

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

This essay will talk about what Carl Roger's person-centered therapeutic approach is, along with other humanist theorists, Abraham Maslow, Malcom Knowles, and Rollo May.

It will also identify how they support the Learning Support Assistant (LSAs) and Teaching Assistant (TAs) in schools.

In today's modern educational settings there are many complexities surrounding student support that need a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional frameworks that support effective teaching practices. There are theorists that inform and enhance the work of teaching assistants (TAs) and learning support assistants (LSAs) in schools, that foster an environment of positive student-teacher relationships, empathy, and self-actualization. The job of the Teaching Assistant and Learning Support Assistant is essential in schools as they often support small groups or work 1 to 1 with learners, they are usually working with children that have needs which require more support. Whereas the teachers are there to academically teach and do not have time to work closely with all the learners. It is easier to teach and support learners when we understand them, and this is why person-centered approaches are at the heart of the best education practice today. In the Welsh governments guidance to person centered practice in education it states that in every aspect of your school, college, or university's life, if you use person-centered practices, you will find that learners will learn more effectively, because their learning reflects their individual strengths and interests. It helps form positive and productive relationships. Communication and information will be easier to share between staff, learners, and parents (Welsh government guidance, 2019). In Pembrokeshire schools the role is to meet student needs including their personal, social and health needs. (Learning Support Assistant & Lunchtime Support (E6455) - Yeadon) Physical hygiene, first aid and welfare matters. Supervise and support learners ensuring their safety and access to learning, including those with special educational needs, use learning strategies to help. Establish good relationships with learners and act as a role model. Promote inclusion and acceptance of all learners. Encourage students to

communicate with others and engage in activities being taught. Encourage learners to act independently and provide feedback as appropriate. Encourage learners to behave in an appropriate way in line with relevant school policies. Encourage learners to develop self-discipline, self-esteem, and independence. Value and respect the views and needs of learners. Ensure learners have equal access to opportunities to learn and develop. These policies and procedures link in with the person-centered approach. (policies and procedures, yht)

Carl Rogers, an American psychologist who was one of the founders of humanistic psychology, he thought the idea that individuals have an innate drive toward self-actualization and growth. His person-centered therapeutic approach focuses on the importance of creating a supportive environment which includes these three things: unconditional positive regard, empathetic understanding, and congruence. These elements are not only fundamental to effective therapy but also valuable for TAs and LSAs working in educational settings. The principle of unconditional positive regard encourages Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants to accept and value learners by fostering an environment that is non-judgmental, educators can help their students feel accepted and respected. This is vital for their psychological and emotional well-being. For instance, providing encouragement without judgment will make the student feel more comfortable in expressing their feelings and challenges. (UNICEF, 1989) all young people have the right to express their views and decisions that affect them, this is stated in the human rights treaty. This atmosphere can significantly enhance their motivation, engagement and overall increase their academic performance. Rogers also states that having empathy to connect with students will help with their education. Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants need to understand their students' perspectives and their experiences, as you never know what someone is going through in their personal lives. By being empathetic and validating students they can navigate their emotional states, which may be pivotal for those facing learning difficulties or social challenges. This allows for the identification of their Individual needs which will help with support strategies that can enhance overall learning experiences. (Bates, learning theories simplified, page 64). The concept

congruence that Rogers talks about is important to the authenticity in the relationship between educators and students. Students are more likely to respond in a positive way, fostering trust and openness if Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants demonstrate a realness and honesty towards them. This genuine connection can set a good foundation for powerful experiences, giving the students the confidence to take risks and grow within themselves and their learning. (Bates, 2023) Due to the student's individual experiences (Rogers, 1989) it would not be fair to make assumptions about what they want or need and should not interpret their views. Consequently, individuals need to be at the center of all decisions made. Students should be regarded as potentially competent, and no one should question that. (Rogers, 1986) Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants should be involved in the process and need to be committed to encourage their learning power. Person-centered planning approaches encourage people to focus on what the person is capable of and then use this information to decide on how they can access support themselves.

Abraham Maslow's theory Hierarchy of needs emphasizes the importance of meeting basic, psychological, and emotional needs before learners can achieve their goals, such as self-actualization. (Bates,2023)

Maslow stated in a paper called 'A Theory of Human Motivation' (1943) for a human to survive their physiological needs must be met. He argued that the human body and mind would not function appropriately if all basic needs were not met. If Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants use the Hierarchy of needs by ensuring students basic needs such as having food, the correct clothing, safety, belonging, and esteem are being met within the school environment. By creating a sense of community and belonging, Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants help students feel safe, which can aid them in their academic and social development. For example, The Welsh Government introduced its free breakfast initiative in primary schools. The aim of this was to help the overall health and concentration of students, which has evidence that shows that it helps with the student's educational performance. It was intended to not replace breakfast that was already provided by care givers but was put in place to ensure all children,

even those who did or did not have breakfast, had something to eat before school. (Welsh Government Guidance, 2014). Simple things like building in breaks into the school day, trusting the students to go on toilet breaks, making sure the heating and ventilation system is in working order in the school, arranging seating plans to make sure they get the best learning experience, having good classroom control, showing respect will have a positive impact and make the students and make them feel safe within the environment. (Bates, 2023)

Theorist Rollo May focuses on the individual experience and the search for meaning in life, this offers invaluable insights for Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants as they could support students who may feel lost or disconnected in their lives. Creating a safe open place for them to discuss and explore self-identity. This can empower students to understand and regulate their emotions, challenges, and aspirations. Profoundly this can build self-awareness and resilience among students (Existential, 2023).

All these theories link to Malcom Knowles's theory adult learning theory or andragogy this approach focuses on practical, experience learning. Even though the theory is based on adult learning this is used in Pembrokeshire schools today, where students engage in practical learning. for example, motor mechanics, welding, hair, and beauty. (Ysgol Harri Tudur/Henry Tudor School, 2024). Keeping students connected to real-world challenges, they can apply what they have learnt into their everyday practices. ensuring higher value and relevance. (Bates, 2023) Giving students the respect and space to set their own goals and targets within their studies, by keeping them motivated in this way will help them achieve at a higher level as they are in control of their own learning.

Implementing humanistic principles in the classroom setting involves practical strategies that TAs and LSAs can adopt: Active Listening: Encouraging TAs and LSAs to practice active listening can support students in feeling heard and understood. Techniques such as paraphrasing and summarizing students' thoughts can validate their experiences. Collaborative Problem-Solving: Engaging students in problem-solving discussions not only fosters independence but also encourages critical thinking and self-

efficacy (Bates, 2023). When students contribute to their learning processes, they are more likely to feel invested in their outcomes. Creating Safe Spaces: Establishing a classroom environment where students feel safe to express themselves is crucial. TAs and LSAs can facilitate this through collaborative activities, open forums for discussion, and a culture of respect and acceptance (Corrigan, E., 2014).

The work of Teaching Assistants and Learning Support Assistants is profoundly enriched by Carl Rogers' person-centered therapeutic approach and the broader humanistic psychology framework. By embracing the principles of unconditional positive regard, empathy, and congruence, alongside the insights from other humanistic theorists, TAs and LSAs are better equipped to support diverse student populations. In doing so, they not only foster a more positive and inclusive educational environment but also contribute to the holistic development of students, empowering them to reach their full potential both academically and personally.

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