Caring Relationships and Supportive Community
MEETING STUDENT NEEDS
(from Watson & Ecken, 2003, *Learning to Trust*)

NEED FOR BELONGINGNESS

1. Build a sense of group membership
*Use class meetings to share news and class accomplishments
*Involve students in planning & problem solving
*Use inclusive language: "we"
*Frequently refer to the class as a whole, e.g., "This class sure likes to learn!"

2. Build a shared history
*Create shared learning experiences
*Involve students in developing class procedures, customs, & rituals

3. Highlight shared goals
*Generate with students lists of things they hope to learn
*Weave these into the curriculum

4. Highlight shared values
*Engage whole class in thinking about
    -how they want to be treated
    -how they want their class to be

5. Build interdependence and responsibility
*Ask & help students take responsibility for the classroom

6. Encourage students to be helpful
*To help one another
*To help the class as a whole
*To help the teacher
*To help the community

7. Organize the environment to support student interaction

8. Be open to student suggestions

NEED FOR COMPETENCE

1. Adjust learning activities to match student skills
*Provide additional scaffolding for students who are struggling

2. Help students see that learning is interesting, relevant, and important

*for example, connect learning activities to student lives and interests
*provide opportunities to share their learning with others

3. Build hopefulness in struggling learners by helping them see how they are making progress

4. Stand firm on the importance of learning, but make allowances for special stresses in their lives

NEED FOR AUTONOMY

1. Provide students with as much autonomy in their learning as they can handle

2. Balance autonomy with authority. Clearly communicate what is negotiable and what is not.

3. Look for and be open to opportunities to engage students in negotiation and problem solving.

4. Make allowances for students with strong autonomy needs.
*Give them time to comply on their own
*Ignore "attitude" until you establish mutual trust
*Problem solve with them to come up with a way to help them comply

5. Allow students freedom to grow
*Adjust rules in response to student growth
*Encourage student initiative
*Allow students sufficient freedom

ADDITIONAL NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY OTHERS

According to **Susan Fiske** (2004) in a review of social psychology research, the five basic human motives are:

(1) Control (autonomy)
(2) Belonging (connectedness)
(3) Enhancing Self (competence)
(4) Trust
(5) Understanding

Ervin Staub (2005) adds **Purpose** as another basic need

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Fostering Whole-Brain Functioning

- Too often, we operate from self-interested positions (left-brain dominance) or react to perceived status threat (reptilian brain dominance), due to upbringing or culture.

- Human higher morality is dominated by the **right brain**, which takes a holistic, connective orientation to life (see McGilchrist, 2009; Taylor, 2008).

- **A Communal Imagination Ethic** combines right-brain sensibilities of wholeness and connection with left-brain problem-solving skills

How do we foster a "step to the right" (as neuroscientist, Jill Bolte Taylor, 2008, calls it)? Here are a few suggestions.

Foster WELLBEING through these practices
Deep breathing (Kabat-Zinn)
Kindness to self (Salzberg)
Mindful presence (Langer)
Expand social pleasure
Openness to the new instead of bracing against it (Bougeault)
Shift attention to the big picture
Choose environments that foster prosocial intuitions (Hogarth)

Realize brain/personality PLASTICITY and the power of SELF-AUTHORSHIP
Foster a growth mindset instead of fixed mindset (Dweck)
Your activities (Siegel, Rossi):
- turn genes on and off
- build neuronal connections
- awaken right brain

Build RIGHT BRAIN CAPACITIES (activated during full-body activities)
Active free (self-directed) PLAY (Panksepp)
Artistic creation (e.g., dancing, song creation) (Siegel)
Belly laughing (Junkins)
Social silliness

Create PROSOCIAL NICHES for self and others
Give people the benefit of the doubt and show compassion
Encourage the 'higher self' in others through supportive comments
Support young children's developmental needs