a classroom full of incredibly unique learners, each arriving with a different set of challenges, each with specific needs. While teachers are not superheroes with the ability to eliminate numerous barriers outside of school, they do have the power to make a positive impact on student learning each and every day by alleviating the barriers within the classroom that inhibit positive learning experiences for all students. "School success is broader than just grades and test scores" (Buehler, Fletcher, Johnston, & Weymouth, 2015, p. 76). By acknowledging and tending to student needs, teachers can improve the learning experience and help more students become successful.

Throughout my career, I have taught both choral and general music to middle-, high-, and elementary-school students in urban, suburban, and rural settings. I have had class sizes from 18 to 54 students. This broad spectrum of teaching experience has shaped my belief that how well students' needs are met can impact how they perceive the learning environment, which can, in turn, influence their learning experience. One could

argue that the basic needs within Maslow's (1943) hierarchy - physiological, safety/security, love/belonging, esteem - must be met in order to propel students towards the higher level needs addressed within Glasser's (1998) Choice theory - power, freedom, and fun. In other words, students are not ready to learn until their basic (deficiency) needs are largely satisfied.

The purpose of my research is to bring additional insight into the student experience and give students a voice to share their own story. What role does attention to student needs play? How do students perceive their needs are being met? How does this affect their learning experience? What can schools do to help mitigate student needs in order to foster positive learning experiences? Uncovering the answers to these questions requires an understanding of student needs and how educators' responses to such needs affect student learning experiences in schools and classrooms. Since educational achievement has the power to shape one's future, understanding what factors impact the classroom learning experience is crucial to improving the school environment as a whole for all learners. Teachers need to understand student needs before we can begin to appropriately respond to them. In an effort to shed some light on these complex questions, this case study will address the following question: *According to high school students, how does meeting students' needs and honoring student voice affect the learning experience?*

Development of Research Interest

I have always known I wanted to be a teacher. I love kids' honesty, willingness to learn, enthusiasm, spirit, and uniqueness. I chose to pursue music education because I

believe it has a particular capacity to unlock parts of student learning and development that are less readily accessed in other subjects; the music classroom must be emotionally available in order to make the music come alive. In choir, students are required to bravely share their voice with others. Their voice a part of them that is unequivocally authentic and unique. Since this task can be intimidating and frightening to some, it is especially important that in the music classroom each student's experiences, abilities, struggles, and perspective are valued. In my experience, tending to students' needs and honoring their voice enhances the learning experience and encourages students to reach their full potential.

In nine years of teaching, I have completed character education training for PBIS, Capturing Kids Hearts, and Beyond Diversity, and I have also answered calls to implement countless initiatives that focus on a variety of instructional practices. All of these educational initiatives aim to improve the student experience with one ultimate goal in mind: increasing achievement through whatever means possible. However, the majority of these efforts significantly overlook the power of the student perspective. In each of the schools I have worked, I have witnessed the yearning that many students possess to be high achievers and the power that teachers have to inspire students and help them achieve in ways they did not know were possible.

Unfortunately, every school also has students who feel as though they have failed before they have even begun to try. When asking students why they are struggling in a class, I have heard responses such as "*It doesn't matter; The teacher isn't any good; I can't do my homework at home; I don't care about what they're teaching; I didn't get*

any sleep last week; I had to work; I'm just not good at (insert subject or task); I am going to fail anyway so why try," and many other statements that hurt the soul. In my experience, I have realized that every student I encounter has something valuable to contribute to education by sharing their experience. When asked, students will share what challenges they face in (and out of) the classroom. They will hint at which needs are and are not being met. Students are smart. For the most part, they know what works for them. And when I try to help them find solutions in their control within the school day, it typically empowers them to be more successful. Ultimately, educators should give students a stronger voice so they feel they have the power to influence the educational process, inform educators regarding the challenges they face, and makes changes to improve their educational future.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy is one theory I understood very early in my teaching career, and I think it shaped my development as a teacher by helping me to reflect upon whether or not students' needs were being met in my classroom. Maslow's (1943) theory posits that people have levels of needs, in which the lower levels must be at least partially satisfied before one can tend to higher level needs. For example, one must feel safe before openly tending to inter-relational pursuits such as love and belonging. Maslow's hierarchy helped me consider students' needs levels as they entered my classroom. Gauging whether students seemed upset, sleep deprived, hyper, etc. helped me better suit my instruction to respond to their current state. In my opinion, Glasser's choice theory furthers the effort to respond to student needs by challenging their higher-level needs. Glasser's choice theory (1998) posits that needs fall into the categories of power,

freedom, fun, and belonging. Offering choice and providing opportunities for students to fulfill these additional needs according to Glasser (1998) arguably increases engagement and inspires students to take ownership of their learning. For these reasons, I am drawn to Maslow's hierarchy and Glasser's choice theory as frameworks in my pursuit to better understand how students experience school.

In considering both Maslow's (1943) hierarchy and Glasser's (1998) choice theory, I have found the two theories collide in a way that allows for Maslow's classification of deficiency needs and growth needs to be effective in addressing student needs within the context of the learning experience. For the purpose of this study, the following were included within deficiency, or lower-level needs: physiological, safety/security, belongingness and love, and esteem. Within higher-level growth needs, cognitive, self-efficacy, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence needs dovetail with Glasser's (1998) needs of belonging, power, freedom, and fun.

I believe that no student truly wants to fail, and I am determined to learn more about the student experience in hopes of eliciting authentic student perspectives. By doing so, I hope to uncover some of the influences on positive educational experiences in schools. I am aware that there are many obstacles students face when they leave the school grounds, and I have little ability to affect those experiences. However, I do have the power to impact how students experience my classroom, and I want to understand specifically what the influential factors are for high school students. This process starts by listening to students and giving them intentional, structured time to share their stories, victories and challenges, as well as what does and does not work for them as individuals.

Researching achievement trends is valuable; however, sometimes such results miss the root cause of the issues, creating attribution error problems, which later leads to ineffective solutions. I continue to be fascinated by my students and welcome any opportunity that allows me to learn more about how they learn, including what inhibits their learning, all the while empowering them to take ownership of their learning and have a positive experience at school.

Significance of Research

While many have conducted research surrounding the learning experience (Buehler et al., 2015; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Kangas, 2010; Meyer & Turner, 2006; Voelkl, 1997) there remains room for more study of the student perspective as it relates to student needs. Along these lines, there is still room for growth in understanding how learning experiences shape the student perspective and vice versa, and I presume there may be trends related to which needs are most successfully addressed in school. Working to increase achievement is an ever-evolving process with myriad factors, so why not ask students, the recipients of our efforts, to share their voice and insight into what they think is important in shaping their learning experience and success?

I am particularly interested in learning about what factors contribute to or inhibit students' school or classroom experience, how their experiences shape their perspective and vice versa. With the abundance of research surrounding achievement, undertaking the complete scope of factors that contribute to student achievement would be providential, but eliciting the student perspective to research the factors that influence the learning experiences within the confines of the school is an accessible endeavor that may

empower educators to affect positive change within their own classrooms in a practical manner.

Each educator is given the responsibility to provide students with the tools and environment to be successful learners; however, if student needs within the classroom are overlooked, students may disengage or withdraw, negatively affecting their learning experience, academic success, and ultimately, their future (Glasser, 1998; Voelkl, 1997). In the end, students need to know their voice matters. Educators must understand the factors that contribute to the learning experience and seek sustainable solutions within their classrooms. Finally, it is essential that policy makers understand what students feel are the greatest influences to positive learning experiences so that the appropriate factors may be considered as policies are put in place to improve achievement.

Though there have been extensive theories developed around learning practices, students can still remain recipients of whatever methods their teachers choose to use, rather than consistently becoming integral, active members within the learning process. Theorists argue myriad solutions for increasing achievement from increasing engagement to improving school culture to incorporating culturally-responsive teaching, but there is room for more research addressing the student perspective surrounding educational barriers. What message are we sending to students about the value of their voice and their role in learning? If we do not listen to their voice, including their grievances, how do we plan to respond appropriately to their diverse needs? According to Miranda, Moore, and Vega (2015), African American and Latino high school students perceive school relationships, policies, and safety to barriers to positive educational experiences. Each of

these factors address different student needs that should be addressed in the school and classroom in order for learning to take place. I presume these sentiments are not unique to African American and Latino students, but may very well be areas in which my own students experience challenges, as well.

Students offer a wealth of data for gathering the student perspective as it relates to the learning experience because they experience it firsthand everyday. Unfortunately, each learner is unique, and it can be challenging to determine which factors influence students in differing populations. This study aims to give students who are so often only evaluated by test scores a voice, allowing them to share first hand what factors exist within their schools and classrooms that positively or negatively influence their learning experiences. By offering students a voice through surveys and open-ended questionnaires, it is my hope that trends regarding their learning experiences may be revealed. In turn, student responses will offer insights that will inform educators and policy creators as they implement programs that address student needs and improve the learning experience for all students.

Conclusion

The number of instructional approaches aimed at increasing achievement is overwhelming. This is no surprise, considering that helping students become active learners and preparing them for a successful future is the main goal of education. Yet, there is significant room for the student perspective in response to our efforts to increase achievement. In an attempt to propel students into productive adulthood, educators must listen to students in order to learn whether the strategies we are using are effective and

where there is room for growth. Students have the potential to provide educators with information relevant to the learning experience that may be common within broader populations. What needs are being addressed or overlooked in the classroom? What are the factors that promote or inhibit learning? What methods or tools are helpful within the school or classroom for improving the learning experience? What school policies strongly affect the learning experience?

Chapter Two will review literature surrounding student needs and the learner experience, often using the lens of the student perspective. Using Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs and Glasser's (1998) choice theory as a framework for understanding student needs, the literature review will discuss both deficiency and growth needs in the context of the learning experience.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Students can be very insightful when given the opportunity to share their needs and experiences. "The key for educators is to help students identify their needs and monitor the means by which students can pursue these needs" (Rose, 2003, p. 54). Understanding the student learning experience involves thoughtful consideration of student needs and how they are satisfied. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs provides one framework for addressing human needs. While many theorists have developed various notions regarding human motivation, Glasser's (1998) choice theory is one that works well to build upon Maslow's findings, positing concepts that relate well to Maslow's initial beliefs by classifying many characteristics that can motivate students within the growth needs.

