Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VI

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

1. Discuss Kelly’s personal construct theory.
2. Explain how the intellectual antecedents of John Dewey’s pragmatism have emerged and contributed to Kelley’s theory.
3. Describe Rogers’s major concepts.
4. Explain the criticisms of Rogers’s view of human nature and therapy.

Reading Assignment

Chapter 10:  
George Kelly and Personal Construct Psychology

Chapter 11:  
Carl Rogers and the Person-Centered Perspective

Unit Lesson

Personal Construct Psychology

Will you please try to see it from my perspective?

Have you ever been asked this question? Quite often when conflicts arise, many individuals request that we take time to examine the issue from their perspective. However, what does this really mean? Within this unit, Frager & Fadiman (2013) discuss George Kelly and his work with personal construct psychology. Kelly argued that one should seek to notice patterns and the uniqueness in situations in order to effectively deal with life. In essence, he believed that we base our understanding of the world around our personal constructs. Therefore, it is often essential that we challenge ourselves to examine the world while looking from a different lens.

Much of Kelly’s thinking can be traced back to his earlier influences. Some of his predecessors include John Dewey, Alfred Korzybski, and Jacob Moreno. He further embraced his background as a psychology, speech, and drama teacher by dissecting his usage of Freudian interpretations. This eventually led to his therapeutic utilization of role play during sessions with his clients. Based on this premise, Kelly encouraged his patients to embrace a new role in life in order to examine the world from a different perspective. As you read this section, begin to think critically about Kelly’s theory. Do you agree with his reasoning? Have you ever sought to place yourself in someone else’s shoes? Did this change your perspective on a situation?

Preview of Kelly’s Theory
What is personal construct system?

As you carefully examine this section, make note of the basic characteristics associated with personal construct system. Do you agree with Kelly's theory that one’s worldview will impact the way he or she conducts personal relationships? What are your thoughts on the process and function of construct systems? Take close note of Kelly’s ideas on choice and experience. Do you agree that we have a choice to change our perspective in life if we see that a better alternative is presented? Should life experiences shape our personal constructs?

Frager & Fadiman (2013) continue this section by discussing Kelly's views on individual differences and how these can impact our interpersonal relationships. Please continue to embrace critical thinking as you read this section. Do you think all humans share basic commonalities based on various life experiences? Have you ever been challenged to examine an issue from the perspective of another in order to understand his or her construct?

Do you feel as if you are evolving?

As you conclude your examination of this section, Frager & Fadiman (2013) reveal Kelly's views on transitional constructions. Do you agree with his ideas? What do you feel intensely? Do you often experience anxiety when faced with certain challenges? Have you ever felt threatened when a situation seemed beyond your control? How often do you experience fear, guilt, aggression, and hostility? Carefully identify Kelly’s ideas in these areas and see if correlations exist in your personal experiences. Finally, what do you think about Kelly’s C-P-C cycle? How important is this progression during therapy?

Person-Centered Therapy

Are you trustworthy? Can you effectively solve your personal issues?

In this section, Frager & Fadiman (2013) introduce the reader to Carl Rogers. He believed that individuals could effectively trust their instincts and intuition to solve problems which arose in life. In essence, the client should be the primary focus of therapy as he or she has the innate ability to self-correct. Rogers argued that the therapist should serve primarily as a listener when working with clients.

Rogers’s ideas can be traced back to his structured upbringing. He was raised in a strict home with fundamental Protestant values. He was later exposed to the work of John Dewey and William Kilpatrick. Eventually, many of his ideas would be equated to Eastern sources such as Zen Buddhism and Lao-tzu.
Although his thinking would later evolve and encompass more person-centered approaches, as well as group therapy, much can be learned by carefully examining his early work.

**Preview of Roger’s Theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Differences</th>
<th>Rogers did not focus on stable individual differences, although individuals can be said to differ in their level of development and in the conditions they perceive must be met to be approved by others. Other researchers have recently developed scales to measure aspects of his theory that may be comparable to personality traits.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation and Adjustment</td>
<td>Rogers describes in detail his client-centered therapeutic technique. Individual therapy and group therapy, including encounter groups, lead to progress through stages of functioning, leading to greater openness to feelings, the present, and choice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive Processes</td>
<td>Thought and feeling may be impeded by accepting others’ messages about what we should be.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>The person-centered approach has implications for the improvement of society, including education, marriage, work roles, and group conflict (including conflict among nations).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological Influences</td>
<td>Rogers did not consider biological factors, though his actualizing process is based on a biological metaphor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Children become alienated from the growth forces within them if they are raised with conditions of worth. Parents should raise their children with unconditional positive regard. People can change in adulthood, becoming freer.</td>
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*Preview of Roger’s Theory*

**Can others truly know the “real” you?**

As you examine this unit, you should carefully examine Rogers’s views on the self. He believed that we are always changing. What do you think? Does your ideal self ever conflict with the “real” you? Do the conflicts that you experience in these areas promote your tendencies for self-actualization? Are your outward actions always congruent with your inner feelings and emotions? You should embrace the personal reflections in this section to see if inconsistencies exist in your life. If so, are you willing to embrace strategies which will eliminate the discrepancies? Can you do as Rogers suggests? Are you able to self-correct and begin your personal healing process?

**Does everyone truly want to be loved?**

In this section, Frager & Fadiman (2013) discuss Rogers’s views on conditions of worth. Rogers argued that all individuals possess a need for love. Do you agree? What behaviors are you willing to embrace in order to receive love and acceptance? What if these behaviors force you to deny an aspect of self? Are these conditions of worth truly that important to you? Is it worth risking a false self-image?

**Do you enjoy meaningful relationships?**

Further examination of this section will reveal Rogers’s beliefs on relationships. Essentially, he believed that relationships are integral parts of one’s life. In other words, they can provide congruence or produce personality constrictions. As you read this section, carefully examine your relationships. In your opinion, does one’s relationship help him or her to discover the actual self? What are your thoughts on marriage? Do you value commitment? How important is open communication in a relationship? Do you ever impose unrealistic expectations on others? How freely do you express your emotions within your relationships?
Would Rogers describe you as a fully functioning person?

According to Rogers, a fully functioning person is aware of the continuous changes which take place in our universe. He or she seeks to remain open to experiences in life while learning from them. In essence, the individual freely embraces a continual process of self-actualization. Thusly, this individual can trust his or her instincts and judgments when seeking to make decisions. Does this effectively describe you?

Do you believe in person-centered therapy?

Frager & Fadiman (2013) conclude this section by describing Rogers’s views on person-centered therapy. What are your thoughts? Do you believe that humans have an innate drive for growth and wellness? Can you successfully examine your issues and unlock the door to your recovery? Should therapists seek to understand the person’s point of view while providing a warm, supportive environment? Finally, is it possible for an individual to heal him or herself if the therapist can effectively display unconditional positive regard?

Reference


Supplemental Reading

The following articles are located in the CSU Online Library:


Learning Activities (Non-Graded)

It is suggested that students attempt the Personal Reflection exercises located throughout Chapter 10 and Chapter 11 of the course textbook.

Click here to access the Interactive Glossary. Please review the Unit VI Key Terms before attempting the Unit VI Assessment.

Non-graded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions contact your instructor for further guidance and information.

Key Terms

1. Anxiety
2. Conditions of worth
3. Congruence
4. Constructive alternativism
5. Empathetic understanding
6. Fully functioning person
7. Guilt
8. Incongruence
9. Interpersonal knowing
10. Objective knowing
11. Personal constructs
12. Personal power
13. Subjective knowing
14. Unconditional positive regard