

Discuss how Carl Rogers' person- centred therapeutic approach and other humanist theories support the work of TAs and LSAs in schools.

" Facilitation is more about what you practice than how you practice. To adopt a humanistic approach, you need to believe in your role as a class facilitator and not a class controller or director. Actions for good facilitation are "Start by setting the mood and climate for the session. How you come over to others in the opening of the session will have a significant impact on how they perform during the class." "Find out what others are expecting from the session. Get full agreement on what the learning outcome will be. Write them down and refer to them during class." "What do we want to find out?" "Have a range of learning resources to be utilised by learners (exercises, tasks, etc)." Topic-related tasks in provision. "Act as a flexible resource to learners." "Become a learning participant. You will be surprised at how much you can learn from your learners." "Listen, interact, ask questions?" "Find out what your learners gained from the session. Ask each learner what they learned from the class." "Don't be afraid to share your own feeling about the learning experience." "Be receptive to criticism and never be afraid to accept your own limitations." "The behaviour and actions you display during class will often stimulate learners' desire to want to learn more rather than the content of the session. "In the classroom always be genuine and honest with your learners." Try to understand how they are feeling about the subject." "Think positively about your learner's potential to achieve. "

//Carl Rogers (1902-1987) was a driving force in the humanist movement, which advocated a shift in emphasis in the learning process away from the teacher towards the learner. In the humanist approach, the teacher's role changes, providing solutions, to one of authority or expertise, to one of facilitating the process of individuals arriving at their own solutions. He saw the helping process as one of self-actualisation, self-healing, and the client knows best. As Bates (2023, p.64) "The counsellor is a facilitator, not an expert." Positive aspects of a person-centred counselling include humanity, compassion, and optimism. Rogers believed the core conditionings are necessary and sufficient for change. (MCLEOD 2011). /According to Renaissance learning, Inc. (2025) individuals with a "growth mindset" believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through effort and dedication. "This approach supports the work of TAs in schools by promoting a student-centred, empathetic and non-judgemental environment that focuses on the learner's overall wellbeing, personal growth, and self-esteem. This perspective helps TAs foster self-motivation, autonomy and a positive learning experience for pupils."

Another humanist theorist, Abraham Maslow 's most famous work was the 'Hierarchy of needs (1943) in which Maslow suggested that an individual's response to learning is dominated of any given moment by whichever need has priority. The hierarchy of needs is divided into two phases. The lower order needs related to the physiological and safety aspects of learning physical and psychological). Maslow argued that progression to the higher levels is not possible until the lower-level needs have been met.

At placement A , the reception children have the choice of what area of provision they would like to choose to learn in, whether it be the maths, literacy, junk modelling, fine motor or role play area. TAs are encouraged to model what the children should be doing in these areas while letting them learn as independently as possible to encourage learning rather than specific instruction or techniques. The ethos in Johnston C.P. school is one of staff having a positive demeanour, as the classroom atmosphere greatly affects children's ability to learn effectively. I am always honest and genuine with my class to promote relationships that are based on trust and integrity. As a TA, it is important to be reflective in practice and be able to take constructive criticism to improve practice.

During continuous provision there are a range of different activities available for the pupils to access to enable them to learn through play. During which time I model what they should be doing in each area, for example, I model tracing numbers and letters in sand. Observing and listening to children in provision helps me to identify if children are reaching their targets or if there are any gaps in their learning. When we have a new topic launch, we write down on the whiteboard what we want to find out about the topic and what the children are expecting from the topic.

Following the introduction of the Foundation phase curriculum in 2004, which required higher pupil-adult ratios for 3-7 year olds, more support staff were employed. The Welsh government provided funding in schools to recruit extra staff to support pupils during the COVID-19 pandemic (The Education Workforce Council (EWC 2021). Since the reduction in specialist external agencies working within schools, TAs have become increasingly responsible for direct intervention. TAs are employed to undertake roles that have evolved to include pastoral support, behaviour management, and supporting pupils with ALN. Engaging in 1-1 and groupwork sessions in both mainstream and specialist provisions in areas such as speech and language and behaviour support-ASD. EWC (2021).