Using Maslow's hierarchy of needs alongside Glasser's (1998) choice theory provides a framework for evaluating the school learning environment. One can clearly identify necessary elements as they relate to Maslow's (1943) five basic needs: biological/physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Glasser's (1998) identified needs of belonging, power, freedom, and fun can enhance Maslow's self-actualization level by addressing some of what Maslow determines are growth needs. By creating an environment grounded in addressing lower-level needs, schools and educators can then begin to address the higher-level needs, and ultimately bring students to a level of self-actualization, where they are able to connect and contribute to the world

around them (Huitt, 2007). The following chapter reviews facets of the classroom learning environment through a review of needs theories, deficiency needs, and growth needs, including student perceptions as part of the discussion, in order to address the following research question: *According to high school students, how does meeting students' needs and honoring student voice affect the learning experience?*

Hierarchy of Needs and Choice Theory

Research surrounding the learning environment frequently cites physiological, social-emotional, and self-efficacy needs of students as contributing factors in school satisfaction and achievement (Buehler et al., 2015; Elmore & Huebner, 2010; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Meyer & Turner, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Voelkl, 1997). Lower-level needs, or as Maslow characterizes them, *deficiency needs*, include environmental factors such as physiological needs, safety/security, belongingness and love, and esteem (Huitt, 2007). Higher-level needs, or *growth needs*, relate to cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, self-actualization, and transcendence. While it is necessary to pay attention to deficiency needs in order to lay the foundation for a productive learning environment, growth needs include the academic and intellectual factors of learning and reflect the ultimate goal of education: to help students reach their full potential as learners and individuals who positively contribute to society. Glasser's choice theory arguably enhances Maslow's hierarchy by defining additional motivational needs.

Maslow (1943) developed the hierarchy of needs based upon significant research surrounding motivation. Starting from the most basic level and moving to higher-level needs, Maslow's hierarchy includes the following needs:

- Biological/Physiological - breathing, food, water, shelter, sleep, homeostasis

- Safety - security of body, resources, morality, family, health, property, ownership, stability, freedom from fear

- Love/belonging - friendship, family, group relationships

- Esteem - self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect for and by others, recognition

- Self-actualization - realizing one's potential, morality, creativity, problem solving, acceptance of facts, lack of prejudice, pursue inner talents; includes cognitive, aesthetic, and transcendence needs. (as cited in Huitt, 2007)

Maslow's belief is that one may only begin to address higher-level needs if the preceding lower-level need has been largely satisfied. In addition, the longer a need is unmet, the greater the motivation to satisfy the need (Huitt, 2007). Maslow (1943) acknowledged the order of the levels within the hierarchy are not finite, and that there are instances when they may be reversed or overlooked. For example, one who has never experienced significant hunger may overlook the physiological need for food, not deeming it as a significant threat to basic needs (Maslow, 1943). Rather, the levels may be interpreted as a continuum, in which the lower level exhibits a higher amount of satisfaction. As one need becomes largely satisfied, higher-level needs begin to emerge (Maslow, 1943).

Glasser's (1998) choice theory also addresses student needs, some of which could be considered higher-level needs within Maslow's hierarchy. Glasser (1998) posited that students must have choices within their learning, arguing that people act because they

determine a choice to be the most satisfying choice available at the time. According to Glasser (1998), students perceive and classify people and experiences in reference to their quality world (a specific, personal world that is the core of their lives). Choice theory suggests that humans are driven by (1) the need to survive, (2) the need to belong, (3) the need for power, (4) the need for freedom, and (5) the need for fun (Glasser, 1998). When students place people or experiences within their quality worlds, it is because they determine these pieces to be the most satisfying to these needs (Glasser, 1997). Glasser (1997) stated, "In fact, all we can ever get from the outside world, which means all we can give one another, is information. But information, by itself, does not make us do anything" (para. 7). In other words, students cannot be forced to learn; rather, students choose whether not to include learning experiences in their quality world. When they do so, students are more motivated and, in turn, more successful (Glasser, 1997).

Admittedly, this is not an all-inclusive list of the many theories surrounding human needs and motivation. While there are a variety of theories that address the needs of students, there remains to be an outstanding consensus among theorists as to what the all-encompassing human needs include (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Glasser, 1998; Maslow, 1943; Nohria, Lawrence, & Wilson, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Thompson, Grace & Cohen, 2001). In response to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Norwood (1999) proposed that the particular level of needs being addressed lends insight into the kind of information (coping, helping, enlightening, empowering, edifying) required to fulfill the need and assist the individual to the next level. By addressing students at the appropriate level, educators may appropriately provide information and guidance that can

propel students toward higher-level learning. Alderfer's (1972) Existence-Relatedness-Growth theory provided a similar hierarchy to Maslow, establishing basic needs (Existence), mid-level needs (Relatedness), and high-level needs (Growth). Other theorists, such as Ryan and Deci (2000), Thompson, Grace and Cohen (2001), Nohria, Lawrence, and Wilson (2001), Connell and Wellborn (1991) and many others, have categorized needs, without necessarily using a hierarchical approach.

While there remains to be an overwhelming agreement about specifically which basic needs exist, human needs theorists in general have included some form of bonding and relatedness in each theory (Huitt, 2007), so it is fitting that belongingness among students would be considered a significant category of study. For the purpose of this research, Maslow's grouping and terminology of Deficiency Needs (physiological, safety/security, belongingness and love, esteem) and Growth Needs (cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, transcendence) will be used alongside Glasser's choice theory to address the student needs as they relate to the learning environment.

Deficiency Needs

There are innumerable factors that contribute to whether students have a positive or negative learning experience; yet, one of the factors that receives much attention is the school or classroom environment, as it is the most proximate setting for learning (Steinberg & Lerner, 2004). The classroom environment has the power to foster positive or negative emotions which, research indicates, leads to students' perceptions of their value and connection with school (Elmore & Huebner, 2010). Positive emotions and identification with school are directly correlated to higher academic achievement,

appropriate school conduct, and persistence to stay in school (Meyer & Turner, 2006). These sentiments also predict students' abilities to persevere in the face of academically challenging work (Meyer & Turner, 2006).

The classroom environment encompasses all of the deficiency needs - physiological, safety/security, belongingness and love, and esteem. Research indicates there is a correlation between the school environment and students' learning experience (Buehler et al., 2015; Coyne & Coyne, 2001; Elmore & Huebner, 2010; Meyer & Turner, 2006). When students perceive their learning environment to be positive, safe, and supportive, their school experience is more enjoyable and they are more positively engaged in the learning process (Buehler et al., 2015, p. 79). This finding aligns with Maslow's hierarchy and reinforces the notion that schools have a responsibility to respond to student perceptions regarding the learning environment in an effort to increase student engagement and improve the learner experience.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (1990), school satisfaction is related to dropout rates, student grades, and behavior in school (as cited in Elmore & Huebner, 2010, p. 525). While it is obviously important to concentrate on student achievement, solely focusing on academic success does not address the context in which students learn, including their socioemotional needs (Elmore & Huebner, 2010). In other words, tending to students learning environment requires acknowledging their needs. Doing so may help students develop the necessary social and emotional skills to become responsible citizens who will use their acquired knowledge to contribute to society later in life (Elmore & Huebner, 2010). This process begins with investigating existing

research surrounding student perceptions as they relate to the learning experience, including the classroom environment, teacher support, relationships, identification with school, and instructional styles.

The classroom environment plays a large role in shaping whether students have positive or negative feelings toward school (Elmore & Huebner, 2010). A study by Elmore and Huebner (2010) of 587 middle school students suggested that school satisfaction is not simply a byproduct of academic success, but may also contribute to student engagement behaviors that affect active participation in the learning process (p. 536). Such evidence points to the importance of creating a positive and engaging classroom environment as a means to improve behaviors and motivation alike.

Physiological needs. Physiological needs include the basic human needs for survival - air, food, water, shelter, sleep (Maslow, 1954). Meyer and Turner (2006) found that students in perceived negative or ambiguous (i.e. inconsistent) classroom environments were more likely to report instances of avoidance behaviors, disruptive behaviors, and cheating (p. 383). This finding accentuates the importance of building positive and consistent classroom environments as a means of decreasing problem behaviors and improving school safety. Ladd, Buhs and Seid (2000) suggested that students who like school are more likely to follow teacher instructions and abide by classroom rules, while those who have negative feelings are more likely to rebel against said expectations (Elmore & Huebner, 2010, p. 527). In other words, students who have positive school experiences are more likely to positively contribute to the classroom environment and school as a whole.

According to Maslow's (1954) hierarchy, these foundational physiological needs must be largely satisfied before one can move into higher-level needs (e.g. academic tasks). While schools can not necessarily ensure basic needs are fully satisfied, many do offer supports to fulfill some physiological needs. Transportation, meals, and in-school health supports are all examples of how schools support and mediate students' physiological needs, enabling students to progress to the next level of the hierarchy.

Safety/security needs. While school safety is improving, it is still a need schools cannot afford to ignore (Glasser, 2000). School policies prohibit weapons, vandalism, and bullying, and have specific methods for allowing visitors into school buildings. However, many students continue to struggle with bullying and troublesome behaviors, which may threaten their sense of safety and security and can inhibit their ability to learn.

Reports indicate both increased school satisfaction and perceptions of school safety are directly correlated to trouble avoidance (Buehler et al., 2015). In other words, students who are satisfied with school and feel safe in school are less likely to engage in troublesome behaviors such as cutting class, misbehaving in class, and fighting. Furthermore, students who engage in problem behaviors in school are less likely to be academically successful (McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008). Ensuring that school expectations and policies establish and maintain a safe environment is vital to creating a positive learning environment. Schools may also consider investing in character education programs that prevent bullying and promote positive citizenship play an important role in helping students be more successful in school (Coyne & Coyne, 2001).

Studying the affective or emotional environment in classrooms may also lend insight into predicting whether students have positive or negative learning experiences. This notion supports schools' efforts to incorporate positive behavior support systems and character education in an effort to improve the learning environment in the classroom and throughout the school. According to Coyne and Coyne (2001), when schools adopt policies that expect positive caring values found in many character education programs, student achievement rises and negative behaviors decline (p. 59). Coyne and Coyne (2001) further argued that "schools have a responsibility to nurture students so they possess not only the academic skills to be successful in the workforce, but also the values to facilitate a caring society" (p. 60).

