

*Activity: Bem's Sex Role Inventory*

## COGNITIVE APPROACH

What is cognitive psychology?

How do we process information?

- ☞ Information is processed similar in concept to a computer (see page 451)
- ☞ Focuses on STM and LTM
- ☞ Personality is determined by the effect of experience on how we perceive reality

## STIMULI – MENTAL PROCESS/S – PERCEPTION, BEHAVIOR

### GEORGE KELLY

- ☞ Focused on how people continuously construct and RECONSTRUCT the meanings of their lives
- ☞ Personality is simply the result of all the experiences we have learned, and the way our constructs function to interpret and anticipate events.

*Personal Constructs* – cognitive structures we use to interpret and predict events

- ☞ Personality difference as a RESULT of how we CONSTRUCT the world; NO TWO PEOPLE are alike
- ☞ The categories we use to look at people and interpret (predict) events
- ☞ Personality is determined by the CONSTRUCTS we use to construe the world

EX: whether we use *intelligent-unintelligent, sociable-not sociable, warm-indifferent* constructs with most of our interactions

How would you describe living in a war torn land such as Iraq?

What are the attributes of people you pay attention to?

- ☞ People also differ in the IMPORTANCE they give on PARTICULAR CONSTRUCTS

EX: some people might value being intelligent and look at that when meeting people

*Fundamental Postulate* – a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events

- ☞ Behavior is a means for us to test our hypothesis about the world (validate or invalidate)

Why do you go to class?

EX: we go to school because...

We will learn something

It's fun to be there

Parents would get mad

- ☞ Understanding a person is really understanding how the person looks at the world (the constructs that he uses)
- ☞ EXPERIENCE plays a significant role in building our constructs
- ☞ How we behave and perceive the world, is matter of how we process information, which depends on the constructs that we use, which we acquired through experience

EX: suppose two people are looking at the same view (landscape)

Artist – uses colors, shapes, contrast, form, meaning

Mathematician – looks at the fractal structure, symmetry, grouping

Eleven Corollaries

1. Construction Corollary

- ☞ We recognize the patterns in events based on our experience

EX: when our parents come home from work (tired, a gloomy face) we're probably going to get into trouble

*Self-fulfilling prophecy*

*Learned Helplessness of battered women*

2. Individuality Corollary – different people perceive the same events differently

EX: difference in perception of the TAT, perception in class, the root of misunderstandings

3. Organization Corollary – we follow a logical, ordinal system; they are not random

- ☞ There is a HIERARCHY; a dominance
- ☞ We BEHAVE in manner that FOLLOWS the SUPER-ORDINATE construct
- ☞ That is why we are able to make sense of our world; PREDICTABILITY of BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS

EX: a person who has pessimism as an super-ordinate (dominant) construct, interprets, behaves in a pessimistic, depressed, negative way

EX: people who would SCORE high in SOCIABILITY would be display sociable AVERAGE BEHAVIOR

4. Dichotomy Corollary – we organize much like a pc (binary); EITHER OR, YES NO, BLACK WHITE

- ☞ To understand what we mean, we have to define the opposite

EX: How do you know what is good? You also have to tell me what is bad

EX: to understand someone who says he is adventurous, you must know the OPPOSITE of what he means by this.

An adjective that would describe you. Define it by what it is not.

5. Choice Corollary – we choose to process information through all of the possible circuits

EX: We do not simply see lines OR colors; we see lines AND colors

- ☞ Before learning psychology, interaction with people, life events and past experience used to be so simple; experience made them more complicated, we analyze more

*Confirmation Bias*

6. Range Corollary – we can only anticipate events that we have experienced

EX: A person goes into shock when he experiences extreme violence (torture; blood diamond) for the first time

7. Experience Corollary – our system is constantly remodeling itself as we acquire experience
8. Modulation Corollary – own truths are hard to break

- ☞ We usually accommodate new information into our existing constructs, given that our truths are PERMEABLE

EX: reading assigned articles = burden; we accommodate new information: reading = further learning