Humanist theories support the work of TAs in schools. Teaching assistants were introduced to the classroom in the 1960s as helpers or aides. The Plowden Report (1967) documented that classroom assistants were being used to support "under resourced teachers" with administrative tasks or cleaning up classroom resources, such as washing paintbrushes. From the 1990's to early 2000s, the number of teaching assistants employed in English schools trebled as a result of two major announcements. The Education Act (2002) aimed to reduce teacher recruitment and retention crisis by employing more TA's for classroom support.

Teacher workload agreement (2003), the U.K government, local authorities, and teaching association agreed to increase the number of support staff in schools to reduce teacher workload (WG,2019).

In conclusion, this discussion demonstrates that humanist theories support the role that TAs fulfil when providing personalised support for pupils with diverse needs. Emphasising the importance of creating a student-centred safe and supportive learning environment, that promotes personal growth and emotional wellbeing. As well as providing a sense of belonging and respect in the classroom.

TAs should have “unconditional positive regard” for children, meaning that even when a child’s behaviour is challenging, the TA responds with empathy rather than punishment to foster an environment where a child can explore their feelings, understand their actions and grow emotionally (Bates, 2023, p.67).

The bottom level of the pyramid represents physical needs, such as basic survival needs: food, warmth rest. Maslow links to children and young people in school, as at my placement, I have encountered children who cannot learn effectively as their basic physiological needs have not been met first and are often aggressive due to hunger or some other discomfort. A hungry child that feels unsafe cannot focus on learning so is therefore unable to fulfil their full potential and self-actualise.

The following evidence suggests that humanistic theories support the work of TAs in schools, offering a person-centred and therapeutic approach. For example, “Humanism is based on the belief that the individual is self-determining, free to make their own choices. It is a person-centred activity in which the individual plays an active role in deciding what they should be allowed to learn. The basic premise of humanism is that people have a natural potential for learning and that significant learning takes place when the individual can see that the subject matter is relevant to them. In this situation, the practitioner acts as the facilitator: encouraging learning rather than identifying specific methods or techniques of instruction.”

The fourth level up represents esteem, self-belief and satisfaction, reputation and respect. TAs can promote this by providing opportunities in which pupils’ achievements are recognised to help boost children’s self-esteem. Learners will want to learn a sense of pride in their achievements. Bates (2023) argues that praise from TAs is good but praise from peers is even better.

The role of the TA is to ensure that pupils are comfortable, for example, ensure heating and ventilation is effective, and allow drinks, snacks, lunch and toilet breaks. Arrange seating plans according to meet the child’s needs (Bates, 2023).

The second level up represents psychological needs such as freedom from fear, certainty and organisation. Learners need to feel free from physical and psychological harm. So, ensure that you have well-planned lessons and good classroom control. Deal with threatening behaviour in an appropriate manner. Ensuring a safe learning environment. In practice, this means TAs need to ensure that the school environment is a safe space for children that is free from trauma or bullying.

The third level up represents affiliation, a sense of belonging, affection and love. Meaning TAs should have a positive relationship with pupils, and children should feel accepted by their peers and staff. TAs support this through running clubs, which help pupils to build friendships and develop a sense of community whilst at school. Bates (2023) states that learners will want to feel accepted by their peers, so TAs should encourage interaction by mixing up members of the group in a range of activities.

The top level represents self-fulfilment, reaching one's full potential. TAs help pupils reach their full potential by providing opportunities for them to learn new skills and encouraging pupils set goals and challenges for themselves using their talents. Bates (2023) states that learners will want to feel that they have realised their full potential. TAs need to remain realistic about what pupils can achieve here, but it is important to always be positive about what they can achieve next.

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