Engaging classroom environments need to be established early, consistently maintained, and sustained through "positive interactions that build trust and promote student involvement in higher-level learning" (Meyer & Turner, 2006, p. 385). Once these structures are in place, educators can focus on creating an environment in which all students feel a sense of belonging. Students who do not identify with school, or feel an absence of belonging, are more likely to engage in school crime and misconduct (Voelkl, 1997, p. 298). Conversely, according to Goodenow and Grady (1993), feelings of belonging in school are "significantly associated with several motivation-related measures, expectancy of success, valuing schoolwork, general school motivation, and self-reported effort" (p. 60). Therefore, belongingness is a need that plays an important role within student success in school.

Belongingness and love. Whether students feel belongingness and love within the learning environment shapes whether or not students enjoy school and engage in their learning (Voelkl, 1997). Both Maslow and Glasser support the importance of this need by including it in their distinct classifications of needs (Glasser, 1998; Maslow, 1943). Patterns of achievement and participation are associated with student identification (or belongingness) with school (Voelkl, 1997, p. 311), so considering belongingness and love as worthy factors in the school environment is beneficial. Students also report that teacher support and a positive classroom climate contribute to positive motivation (Meyer & Turner, 2006, p. 379). In other words, perceived learning experience has a strong influence on student participation and motivation. Furthermore, when students are actively involved in the learning process, they are more likely to identify with school; the converse is also true (Voelkl, 1997).

The presence or absence of strong relationships within school also have a significant impact in shaping the student learning experience. "Understanding how positive classroom environments develop and are sustained is essential for improving

educational opportunities through the quality of instructional interactions, which have relationships and emotions at their core" (Meyer & Turner, 2006, p. 388). Relationships can influence levels of engagement, interest, autonomy, and belonging, which in turn shapes students' perceptions of their learning experience (Meyer & Turner, 2006). Each of these factors has a correlation with whether students do or do not enjoy the learning process.

Whether or not students feel supported, valued, cared for, and able to take risks, influences whether they have positive or negative feelings regarding their school experience. Rose (2003) argued that educators need to allow students to deal with their emotions before expecting them to attempt challenging learning experiences. According to Meyer and Turner (2006), the emotions and motivations of both students and teachers have the power to shape the learning environment (p. 385). Consequently, perceived positive teacher support is correlated to motivation. "Instruction that students report as more motivational correlates with teacher support, including positive emotional support and statements of caring, as well as other characteristics of a positive classroom climate" (Meyer & Turner, 2006, p. 378). Therefore, teachers must be cognizant of whether students perceive them to be supportive. Despite the teacher's intention, the student perception ultimately influences the learning environment, so it is important and valuable to study the student perspective.

Esteem. Students self-esteem regarding their abilities also plays a role in their learning as well as how they perceive the teacher-student relationship (Buehler et al., 2015). Research indicates that prior academic success influences future achievement

(Buehler et al., 2015), so educators in primary and early secondary grades have an especially vested interest in fostering academic success as a predictor of future gains. Likewise, students who have had historically lower grades may develop a reluctance to respond to teacher efforts, seeing their teachers as judges rather than supporters (Buehler et al., 2015, p. 75) which amplifies the need for teachers to be aware of students' prior achievement level and make a particular effort to engage students with historically low grades in an effort to improve the learning environment as well as increase achievement.

According to Buehler et al. (2015), there is a positive correlation between increased engagement and positive learning environment and support and care from teachers, though students with historically higher grades benefitted more from teacher care and support than historically lower achieving students (p. 72). Even though positive learning environments were more beneficial for students with historically higher grades than those with historically lower grades, it remains important to create a positive learning environment not only as a means of increasing engagement and reducing behavior problems, but also as a means of increasing student success. In addition, research shows that student reports of positive learning experiences were indicative of highly supportive instructional interactions and positive classroom environments (Meyer & Turner, 2006, p. 379). A study by Connell, Spencer, and Aber (1994) found that students' positive emotional and behavioral engagement was significantly associated with positive student outcomes such as good grades in school and high scores on standardized achievement tests. This could be partially due to the belief that emotionally nurturing environments foster academic risk-taking and increase motivation (Meyer & Turner,

2006, p. 380). While academic risk-takers have positive emotions associated with their work, risk averse students have negative emotions associated with their work and tend to avoid challenging tasks (Meyer & Turner, 2006, p. 381).

While identifying with school and belonging are related to classroom participation, these characteristics do not necessarily *predict* achievement (Voelkl, 1997). Focusing on the development of an effective classroom environment does especially well to address the deficiency needs, but leaves room for instructional methods to significantly impact the growth needs. True, basic human needs need to be met before academic work can be done (Rose, 2003, p. 54); however, Steinberg and Lerner (2004) reinforced the significance of moving from the foundational deficiency needs toward growth needs, stating that "development is optimized when students are provided with challenging tasks in a mastery-oriented environment that also provides good emotional and cognitive support, meaningful material to learn and master, and sufficient support for their own autonomy and initiative" (p. 133). It is not enough, then, to study only deficiency needs. Understanding how student needs influence the learner experience as a whole requires understanding which factors propel students forward once their deficiency needs are met.

Growth Needs

Beyond the deficiency needs is a need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Learning how educators can tend to growth needs is equally as important as tending to deficiency needs. While deficiency needs satisfy basic requirements for learning, one could argue that growth needs characterize the processes of higher-level learning. Though they are not consistently distinguished as separate needs within Maslow's earlier

writings, cognitive, self-efficacy, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence needs are included within the growth needs categorized by the self-actualization tier, and fuel individuals towards realizing their full potential (Huitt, 2007). Choice theory offers additional needs to consider when considering the learning environment (Glasser, 1997). By satisfying or denying the need for belonging, power, freedom, and fun, Glasser (1998) argued that students will place the learning experience and the associated people in what they deem to be a suitable place in or out of their quality world; such association contributes to engagement and success.

In relation to student learning, few of the factors included within the context of deficiency needs were able to consistently *predict* achievement. For example, in a study by Brown, Hattie, and Winheller (2013), increased teacher support and peer interactions had minimal effect on achievement; however, self-efficacy and and student perceptions of the quality of learning, were found to predict achievement. For these reasons, it is wise to study the learning experience through student perceptions in reference to both Maslow's and Glasser's defined needs.

Cognitive needs. Cognitive needs such as self-efficacy, rigor, and relevance also affect students' learning outcomes. Self-efficacy, or one's perceptions of their abilities, influences achievement as well as learners' propensities to expand their knowledge and take academic risks. Self-efficacy could also be described in Glasser's needs as one's feeling of power over their abilities. Rigor relates to self-efficacy in that students who have high self-efficacy are more likely to attempt challenging tasks, continue in the face of failure, and ultimately have increased achievement as a result of their persistence and

increased self-efficacy (Bandura, 1993). If a learning task is positively associated with success, self-efficacy (or power/fun), the student is more likely to engage in the process (Rose, 2003, p. 54). Perceived relevance is another important cognitive aspect to consider because students who perceive the learning to be relevant, tend to be more engaged and participate more readily in the work (Voelkl, 1997).

Self-efficacy. Bandura (1993) posited that "students' beliefs in their efficacy to regulate their own learning and to master academic activities determine their aspirations, level of motivation, and academic accomplishments" (p. 117), presenting two apparent mindsets that affect self-efficacy depending on whether learners regard ability as an acquirable skill or inherent capacity. According to Bandura (1993), children who believe ability is an acquirable skill, are more likely to seek challenging tasks that expand their learning, prioritizing personal improvement over comparison to others' achievement. These perspectives are also reinforced by Dweck's (2008) theory around growth mindset and fixed mindset. According to Dweck (2008), growth mindset is the belief that one may acquire the necessary skills to be successful, while those with a fixed mindset would believe their abilities to be inherent.

Bandura (1991) stated that stronger self-efficacy results in individuals setting higher goals as well as demonstrating stronger resilience when faced with challenges (as cited in Bandura, 1993). Criss (2011) supported this belief, stating, "If a teacher can encourage students to have constructive self-perceptions of their competence, and optimistic expectancies of success, students will perform better, be more engaged, exert more effort, persist longer, and be more successful" (p. 63). Conversely, children who

believe ability is an inherent capacity, prefer tasks they feel will ensure success, protecting their feeling of competence at the expense of expanding their knowledge (Bandura, 1993, pp. 120-121). In other words, expected success leads to achievement and self-doubt breeds failure. Maslow (1943) reinforced this belief as well, stating that cognitive capacities are malleable tools. Students with either mindset are compelled to accordingly welcome or avoid rigorous academic tasks. Therefore, understanding the need for self-efficacy is necessary in considering students' responses when presented with rigorous tasks.

Aesthetic needs. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) stated that reasoning and knowing (cognitive needs) receive significant attention because they are tools for survival; however, aesthetic experiences are valued because they directly enhance the quality of life. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1997), aesthetic experiences make life more rich, interesting, and enjoyable, present emotionally salient stimuli that elicits audience understanding and response, and help bring sense to the "randomness of existence by giving shape to experience" (p. 38). Aesthetic experiences include four major dimensions - sensory, emotional, cognitive, and transcendent - and such experiences help learners control their consciousness and approach true happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Studies show that when people are actively engaged in aesthetic experiences such as art or music, they report significantly higher levels of happiness, self-esteem, and other positive responses (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man *can* be, he *must* be" (Maslow, 1943, p. 382). While this is a higher-level need, providing students with

opportunities to address their aesthetic needs can enrich their learning experience by tending to sensory, emotional, cognitive, and transcendent needs simultaneously, potentially improving the learning experience overall. As part of studying growth needs, this research aims to examine whether factors of aesthetic needs significantly influence the learner experience according to students.

