

The basis of Carl Rogers's person-centered approach is used in schools in the UK to ensure that education meets the needs of each child or young person. It's based on the idea that everyone has a unique way of learning, communicating, and making decisions. The Council for disabled children says:

“Person centered planning aims to put children and young people at the center of planning and decisions that affect them. When children are meaningfully involved, this can change their attitude, behavior and learning and make them active partners who work with adults to bring about change.”

This can help the learning outcomes for young students and prepare them for adult life as their needs are thought of within the learning environment. Like Rogers, this method is a non-directive form, where no judgment or solutions on your feelings are given. Instead, students are allowed the opportunity to be involved which makes them feel more in control. The Welsh government published ‘Person-centered Practice in Education: A Guide for Early Years, schools and Colleges in Wales.’ which provides guidance and examples of how person-centered practice can be used in education settings to support learners. The first example is a one-page profile which was first used for SEN students but has risen to a larger scale over time. This is completed by a teacher or LSA with the student fully involved with information that is put into the profile. It will include necessary information on the best learning style to each specific child, ways to deal with their behavior and how to support them through key transition stages. A primary school in Wales has taken this further and has staff complete their own personal one-page profiles. This is available on the school website, where the students, parents, or colleagues can get to know the person, rather than their job title. It is also believed to contribute to a more person-centered team, recognizing staff’s strengths and considering different ways of working. Another tool given to staff is a learning log, whereby staff can improve ways to deliver support to learners as a record is kept assessing daily, weekly, or monthly progression of what is or is not working

well. Teachers and LSA's log observations on learning methods and behaviors in order to support a student's learning, and to help plan effective and proven ways for them to learn in a manner that fits them the best. This learning log adopts Roger's theory that each person has certain conditions that allow them to reach their full potential. In that, everyone can do so through individualized therapist/teacher support rather than treating/teaching them in a 'one way that works for everyone' approach. Roger's belief is that each person has certain conditions that allow them to reach their full potential. Teachers assess what learning and behavioral conditions work best based on each child and thereby the care is focused on individual needs which allows them to gain more understanding from learning.

While Carl Rogers works on a student-lead approach Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has influenced the day-to-day practice of education. His theory states that children's basic needs must be met before effective learning can occur. Maslow's theory puts these needs into a hierarchical order: (from top to bottom) self-actualization (the need to achieve your full potential), esteem needs (respect and recognition), social and belonging needs (friendship, intimacy and overall acceptance), safety needs (security and stability) physiological needs (the most basic things such as food, water, shelter).

'In practical terms, this has led to changes in classroom management and teaching strategies. For instance, many schools now provide breakfast provisions, ensuring that children's physiological needs are met at the start of the day. This addresses the foundational level of Maslow's hierarchy and prepares children for learning.'

(Brodie, 2024)

Maslow's ideas remain highly relevant in today's education settings. The focus on meeting children's holistic needs aligns well with current emphasis

on well-being and mental health in schools. For example, the UK's Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education curriculum reflects many aspects of Maslow's hierarchy (Department for Education, 2020). PSHE curriculum states that 'PSHE is a non-statutory subject. To allow teachers the flexibility to deliver high-quality PSHE' (Department for Education, 2021). The government believes that teachers are best placed to understand the needs of their pupils. Most schools have now started to supply learners' basic needs, not only through free school meals to all primary-aged children, but there are also some schools that now provide breakfast provisions and snacks for morning play. Simply being allowed to drink water within the learning environment contributes to their psychological needs. By doing this, children are receiving care from their teachers (which does link to Roger's theory in that if learners feel relaxed, comfortable and secure within a classroom, they will be more likely to focus and enjoy the learning environment) and being set up well for a day of learning. Teachers are now also encouraged to offer adequate break/ rest times, and we are seeing the use of movement/brain breaks are seen more throughout schools from primary to secondary schools. While at the top of the hierarchy needs pyramid is self-actualization. Self-actualization is the learner's realization that they have achieved their goal and that they can pursue other goals. Teachers can promote self-actualization through positive encouragement and providing children with the next steps for their development or rewards such as a sticker. These tools show the child that their work is important and has had a positive effect for them.

In contrast to Rogers and Maslow, Alfred Adler also developed a humanist theory that suggests when a person feels encouragement, they feel capable and will act positively and cooperatively. Opposingly, he suggests that when a person experiences discouragement, they may act in an unhealthy way by competing or withdrawing. This theory also suggests that it is best to understand a person as a whole and not in different parts, which means to

focus on understanding a person's uniqueness and personality to discern how they proceed in life. Looking at Adlers theory in a school setting, it would be believed that “a misbehaving child is a discouraged child (and helping children to feel valued, significant, and competent is often the most effective strategy in coping with difficult child behaviors.” Adler Graduate School, 2021). Alder believed constant encouragement pushes a client to attempt what they believed impossible, once goals were achieved this would grow self-confidence, pride, and gratification which lead to a desire to cooperate and achieve more. The use of Adlers theory in the school setting would be as simple as inclusivity in the classroom. This could be the teacher learning every student's name or including the students in the creation of the class rules or including their work on the wall or a designated place to keep their belongings. The cooperation to work during school lessons requires cooperation of both the student, teacher and other students and is believed to be “more important than the child’s innate intellectual abilities” (Department and McGrath, n.d.). Adler believed that if students are scolded or criticized for not connecting with their teacher or peers, the student may decide not to like school. This means that teachers should encourage and aid students in connecting with themselves, peers and staff. Once students achieve goals with encouragement it should increase their desire to achieve more.

When looking at Maslow's, and Rogers’ and Adler's theories it is impossible to ignore the similarities. All try to look at people with a positive mindset, focusing on the inner qualities people possess and abilities to develop to their full potential. However, the difference between Maslow's and Rogers’ is their theories of self-actualization. Rogers states individuals have self-actualizing tendencies, meaning that the best person to help yourself is you. This links back to the student-led environment that schools are implementing, and how it will help young people reach their full potential. Whereas Maslow focused on understanding the characteristics of self-actualizing individuals. Rogers

not only looked at the characteristics but also considered the ways to attain self-actualization as well as developing a therapy to overcome barriers that restrict an individual from reaching their full potential. Maslow and Adler's theories are similar in their belief that the surroundings of a person will affect their ability to self-actualize. Maslow suggested that once an individual fulfills the basic needs within the hierarchy, they can begin to achieve self-actualization. Maslow put the need to self-actualize at the very top of his hierarchy, above basic needs like physiological needs, safety needs, love, etc. At the same time, Rogers considered it to be the only motivation that drives people forward. So, it is the confrontation of the final point and the never-ending progress. Schools and other learning institutions seem to have adopted both ideas of self-actualization.

In conclusion the humanist theory, no matter which theorist created the idea. It has widely influenced the delivery of learning styles in the school system. Most students spend the majority of their day at school, and for them teachers that adopt a caring and encouraging attitude allows them to begin their journey towards self-actualization. This will aid them in their lives and work towards a well-functioning society.

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