9. Fragmentation Corollary – we sometimes use circuits that “inferentially” does not make sense

- ☞ In attempt to anticipate events, we use varying constructs to make our odds of being able to anticipate greater
- ☞ An explanation for inconsistency, and paradoxical human behavior

EX: *Illusory Correlation and Illusion of Control of primitive (animistic) people*

10. Commonality Corollary – when two people are alike in the way they construe reality (experience) they use the same psychological processes

EX: agreeing, the same wave length - result of the commonality of our constructs (our psychological processes)

11. Sociality Corollary – the way that we construe our interactions with other people or their behavior, determines how we interact with them – defines our roles

EX: we construe one’s behavior as being HOSTILE = we become ANTAGONISTS

(<http://www.oikos.org/vincpcp.htm>)

## **Cognitive Personality Variables**

*Schemas* – work like constructs

*Schemas and our interpretations*

- ☞ Our INTERPRETATIONS of events and people DEPEND on our SCHEMAS
- ☞ If we incorporate love and caring in our lives through experience, we include these in our schemas (templates)

EX: experience with loving and caring mother = we form a template for people as loving and caring

EX: experience with abuse = we become pessimistic; we view the world and the people around it as cruel

*Memory and Schema*

- ☞ We PROCESS information that are RELEVANT to our schema FASTER

EX: ask me about online games (Dota) = I DO NOT have a schema for that; how ENGINES work

- ☞ As we experience more, we receive more information, which either forms new schemas, or modifies our existing ones.

EX: First romantic relationship = we form a schema for what a relationship is (rosy, fun, exciting, ecstatic); it turns bad = we modify our idea of what a relationship is (bitterness, complications, infringement...)

*Personalization* – making something relevant to one person either for better understanding or some other purpose

- ☞ Personalizing information results in better recalling

EX: Word recalling experiment (big letters, rhymes with, means same as, describes you)

- ☞ Self-schemas are more important to us (EASIER TO ACCESS), using it alongside other information, allows for better recall – INFORMATION becomes PERSONALIZED

## **Cognitive Representations of the Self**

*Self-schema* – these are our ideas about ourselves; how we came to know our SELF

- ☞ These also include our possible selves (both DREAMT AND DREADED)

Functions of possible selves in perception and behavior

1. Provides incentives for future behavior

- ☞ Directs our behavior towards ideal self
  - ☞ Inhibits us from becoming our dreaded self
2. Helps us interpret the meaning of our behavior
- ☞ Determines the strength of our emotional reactions to events

EX: a student who want to graduate with honors = strong emotional reaction to failure in exams

EX: a person who wants to be a rock star might have a strong emotional reaction to learning a new piece

### How might they react?

Dreaded self = unethical student, someone offers a leakage to an exam;

Dreaded self = drug addict, someone offers a cigarette;

## **Self Discrepancies**

Self Discrepancy Theory

*Actual Self* – our self-concept; who we (believe) are

*Ideal Self* – our mental image of the kind of person we want to be

*Ought Self* – social dictates of who we should be; the good person stereotype

- ☞ Discrepancies between ACTUAL and OUGHT = ANXIETY, NERVOUSNESS, GUILT
- ☞ Discrepancies between ACTUAL and IDEAL = DISAPPOINTMENT, DEPRESSION

## **Cognitive Psychotherapy (Cognitive Restructuring)**

- ☞ Focuses on how a person processes thoughts
- ☞ Probing during therapy exposes the client to the mental processes, MAKING THEM AWARE

*Fixed Role Therapy* – Taking on an imaginary role so that the person may construe the world through the constructs of “the other person”; they may eventually incorporate the constructs as their own

*Rational Emotive Therapy*

A – Activating experience

B – irrational **B**elief

C – emotional **C**onsequence

☞ Clients usually have problems because of the connection they assign to A and C; they believe that C was caused by A; often not being able to consider the process in between

☞ Irrationality of the reasoning to establish the A-B-C connection

EX:

A – romantic couple separates

B – [-] an unsuccessful relationship is equivalent to an overall failure in life; cause of depression

B – [+] not all relationships work out; good relationships will come; it does not mean that no one will ever love you

C – person X is devastated and wishes to end life

*Two Goals of Rational Emotive Therapy*

1. To make clients see the irrationality in their reasoning;
2. To replace their irrational beliefs with rational one's; expose them to an alternative way of reasoning

☞ Modulation corollary

### **Self-Instructional Therapy**

☞ Setbacks will never be eliminated – prepare people with a ready arsenal to prepare and deal with future and potentially failures/distressing situations

☞ Allowing them to anticipate potential problems, so they can plan ahead and provide a “remedy” – *internal monologues*

### How do you measure personal constructs?

#### **Repertory Grid Technique (REP test)**

☞ Elicits the constructs a person uses

☞ Maps out a pattern in the way the person thinks

☞ Let's the client become aware of the thought processes

EX:

1. list 24 people from various personal experiences,
2. therapist pick out names, and asks
3. in what important way are two of these people similar but different from the other?

☞ Elicits that range of the personal construct being used

EX: Intelligent – dumb; friendly – not friendly; compassionate -

4. to include self-concepts, add name of client, and ask same question

## Limitations

1. Representativeness of the people on the list to people they actually encounter
2. Are the constructs used applicable to all people even those not in list?
3. Constructs elicited are permanent
4. Subjectiveness of interpretation; no fixed quantitative result
5. Constructs' definition subject to limitation in language
  - ☞ *Preverbal constructs* – constructs learned before speech
  - ☞ A construct, LOVING, maybe DEFINED by client differently from how therapist INTERPRETS it

## RELEVANT RESEARCH

### Freudian Concepts and Cognitive Approach

#### 1. Projection

☞ Projection as the result of “not thinking about” the unwanted thought; it floats in memory as a construct; experience is interpreted using the construct; reality is construed by it

EX:

Unwanted thought = sexual desire

#### 2. Transference

☞ We transfer our feelings, thoughts to people who resemble people we know

EX: Constructs we have of our past relationships triggers our interpretation of current relationship

☞ We also transfer suggested information to other people

☞ Because these constructs are made more available, we use them to interpret our current experience

#### 3. Repression

☞ Repressors are more able to control their emotions, but not their physiological responses (heart rate, blood pressure, etc...); they report lower levels of stress and anxiety than nonrepressors

☞ Repressed experience are pushed from consciousness; therefore, they are not readily available in memory; *selective attention*

☞ Spares repressors from recalling negative past experiences because they repress them

## Gender Type and Gender Difference

### Gender Schema Theory

- ☞ People who are *sex-typed* process information by their mental representations of what is masculine and feminine
- ☞ They organize information according to gender

*Gender Schema* – our construct for what is masculine/feminine

EX: what are masculine clothes? What kinds of behavior are feminine?

- ☞ Those who are androgynous or undifferentiated do not regard these kinds of information as important
- ☞ Sex-typed people may think that some behavior are more for women than men, vice versa

EX: ballet seen as for women by sex-typed person; seen as neutral by an androgynous/undifferentiated person

### Cognitive Representations of Self

#### *Emotional Memories*

- ☞ women have been found to be more emotional than men; they better recall emotional memories, and words associated with emotions

Women = nurturing, compassionate, motherly

Men = skillful, industrious, protector

- ☞ cognitive approach uses this to explain the increased likelihood for women to be depressed
- ☞ could be traced to the way men and women are raised

Women = *interdependent*

Men = *independent*

### Cognition and Depression

- ☞ depressed people are preoccupied with sad thoughts, thereby creating a chain reaction in the way they perceive things – *depressive schemas*

EX: depressed = sad thoughts (use sad constructs) – preoccupied thoughts = sad interpretation of events = gets more depressed

*Depressive cognitive triad* – depressed people have negative thoughts about themselves, are pessimistic about the future, and tend to interpret ongoing experiences in a negative manner.