      Self-actualization and transcendence. It is within the level of self-actualization and transcendence that learners search to reach their full potential and connect their knowledge in a way that will make a positive impact on the world around them (Huitt, 2007). Maslow (1943) supported the need for self-actualization, stating that even when the deficiency needs are largely satisfied, a restlessness and discontentment will develop. Those who reach this ostentatious set of needs are capitalizing on the perceived value of their learning, the belief in their ability to successfully apply their knowledge, and the understanding that their contribution to others is the culminating acknowledgement all their work. In accordance with Maslow's theory, self-actualized people are characterized by "(1) being problem-focused, (2) incorporating an ongoing freshness of appreciation of life; (3) a concern about personal growth; and (4) the ability to have peak experiences" (Huitt, 2007, para. 2). These people also focus on using their abilities to think outwardly, affecting others and the world around them.

Value of Student Perceptions

      While the notion of considering student perceptions is not new, its value is sometimes overlooked or doubted. Student perceptions are vital in understanding their educational experiences because they experience all the learning environment entails

firsthand. In a statement that demonstrates students' development through cognitive, self-actualization, and transcendence needs, Wendel (1973) stated the importance of involving the student within the educational process in an article discussing the open classroom:

> The individual student is important because he gives meanings to what he perceives and experiences. These meanings are indeed individual and personal; however, as the person interacts he also seeks to further clarify his meanings...As he restructures his field of meanings, he necessarily looks outside of himself for additional experiences that influence his search for clearer meanings of his perceptions. In this process, the student simultaneously comes to know himself and his environment better. (p.185)

Because the classroom environment is designed intentionally to educate students, it is only fitting to include the student voice within the context of needs and the learner experience. Students' motivation and engagement has been the focus of innumerable studies, and Voelkl (1997) argued that student perception of their learning experience is important in understanding how to help students be successful. A study by Kangas (2010) suggested the value of student perceptions, stating that children have an insightful understanding of schools' potential to enhance students' learning and school satisfaction. The learning environment influences students' school experience and educational development, so it is important to also account for student perspectives when discussing needs, motivation, and the learning experience. Smimou and Dahl (2012) further reiterated the necessity of considering student perspectives in studying learning

environment factors such as teaching quality, assessment methods, and satisfaction as a means of improving educational practices. They liken students to customers and argued that understanding students' needs in the same way business seek to understand customers' needs is a valid means of better understanding the learner experience (Smimou & Dahl, 2012). Incorporating needs theories such as Maslow's and Glasser's to study the learning experience provides an accessible framework for evaluating the learner experience through the student perspective. By examining both *deficiency* and *growth* needs, this study aimed to identify which student needs are being met and which need to be better addressed in order to improve the learner experience.

Conclusion

Based on this literature, it is important that students' needs be addressed in an effort to foster effective learning environments (Buehler et al., 2015; Coyne & Coyne, 2001; Elmore & Huebner, 2010; Glasser, 1998; Maslow, 1943; Meyer & Turner, 2006). As Elmore and Huebner (2010) stated, "Increased knowledge of the conditions under which successful learning occurs may lead to critical changes in the education process that simultaneously promote successful academic and socioemotional outcomes" (p. 525). Much of understanding about student needs stems from the students' perceptions regarding their needs. Students' perceptions are their reality, so it is critical that educators take time to survey, understand, and respond to learners' ideas. Student perceptions power the learning experience. As evidenced by this research, students' perceptions related to their learning experiences influence levels of trouble avoidance, school satisfaction, dropout, classroom participation, lesson engagement, academic achievement,

academic risk-taking, resilience, and relationships. All of these factors point toward self-actualization, which calls students to reach their full potential. By creating learning environments that honor both the deficiency and growth needs, educators can foster positive learning experiences that empower students to reveal the amazing potential within themselves. Step one, then, is to better understand the student perspective as it relates to one's experience, in an effort to make appropriate adjustments and ultimately improve engagement, achievement, and the learning experience as a whole.

The research methods outlined in Chapter Three aimed to identify one means of studying the student perspective as it relates to the learning experience through a case study of 44 students. By collecting the student perspective through both quantitative and qualitative data, the goal of this research is to understand the school experience through the student perspective and equip educators with the knowledge of practices the students deem most profound in hopes of creating a classroom environment that not only enhances the learning experience, but also increases learner success.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction and Research Goal

The literature review in Chapter Two examined student needs and how the student perception influences the student experience by reviewing Maslow's hierarchy of needs alongside Glasser's choice theory. Existing studies related to the student perspective were also reviewed within the context of deficiency needs and growth needs. The goal of this research project is to offer insight into the learning experience by collecting student perspectives and addressing the following question: *According to high school students, how does meeting students' needs and honoring student voice affect the learning experience?* This chapter reviews the research methods used in studying this question by discussing the reasoning behind the research study, the design, process, methods, and tools used for the study, as well as who the participants were and how the data was collected and analyzed.

Rationale

Research indicates that the learner experience is shaped by perceived teacher support, school safety, and the learning climate, and that an improved learning experience positively impacts student behavior, self-efficacy, school satisfaction, and achievement (Buehler et al., 2015; Elmore & Huebner, 2010). Based on review of the current literature, it appears there is a need for additional research related to which practices within the classroom particularly contribute to the learner experience. By focusing on impactful classroom experiences through the student perspective, this research project

aims to equip educators with the knowledge of practices the students deem most profound in hopes of creating a classroom environment that not only enhances the learning experience, but also increases learner success.

Research Design

The research method selected for this project is a case study. Case studies are a "qualitative design in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (Creswell, 2014, p. 241). This case study consists of a group of 44 ninth- through twelfth-grade students enrolled in my choir classes. A case study allows for multiple data sources to deeply understand an event or an experience. In this case, students' perceptions related to learning experiences according to their deficiency needs (physiological, safety/security, belongingness/love, esteem) and growth needs (cognitive, self-efficacy, aesthetic, self-actualization/transcendence) were examined. I chose this method because it provides a format for collecting a variety of data, while remaining bound by time and activity (Creswell, 2014, p. 241). In an effort to better understand the factors surrounding the learner experience, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. By including both quantitative and qualitative data, research offers a more complete understanding of the case being studied (Creswell, 2014, p. 4).

Survey responses, follow-up interviews, and student enrollment, attendance, and achievement data were used to address the research question. According to Mills (2014), surveys are "generally accepted as part of the school culture, and they provide a great deal of information in a relatively short amount of time" (p. 135). The Likert scale was

used because it is an accessible format that provides quantitative data to measure the

intensity or extent of opinions of participants (McLeod, 2008). I chose to complement

surveys with open-ended questionnaires including relevant follow-up questions to include

a qualitative account of the student perspective. Incorporating the qualitative component

enables the researcher to focus on individual meaning (Creswell, 2014, p. 4), which is an

important consideration when examining the learner experience through the student

perspective.

Finally, student attendance (tardies, excused/unexcused absences), achievement

data (GPA, standardized test scores), and behavior data (reported trouble behavior

incidents) were collected to further understand student achievement and context within

the case. I want to learn which factors strongly influenced the learning environment from

the student perspective and being able to compare differences among groups of students

who achieve at various levels and who attend at different rates will further describe the

case. In addition, this data offered additional insights into any trends or themes that

resulted from the initial survey questions.

Setting and Participants

This study took place within an urban high school in Minnesota of approximately

1,140 students, comprised of 1% American Indian, 8% Asian, 33% Latino, 21% African

American, 35% White, and 2% who identify as Multiracial. 57% of the students qualify

for free and reduced lunch. The staff includes 60 teachers, 3 administrators, 3 counselors,

and 1 social worker. The school offers a range of enrichment and extracurricular

opportunities, including a wide variety of sports, theatre, National Honor Society, and

Student Council, to name a few. There are also a variety of student support programs available, including GLOW (Gay, Lesbian, or Whatever), a multicultural girls group, Latinas Unidas, a food shelf, and a clinic. The study involved 44 participants in grades 9-12. Since the researcher is a choir teacher, all of the participating students were enrolled in a choir class at the participating high school.

Methods and Tools

The tools used in this research project include student surveys, follow-up phone interviews of select students, and student achievement, attendance, and behavior, data. Student questionnaires were used to elicit the student perspective surrounding the learning environment. Student school data was collected as an additional measure of the student experience.

Surveys. Cross-sectional student surveys including questions adapted from the Perceived School Experiences Scale (PSES) (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini, & Ball, 2012) and Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS) (Huebner, 1994) alongside open-ended questions were digitally administered to participating students (see Appendix A) using Google forms. The PSES scale may be used to assess students' perceptions of school-related factors, including school connectedness, emphasis on academic success (*academic press*), and academic motivation (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2012), monitor progress, and assess student needs.

All students within the choir classes at the high school were emailed an invitation to participate in the survey. Those that returned the informed consent form were granted access to the Google forms survey, which could be completed via public or private

computer or device. The surveys also included an invitation to participate in a follow-up phone interview. Students completed the survey independently during the summer and submitted it electronically to allow for adequate processing time and confidentiality. The questions included in the survey used a Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) to gauge the level of respondents' agreement with statements. The open-ended questions intended to gather additional insight related to the initial survey responses.

Follow-up interviews. Follow-up phone interviews were conducted with 3 students. Interviewed students were selected based on completion of the initial survey, within which they indicated willingness to participate in a follow-up phone interview. The interviews provided qualitative data for open-ended questions related to the initial survey questions (see Appendix B).

Student school data. Participant and school-wide student achievement, attendance, and behavior data was also collected from the most recent school year. This data was reviewed in order to create a context within which to place student responses. For example, for a student with multiple records of truancy or trouble behaviors, belongingness or safety may be more salient. Likewise, for students with high achievement, cognitive needs and self-efficacy may be more salient. Names were recorded on the surveys in order to pair response data with said student records and offer additional information to further describe the learner experience.

Data Analysis Methods

The survey questions using the Likert scale were compiled alongside student responses from the follow-up interviews. Participant responses were compared with

attendance, achievement, and behavior data. To determine reported rates of needs satisfaction, responses relating to each category of needs were averaged based on the extent to which students reported the need was satisfied. The Likert scale responses were then broken into two groups - responses indicating satisfied and unsatisfied needs. For example, for the statement, "I am usually hungry in class," responses of strongly agree and agree indicated unsatisfied needs and responses of strongly disagree and disagree indicated satisfied needs. Rates were again averaged within the satisfied and unsatisfied categories to simplify results for reporting. Each subcategory was then averaged to determine overall satisfaction of deficiency needs and growth needs. The same process was used to assess whether students felt their voice was being heard/valued in school.

These results were then compared and contrasted with follow-up interview responses. Trends and discrepancies were noted and analyzed. Significant themes and trends were identified, compared, and contrasted within the context of needs as identified by Maslow (1943) and Glasser (1998) in order to provide recommendations for teachers to consider.

Human Subject Research Review Process

The process for this study involved submitting the Human Subjects Committee (HSC) long form to Hamline University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) along with consent from the school where the case study took place. Prior to the completion of the research, participant consent forms were obtained. Then, the surveys and questionnaires were distributed to students via email. Data of student achievement, attendance, behavior, and enrollment was also collected at this time. Once the surveys were completed, analysis

was conducted, results were recorded and reviewed, and finally reported in Chapter Four of this document.

Summary

Chapter Three addressed the methods used to study the following research question: *According to high school students, how does meeting students' needs and honoring student voice affect the learning experience?* A case study approach was used to collect quantitative data (surveys, achievement, attendance, and behavior data) and qualitative data (follow-up interviews) from students. Surveys were sent to 44 students, 19 of whom responded. Data from a cross-sectional survey was collected alongside achievement, attendance, behavior, and enrollment data. Student responses were recorded in relation to the Likert scale and open-ended questions were reviewed alongside academic and behavior data to understand the extent to which the school experience influenced the learning environment for the student participants. In addition, follow-up interviews were conducted with 3 students. In an effort to highlight impactful classroom experiences and offer insight into considerations for creating a learning environment that both enhances the learner experience and increases student success, Chapter Four reviews the results of this study, and discusses the findings as they relate to current research surrounding the student perspective and the learning experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The intent of this chapter is to share the results of the study outlined in Chapter Three. To briefly review, this study included 43 students in grades 9-12 representing a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Achievement, attendance, and behavior data was collected and compared between the participants and their responses. Surveys and follow-up interviews were conducted (see Appendix A and B, respectively). All of these pieces of data were gathered in an effort to answer the research question: *According to high school students, how does meeting students' needs and honoring student voice affect the learning experience?*

The following chapter reports the findings regarding student needs within the context of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy and Glasser's (1998) Choice Theory. In addition to these needs, the extent to which students feel they are able to share their own voice within their school experience is reported. The following information is intended to provide valuable insight into whether student needs play a significant role in shaping the learning experience through the perspective of the students.

Attendance, Achievement, and Behavior Data

While the attendance rate of participants is above the rate of the student body as a whole (see Figure 1), achievement data (see Figure 2 and Figure 3) and behavior data indicate the participant sample size is a relatively appropriate representation of the larger student body. Participant students' attendance rates were higher than the student body

rates, as indicated in Figure 1. Ranges reflect standards/targets set by the participating school.
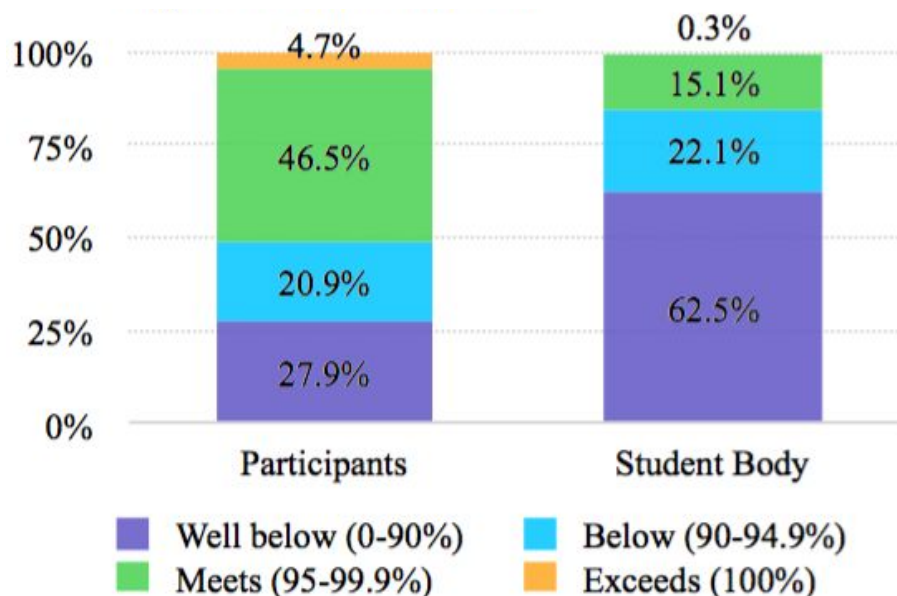
Figure 1. Attendance rates

Achievement data sets included both grade point average (GPA) and standardized testing scores. In comparison to the larger student population both achievement measures indicate the study participants are representative of the larger student body in the middle GPA tiers (see Figure 2), and most closely representative of the school when comparing standardized test scores, with rates within 2.0% of each other for three of the five categories.
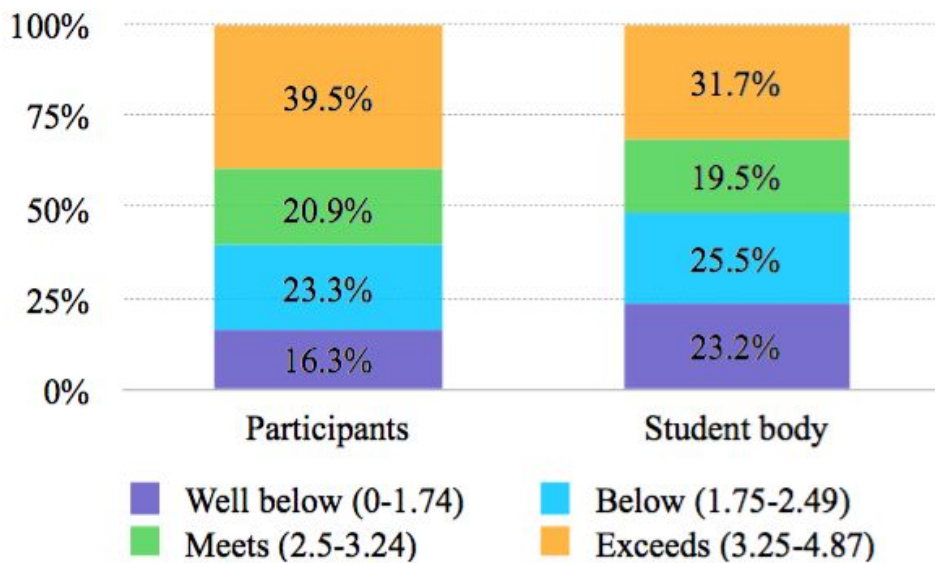
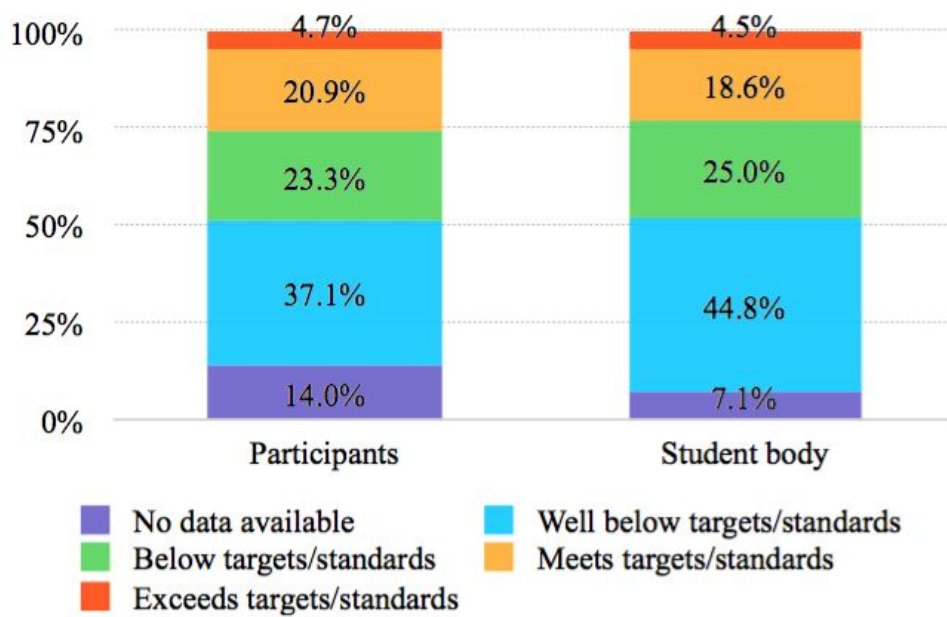*Figure 2*. Grade point average (GPA)

Figure 3. Standardized test scores

According to school records, 13% of participant students were involved in reported trouble behavior incidents, while 17% of students in the student body were involved in such incidents.

Analysis of the participant sample in relation to the entire student body indicates the study likely provides a closely representative sample of the school, with the exception of increased attendance rates. This analysis is important to note when considering the reported learning experiences of participants and understanding their deficiency needs.

Deficiency Needs Results

Deficiency needs assessed in the study included physiological, safety and security, belongingness and love, and esteem needs (see Appendix C). Research indicates there is a correlation between the school environment and students' learning experience (Buehler et al., 2015; Coyne & Coyne, 2001; Elmore & Huebner, 2010; Meyer & Turner, 2006). Since all of the deficiency needs can be encompassed within the classroom, it is appropriate to examine the learner experience through these needs. Survey results were analyzed based on four-point Likert scale responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Follow-up interviews were conducted to provide both insight into student responses as well as give students an opportunity to share their voice as it relates to their learning experience. Three female students participated in the follow-up interviews after completing the initial survey. The questions used were intended to elicit authentic responses that would extend understanding of the survey results. Questions corresponded

with each level of needs as well as student voice, and responses are included alongside survey results for each category.

According to this study, an averaged 60% of respondents indicated their deficiency needs overall are largely being met, while 39% indicated many of their deficiency needs are not being met. The following chart further reveals the individual deficiency needs reported by participants.

Table 1

Deficiency needs being met at a glance

Deficiency needs overall	60%
Physiological needs	53%
Safety and security needs	55%
Belongingness and love needs	53%
Esteem needs	79%

Physiological. Within the growth needs, physiological needs presented the most room for growth. Physiological needs addressed in the survey responses included transportation, hunger, sleep, physical comfort, and frequency of visits to the counselor, nurse, or health center for mental or physical help. Overall, 53% of participating students indicated their physiological needs were being met. Based on responses that indicated significant unmet needs, uncomfortable classroom temperature was the most significant, with 84% of students reporting they are uncomfortable in their classrooms. This need was followed by 58% of students reporting they are usually hungry in class.

Interviewed students all said that their physiological needs are mostly met, but mentioned how they could use more sleep. Though one said it was sometimes her own fault for not going to bed, two of the three mentioned homework keeping them up late, causing them to be sleepy in class.

Safety and security. Respondents indicated their safety and security needs were being slightly better addressed. While 55% of students reporting these needs overall were being met, the strongest result was students agreeing that they feel safe at school (74%). Destruction of property and mean-spirited comments were the highest reported unmet needs for safety and security, with 58% of students agreeing that students say mean things to one another and that destruction of property is a problem in school.

Interviewed students' responses were consistent with the survey results. They did not indicate much dissatisfaction with physical safety, but talked more about social safety being a concern. One student said, "There will always be a few things holding me back - insecurities and stuff...Sometimes I'm afraid I'm not as smart as others in my class." Another mentioned fear of others' judgment as a barrier to her reaching her full potential. She said, "I push back on what I know I can do because I am afraid of other people's judgment, so I'm not working as hard as I could or using my full potential." This statement also evidences some feelings associated with the next level of needs - belongingness and love.

Belongingness and love. Almost 53% of respondents indicated their belongingness and love needs are being met at school. In fact, 84% agreed that there are teachers at school they can go to for help. Just over 52% of students indicated satisfaction

with social belongingness, which outranked school belonging by 5%, with only 47% of students reporting they feel like they belong in their school.

Consistent with the survey results, interviewees were on all parts of the spectrum. One student said she does not feel like she belongs, but goes to school to meet her goals. Another said she sometimes belongs, but often feels out of place or "different". The third, without hesitation, said she belongs because she has gone to the district her whole life and knows how the system works.

Esteem. Esteem needs were by far the most strongly satisfied need, with 79% of students agreeing that their esteem needs were met. Teacher support, relationships, affinity, and high expectations all received over 89% agreement that the needs were being met. The lowest result in this category was related to student attitude; only 32% felt they possessed a positive attitude toward school.

In regard to esteem needs, the student interview respondents said some of their teachers really care about them, and others less so. One mentioned she does not connect with people as much or as well as she would like. However, when asked to describe a time in high school when they learned something particularly well, one mentioned affinity for a teacher as contributing factor to her success. She said of one of her teachers, "I really liked Mr. Fredrickson (alias). He was so passionate about what he was teaching. His energy about it made me more interested in the topic as well." The other two referenced the next level in the needs hierarchy and the first tier of growth needs - cognitive stimulation.

Growth Needs Results

While deficiency needs satisfy basic requirements for learning, one could argue that growth needs characterize the processes of higher-level learning. Understanding growth needs and learning how to mediate them may help teachers further advance student achievement. Growth needs assessed in the study included cognitive, self-efficacy, aesthetic, and self-actualization and transcendence needs (see Appendix C).

Table 2

Growth needs being met at a glance

Growth needs overall	68%
Cognitive needs	78%
Self-efficacy needs	83%
Aesthetic	49%
Self-actualization and transcendence needs	61%

Cognitive. Overall, the majority of respondents agreed that their cognitive needs were met. Questions referencing the school valuing students' learning and thought-provoking assignments yielded the most positive response, 95% and 84%, respectively. Students indicated that helpful teacher feedback was a lesser satisfied cognitive need, with only 63% of students agreeing that teacher feedback is helpful. While this is the lowest satisfied need within the cognitive needs, it is worth noting that 63% is still higher than the reported satisfaction of deficiency needs overall (61%) as mentioned previously.

When asked about a time they learned something particularly well in school, two of three interview respondents cited cognitive stimulation as a reason for their success. In other words, when they were interested in the content, they were more successful in their learning. One said, "My dad has had back problems, and the things I learned in biology let me help him." These responses speak to the importance of including curriculum that is both relevant and interesting to students.

Self-efficacy. Of all the needs within the study, self-efficacy ranked the highest in satisfaction. An average of 82% of students indicated their self-efficacy needs were being met. Students largely agreed that they enjoy school activities, like to try new things, and have positive self perceptions of their social likeability. In addition, 79% of students agreed that when they work hard, they learn more, directly indicating positive self-efficacy and a growth mindset.

Of the three interview respondents, only one said they thought they did their best in school. She said she always puts her full effort into her work because it is important to her and to her parents. "I know in the long run it will pay off," she said. Another cited low self-efficacy as a reason for her incomplete efforts. She said she gives effort, but not usually her best effort. She said, "I try to push myself academically, but there are times when I don't think I'm able to or I'm not smart enough so I just don't try." In this student's case, her lack of self-efficacy prevents her from reaching her full potential.

Aesthetic. Contrary to self-efficacy satisfaction, aesthetic needs were the least satisfied need within the growth needs. Often satisfied by creativity, beauty, and emotional and sensory stimuli, aesthetic need satisfaction was only indicated by 49% of

participants. Though 63% of students agreed they get to use their own unique ideas when completing assignments, the same number indicated they wish they had a chance to be more creative in class.

All three interview respondents agreed that aesthetic learning opportunities are important, but wished they had more opportunities to be creative and show their individuality/character. One said she thought aesthetic learning activities "help you learn more about yourself, what you like and dislike." Another said colors and creative projects motivate her and make learning more exciting.

Self-actualization and transcendence. The highest level need, self-actualization and transcendence, aligned with the overall average of total needs satisfaction, both at 61%. Even though 74% of students feel they have made the most of their school experience so far, only 47% feel they are the best version of themselves in school. Still, 58% agree that school helps them in real life and is preparing them well for adulthood.

In the interview, self-actualization and transcendence needs were addressed by asking the students whether school has helped them discover more about themselves and what they want to do in the future. All of the respondents said school has helped them in this area, but to a limited degree. Two of the three said high school exposed them to new experiences and ideas, which created interest in areas they did not previously appreciate. One explained her thinking, saying, "Trying new things has allowed me to discover hidden talents, and helps me consider new opportunities for careers in the future. It provides a sense of belonging to something bigger and helps me narrow down what i want to do in the future with my goals and dreams." The third respondent said her music

class experiences were more influential than in math, english, history, or science because "it was something fun". In fact, she has decided to pursue music in college.

Student Voice Results

Student perspective was also included in the survey as it is a valuable piece of information when assessing student learning experiences. Results show that 43% of students feel their voice is not heard or considered in school. Only an average of 32% said they often shared their voice in class. Even though 84% did agree their teachers listen to what they have to say, when asked if their teachers want to know what they think, only 63% agreed. Furthermore, 42% felt their opinion did not matter in class discussions. These results would suggest the sentiment that the teachers care about the students' voice, but do not necessarily do a great job of eliciting authentic responses during discussions.

The student interview respondents had mixed feelings about whether their voice was heard. Yet, none of them responded with a resounding, "Yes, my voice is heard." They all hedged their responses, saying they were sometimes heard, that it depended on the teacher or the situation. The students made comments such as, "I don't think the teachers really understand or fully listen to me," and, "I don't usually like to voice my opinion because of how my peers always shoot me down. If I were to speak up, it could go either way."

The students final question the three interview students were asked was, "What do you think has had the strongest impact on your success at school?" All three shared the same response: family. One said, "Even though I don't always do my best, they're always

there to cheer me on or help me out. Even when I have low self-esteem, they think highly

of me and think I can do it." Another said her parents encouraged her, even when she had

to stay up late to finish homework, reminding her it would pay off. "My parents want me

to have a better life than they had," she said. Though the interviews with each student

lasted no more than 20 minutes, the experiences they shared offered clarity and insight

that was largely consistent with the survey data.

Summary

In summary, the total average satisfaction of all deficiency, growth, and student

voice needs combined, according to participating high school students is 61.7%, leaving

room for roughly 38% growth.

Table 3

Overall mean of needs being met

	Needs being met	Total average of all needs being met
Deficiency needs	59.9%	
Growth needs	67.8%	61.7%
Student voice	57.3%	

With only one-fifth of students meeting or exceeding targets/standards for standardized

tests, only half with a GPA of 2.5 or above, only half of the students with attendance rates

of 90% or better, and 17% of students being involved in reported trouble behaviors, there

is room for improvement for the learner experience overall.

Chapter Five provides conclusions of the study and recommendations in relation

to the research question: *According to high school students, how does meeting students'*

needs and honoring student voice affect the learning experience? Possible implications,

learnings, as well as areas for further consideration are also discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to bring additional insight into the student experience and give students a voice to share their own story by examining needs and the extent to which they are met. Through review of existing literature and analysis of case study results, the findings indicate that there remains significant room for growth when it comes to satisfying student needs and honoring student voice. The following chapter addresses key findings, reviews case study results relative to existing literature, discusses implications, limitations, and recommendations for further study, as well as provides overall conclusions of the research in response to the question, *according to high school students, how does meeting students' needs and honoring student voice affect the learning experience?*

Key Findings

Key findings of this case study indicate that student needs still need to be met. Counter to what Maslow (1943) posits, students indicated their growth needs had higher rates of satisfaction than deficiency needs. In addition, student voice plays a crucial role in understanding students' needs and helping them become more successful.

Student needs assessment. According to the study, results indicate only 61% of students feel their deficiency needs are being met, leaving almost 2 in 5 students with their basic needs unmet. This shortcoming may contribute to a variety of educational and behavior issues. Research indicates both increased school satisfaction and perceptions of school safety are directly correlated to trouble avoidance (Buehler et al., 2015). So, while

reports do not necessarily indicate the inverse is true, there is evidence to believe that if 40% of students have unmet deficiency needs and 17% of students are involved in trouble behavior incidents, mediating these needs may decrease trouble behaviors.

Students indicated they typically felt physically safe in school, but believed that destruction of property and mean-spirited comments were an issue. This safety/security finding dovetails with the need for belongingness and love in that students also reported forms of rejection (negative judgement, dismissal of opinions) from peers or teachers as a barrier to participating fully in class and reaching their full potential. According to students, teacher support and a positive classroom climate contribute to positive motivation (Meyer & Turner, 2006, p. 379). Furthermore, Voelkl (1997) stated:

> Students demonstrating high academic achievement and active involvement in the learning process are likely to identify with school, while students who have experienced repeated school failure and do not participate actively in the classroom are not likely to respond with feeling of identification and perhaps will further respond with total withdrawal from school. (p. 311)

Even though students esteem needs were largely met, less than half felt belongingness at school. Considering that students who do not identify with school, or feel an absence of belonging, are more likely to engage in school crime and misconduct (Voelkl, 1997, p. 298), and that students who engage in problem behaviors in school are less likely to be academically successful (McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun, & Cochrane, 2008), finding a way to mediate belongingness needs could, again, increase achievement and decrease instances of trouble behaviors.

A study by Connell, Spencer, and Aber (1994) found that students' positive emotional and behavioral engagement [exemplified within satisfaction of deficiency needs] was significantly associated with positive student outcomes such as good grades in school and high scores on standardized achievement tests, which suggests if students' needs are met, they are able to become more engaged and more successful.

Growth needs were slightly better satisfied than deficiency needs, which is surprising considering Maslow's belief that deficiency needs must be largely satisfied before growth needs can be addressed. Students felt they were cognitively stimulated and had very positive rates of self efficacy. According to Bandura (1993), rigor [or cognitive stimulation] relates to self-efficacy in that students who have high self-efficacy are more likely to attempt challenging tasks, continue in the face of failure, and ultimately have increased achievement as a result of their persistence and increased self-efficacy. Findings also supported Voelkl's (1997) notion that students who perceive the learning to be relevant tend to be more engaged and participate more readily in the work, with one student saying she loved the learning in Biology class because she was able to apply her knowledge in a way that helped her dad with his back problems.

Aesthetic needs were the least satisfied growth need, with students yearning for more opportunities to be creative, share their own voice, and demonstrate their uniqueness. Interview respondents said they believed this facet of learning was important and wished they could do more of it in school, a finding which supports Glasser's (1998) choice theory need for power/fun and Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) argument that aesthetic experiences make life [and learning] more rich, interesting, and enjoyable.

It is within the level of self-actualization and transcendence that learners search to reach their full potential and connect their knowledge in a way that will make a positive impact on the world around them (Huitt, 2007), which is conceivably the overall goal of education. Even though 58% of respondents agreed that school helps them in real life and is preparing them well for adulthood, that is not enough. All students need to feel as though school is helping them better understand themselves and the world around them, preparing them to reach their full potential in school and beyond.

Higher satisfaction of growth needs. Based on the results of the study, an average of only 62% of students reported their needs are being met. Amid deficiency needs, growth needs, and students feeling their voice is heard and valued, growth needs had the highest rate of satisfaction. This is surprising, considering that Maslow (1943) posited that lower level deficiency needs must be largely satiated before one can focus on higher level growth needs. However, noting the achievement, attendance, and behavior rates for the participating students and school, there appears to be a correlation between these unmet needs and the overall school population data sets. In addition, only 57% of students responded that they felt their voice was being heard and valued.

Importance of student voice. The data indicates that while almost two thirds of students have less than a 90% attendance rate, roughly half maintain a GPA of 2.5 or better. However, only 23% meet or exceed the targets/standards when it comes to standardized tests, and almost 17% of students were involved in reported behavior incidents. These results suggest that while the students do relatively well in the classroom, they seem to fall short on standardized tests, and a portion of students still

make choices that lead to involvement in trouble behaviors. Eliciting authentic student perspectives and providing multiple opportunities for students to share their voice could enable educators to better understand and address unmet student needs, which may help mediate issues of attendance, decrease negative behavior incidents, and increase overall achievement.

Implications for Educators

Understanding student needs could enhance students' learning experience and, in turn, help students become more successful. Based on this study, developing positive learning environments, eliciting authentic student perspectives, building relationships, and providing more opportunities for aesthetic learning activities would enable educators to better satisfy student needs, and foster more positive learning experiences for students.

Develop positive environments. According to Buehler et al. (2015), when students perceive their learning environment to be positive, safe, and supportive, their school experience is more enjoyable and they are more positively engaged in the learning process (p. 79). This evidence reinforces the notion that educators have a responsibility to respond to student perceptions regarding the learning environment in an effort to increase student engagement and improve the learner experience. In comparing the data for satisfied/unsatisfied needs alongside the achievement, attendance, and behavior rates for the participating students and school, one cannot help but wonder if better tending to unmet student needs would improve overall performance.

Elicit student perspectives and build relationships. Student perceptions ultimately influence their learning environment, so it is valuable to elicit and seek to

understand authentic student perspectives. In a study by Brown, Hattie, and Winheller (2013), self-efficacy and and student perceptions of the quality of learning, were found to predict achievement. If educators were to solicit authentic student responses more frequently, perhaps we could become better aware of the unmet needs that are hindering student progress and tend to them accordingly. These efforts could help increase self-efficacy and belongingness, while offering more freedom with choices and making learning more fun. By encouraging students to share their voice, positive relationships could also further develop. According to Meyer and Turner (2006), relationships can influence levels of engagement, interest, autonomy, and belonging, which in turn shapes students' perceptions of their learning experience.

Aesthetic learning. Providing students with more aesthetic learning opportunities could also stimulate greater academic growth. Such activities address Glasser's (1998) established needs for power, freedom, and fun, causing students to place the learning experience and the associated people in what they deem to be a suitable place in or out of their quality world; an association that contributes to engagement and success. Providing students with opportunities to address their aesthetic needs can also enrich their learning experience by tending to sensory, emotional, cognitive, and transcendent needs simultaneously, potentially improving the learning experience overall.

Limitations

While the study was distributed to 42 students, only 19 participated. Because voluntary response is by nature something students choose to do, participation in the

study may have been more likely for students who have greater satisfaction with their learning experience, and are therefore, more willing to share their perspective.

Additionally, a disproportionate number of survey respondents were female. While the study was sent to 44 students (25% male, 75% female), only 16% of respondents were male. All follow-up interview respondents were also female. These disproportions may have skewed results as it represents a limited gender base.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research is needed on the influence of family on the learning experience. All three of the interview participants said that family was the greatest contributing factor to their success in school. Further study is required to discover the extent to which family affected their learning experience as well as whether these students have more positive experiences than those without a similar support system.

Also, students shared their perceptions regarding the extent to which their needs are being met. However, more study is required to understand specifically the effect the satisfaction/dissatisfaction of needs has on achievement. Do unmet needs impede student learning or are they just bothersome? This study indicates that some correlations to existing literature exist, but where there is a direct relationship between teachers intentionally meeting student needs and positive learning environments has yet to be discovered.

Several other lingering questions require additional study to fully understand the scope of the relationships between needs and the learner experience. Is the data found within this case study consistent with other schools? How are attendance rates, reported

behavior issues, and achievement sets affected when specific student needs are satisfied? Does performance improve? Are unmet needs a barrier to success, or merely bothersome for students? Furthermore, how can teachers make student feedback more effective? Additional insight into any one of these questions could be highly beneficial for educators as we seek to provide the best possible educational experience for all students.

Development of Author

Through this study I have come to further understand the power and importance of providing students with opportunities to share their perspectives and listen to their needs. I must strive to get to know each individual student in order to successfully understand where they are coming from and provide instruction that meets them where they are. This study has accentuated the necessity for personalized instruction, relational teaching, and open-communication between teachers, students, and parents alike. Only by incorporating each of these facets into my own instruction will I be able to provide appropriate instruction that indeed helps each student to achieve his or her full potential.

Plan for Communicating Results

These results will be shared with the administration at the participating school and will be available for other educators to access via Hamline Digital Commons. My hope is that by sharing these results, the participating school will receive insights into their students' needs and be able to better serve the student population. At the very least, my hope is that teachers may review this data and become more intentional about eliciting authentic student perspectives, ultimately using the knowledge they gather to improve the overall learning experience for all students.

Conclusions

According to high school students, how does meeting students' needs and honoring student voice affect the learning experience? Though this question is not easily answered, it is safe to say that both study results and current research indicate significant relationships between student needs and the learning experience. There is compelling evidence to suggest that increased satisfaction of student needs could lead to improved learning environments. Therefore, educators must seek to elicit authentic student perspectives in order to understand whether students' needs are being met and how their needs impact their learning experience. Students who have positive school experiences are more likely to positively contribute to the classroom environment and school as a whole, leading to greater engagement, higher achievement, and increased success (Elmore & Huebner, 2010; Glasser, 1998; Ladd, Buhs & Seid, 2000). For these reasons, it is necessary for educators and school communities to pay attention to student needs in an effort to increase engagement, further achievement, improve the learner experience, and empower all students to be the best they can be.

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APPENDIX A

Student Survey

Your High School Learning Experience

Please respond as honestly and openly as possible to the following questions in relation to your high school experience.

First and Last Name (Your name is only used to compare records and then is *
removed. Only Mrs. Hartje sees it.)

Short answer text

I regularly use school transportation to get to school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

If there were no school buses, I wouldn't make it to school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I usually bring my lunch from home. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I am usually hungry in class. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I often struggle to focus because I am tired. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My classrooms are often uncomfortably hot/cold. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I have visited the counselor, nurse, or health center for mental or physical help. *

○ Never

○ 1-3 times per week

○ 1-3 times per month

○ 1-3 times per year

Destruction of property is a problem in my school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

Students in my school are generally nice to each other. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

Students in my school say mean things to one another. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I am afraid of getting picked on. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I feel safe at school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I wish my school had stricter safety rules. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

There are teachers at my school I can go to for help if I need it. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I feel like I belong in my school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

Every student in my school is valued. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I just don't fit in at school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I have lots of friends at school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I wish I had more friends. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I have a positive attitude toward school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers want me to succeed. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers don't care if I fail. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers care about me. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I have meaningful relationships with teachers at my school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers like me. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

Decisions at my school always focus on what is best for student learning. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My school values students' learning. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

School is interesting. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers assign work that makes me think. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers let me know when I am doing less than my best work. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers provide helpful feedback to students about their academic performance. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers provide helpful feedback to students about their academic performance. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I like the challenges of learning new things in school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I enjoy school activities. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I am fun to be around. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I am a nice person. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

Most people like me. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

There are lots of things I can do well. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I like to try new things. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

When I work hard, I learn more. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I often get to create things in class. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

We learn about beautiful things in class. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My school is ugly. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I get to be creative in school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I get to use my own unique ideas when completing assignments. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I wish I had a chance to be more creative in class. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My school experience is preparing me well for adulthood. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I can connect what I'm learning to the world around me. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I feel I have made the most of my school experience so far. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I am the best version of myself at school. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

School helps me in real life. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers want to know what I think. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My opinion matters in class discussions. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers ask me what I think. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers ask me how I learn best. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I often share my thoughts in class. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

I like to speak my mind in class. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

My teachers listen to what I have to say. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

No one seems to care what I think. *

	1	2	3	4	
strongly disagree	○	○	○	○	strongly agree

If you strongly agreed with any of the statements above, please explain why. *

Long answer text

If you strongly disagreed with any of the statements above, please explain why. *

Long answer text

Do you feel like your voice is heard in school? Why or why not? *

Long answer text

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. Are you comfortable enough in school to reach your full potential? Why or why not?

2. Do you feel like you belong at school? What makes you feel that way?

3. Describe a time you learned something particularly well in school. Why do you think that is?

4. Do you think you do your best in school? Why or why not?

5. Does school give you enough opportunities to be creative? Do you think this is important? Why or why not?

6. Has school helped you discover more about yourself and what you want to do in the future? Why or why not?

7. If you could change one thing about your high school experience overall, what would it be?

8. What do you think has had the strongest impact on your success at school?

9. Do you feel like your voice is heard in school? Why or why not?

10. Is there anything else you think would be valuable information around your needs being met at school or how your learning experience could be improved?

APPENDIX C

Survey Results by Question

	Insignificant (being met)			Significant (not being met)		
	1	**2**		**3**	**4**	
DEFICIENCY NEEDS	26.7%	34.5%		24.5%	14.4%	
Grouped Overall	61.2%			38.8%		
			Sum of 1			Sum of 3
Physiological	**1**	**2**	**and 2**	**3**	**4**	**and 4**
I regularly use school transportation to get to school.	63.2%	0.0%	63.2%	5.3%	31.6%	36.9%
If there were no school buses, I wouldn't make it to school.	47.4%	5.3%	52.7%	10.5%	36.8%	47.3%
I usually bring my lunch from home.	57.9%	10.5%	68.4%	0.0%	31.6%	31.6%
I am usually hungry in class.	15.8%	26.3%	42.1%	26.3%	31.6%	57.9%
I often struggle to focus because I am tired.	26.3%	31.6%	57.9%	21.1%	21.1%	42.2%
My classrooms are often uncomfortably hot/cold.	0.0%	15.8%	15.8%	31.6%	52.6%	84.2%
I have visited the counselor, nurse, or health center for mental or physical help: (1) never, (2) 1-3 times per year, (3) 1-3 times/month, (4) 1-3 times per week	15.8%	52.6%	68.4%	31.6%	0.0%	31.6%
	32.3%	20.3%		18.1%	29.3%	
	52.6%			47.4%		
			Sum of 1			Sum of 3
Safety/Security	**1**	**2**	**and 2**	**3**	**4**	**and 4**
Destruction of property is a problem in my school.	15.8%	26.3%	42.1%	36.8%	21.1%	57.9%
Students in my school are generally nice to each other.	10.5%	42.1%	52.6%	42.1%	5.3%	47.4%
Students in my school say mean things to one another.	5.3%	36.8%	42.1%	31.6%	26.3%	57.9%
I am afraid of getting picked on.	31.6%	26.3%	57.9%	26.3%	15.8%	42.1%
I feel safe at school.	26.3%	47.4%	73.7%	26.3%	0.0%	26.3%
I wish my school had stricter safety rules.	31.6%	31.6%	63.2%	26.3%	10.5%	36.8%
	20.2%	35.1%		31.6%	13.2%	
	55.3%			44.7%		
			Sum of 1			Sum of 3
Belongingness & Love	**1**	**2**	**and 2**	**3**	**4**	**and 4**
There are teachers at my school I can go to for help if I need it.	31.6%	52.6%	84.2%	15.8%	0.0%	15.8
I feel like I belong in my school.	15.8%	31.6%	47.4%	47.4%	5.3%	52.7%
Every student in my school is valued.	10.5%	47.4%	57.9%	31.6%	10.5%	42.1%
I just don't fit in at school.	21.1%	31.6%	52.7%	31.6%	15.8%	47.4%

	Insignificant (being met)			Significant (not being met)		
I have lots of friends at school.	15.8%	36.8%	52.6%	31.6%	15.8%	47.4%
I wish I had more friends.	26.3%	26.3%	52.6%	42.1%	5.3%	47.4%
	20.2%	37.7%		33.4%	8.8%	
		57.9%			42.1%	

Esteem	1	2	Sum of 1 and 2	3	4	Sum of 3 and 4
I have a positive attitude toward school.	5.3%	26.3%	31.6%	36.8%	31.6%	68.4%
My teachers want me to succeed.	57.9%	36.8%	94.7%	5.3%	0.0%	5.3%
My teachers don't care if I fail.	47.4%	47.4%	94.8%	5.3%	0.0%	5.3%
My teachers care about me.	26.3%	63.2%	89.5%	10.5%	0.0%	10.5%
I have meaningful relationships with teachers at my school.	21.1%	52.6%	73.7%	21.1%	5.3%	26.4%
My teachers like me.	47.40%	42.1%	89.5%	10.5%	0.0%	10.5%
	34.2%	44.7%		14.9%	6.2%	
		79.0%			21.1%	

	Insignificant (being met)			Significant (not being met)		
	1	2		3	4	
GROWTH NEEDS	26.9%	40.9%		25.7%	6.5%	
		67.8%			32.2%	

Cognitive	1	2	Sum of 1 and 2	3	4	Sum of 3 and 4
Decisions at my school always focus on what is best for student learning.	15.8%	57.9%	73.7%	26.3%	0.0%	26.3%
My school values students' learning.	26.3%	68.4%	94.7%	0.0%	5.3%	5.3%
School is interesting.	26.3%	52.6%	78.9%	21.1%	0.0%	21.1%
My teachers assign work that makes me think.	15.8%	68.4%	84.2%	5.3%	10.5%	15.8%
My teachers let me know when I am doing less than my best work.	26.3%	47.4%	73.7%	21.1%	5.3%	26.4%
My teachers provide helpful feedback to students about their academic performance.	31.6%	31.6%	63.2%	31.6%	5.3%	36.9%
	23.7%	54.4%		17.6%	4.4%	
		78.1%			22.0%	

Self Efficacy	1	2	Sum of 1 and 2	3	4	Sum of 3 and 4
I like the challenges of learning new things in school.	47.4%	36.8%	84.2%	10.5%	5.3%	15.8%
I enjoy school activities.	31.6%	52.6%	84.2%	15.8%	0.0%	15.8%
I am fun to be around.	42.1%	42.1%	84.2%	10.5%	5.3%	15.8%
I am a nice person.	68.4%	26.3%	94.7%	5.3%	0.0%	5.3%
Most people like me.	21.1%	57.9%	79.0%	15.8%	5.3%	21.1%
There are lots of things I can do well.	36.8%	36.8%	73.6%	15.8%	10.5%	26.3%
I like to try new things.	57.9%	26.3%	84.2%	15.8%	0.0%	15.8%
When I work hard, I learn more.	42.1%	36.8%	78.9%	21.1%	0.0%	21.1%
	43.4%	39.5%		13.8%	3.3%	
		82.9%			17.1%	

	Insignificant (being met)			Significant (not being met)		
Aesthetic	**1**	**2**	**Sum of 1 and 2**	**3**	**4**	**Sum of 3 and 4**
I often get to create things in class.	21.1%	21.1%	42.2%	42.1%	15.8%	57.9%
We learn about beautiful things in class.	10.5%	36.8%	47.3%	42.1%	10.5%	52.6%
My school is ugly.	21.1%	36.8%	57.9%	36.8%	5.3%	42.1%
I get to be creative in school.	26.3%	21.1%	47.4%	47.4%	5.3%	52.7%
I get to use my own unique ideas when completing assignments.	31.6%	31.6%	63.2%	36.8%	0.0%	36.8%
I wish I had a chance to be more creative in class.	0.0%	36.8%	36.8%	21.1%	42.1%	63.2%
	18.4%	30.7%		37.7%	13.2%	
		49.1%			50.9%	

			Sum of 1 and 2			**Sum of 3 and 4**
Self-Actualization and Transcendence	**1**	**2**		**3**	**4**	
My school experience is preparing me well for adulthood.	15.8%	42.1%	57.9%	42.1%	0.0%	42.1%
I can connect what I'm learning to the world around me.	26.3%	42.1%	68.4%	26.3%	5.3%	31.6%
I feel I have made the most of my school experience so far.	21.1%	52.6%	73.7%	21.1%	5.3%	26.4%
I am the best version of myself at school.	21.1%	26.3%	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%	52.6%
School helps me in real life.	26.3%	31.6%	57.9%	36.8%	5.3%	42.1%
	22.1%	38.9%		33.7%	5.3%	
		61.1%			39.0%	

	Insignificant (being met)			Significant (not being met)		
VOICE	**1**	**2**	**Sum of 1 and 2**	**3**	**4**	**Sum of 3 and 4**
My teachers want to know what I think.	15.8%	47.4%	63.2%	26.3%	10.5%	36.8%
My opinion matters in class discussions.	21.1%	36.8%	57.9%	31.6%	10.5%	42.1%
My teachers ask me what I think.	15.8%	47.4%	63.2%	26.3%	10.5%	36.8%
My teachers ask me how I learn best.	26.3%	21.1%	47.4%	36.8%	15.8%	52.6%
I often share my thoughts in class.	15.8%	15.8%	31.6%	57.9%	10.5%	68.4%
I like to speak my mind in class.	15.8%	21.1%	36.9%	47.4%	15.8%	63.2%
My teachers listen to what I have to say.	42.1%	42.1%	84.2%	10.5%	5.3%	15.8%
No one seems to care what I think.	21.1%	52.6%	73.7%	5.3%	21.1%	26.4%
	21.7%	35.5%		30.3%	12.5%	
	57.3%			42.8%		