



Stonebridge

INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY

CERTIFICATE COURSE

Sample Pages

THE COGNITIVE APPROACH



TUTOR TALK: The Learning Outcomes for this assignment are:

- Examine the characteristics of psychology and summarise the laws that govern our wellbeing



TUTOR TALK: Students enrol for courses in psychology for a variety of reasons, but few of them are motivated primarily by the desire to know what psychologists are doing. They want to know what is relevant to their lives, to their futures, and how to cope with the problems they must face within society. They want the subject matter to be pertinent to their own interests as well as social issues that require intelligent decisions.

Psychology touches almost every aspect of our lives. As society has become more complex, psychology has assumed an increasingly important role in solving human problems. Some are of broad concern. What child-rearing methods produce happy and effective adults? How can mental illness be prevented? What social conditions contribute most to aggression and crime? Other problems are more specific. What is the best treatment for drug addiction or obesity? How can people be persuaded to give up smoking? What is the most effective method for teaching children to read? Psychologists are working on these and many other problems.

Psychology in its various forms addresses the entire person – present and past history, needs and wants, joys and complaints and in doing so presents us with an opportunity to bring the mind, the body, and the spirit into alignment, enabling all aspects of personality to function in harmony, engaged for individual purpose; yet to contribute, as we discover and unleash our true individual potential – towards a common goal.

This is not a new concept, it is as was originally intended. The only reason that the simple, straightforward, formula has gone wrong is the result of adverse conditioning and incorrect thinking. People believing, for example, that minor ailments are normal and relationship problems to be expected; that behavioural problems are part of the process of maturing and that we should be expected to “suffer in silence” and cause ourselves pain rather than deal with our feelings constructively and risk offending others.

In confusion, if we express anger, then we are criticised for being destructive. If we bottle up our feelings, we do ourselves harm. We cannot win because the rules are wrong, and we cannot change the “rules” because we are not yet able to see the point in thinking differently. More than anything, we do not know how to think differently.



TUTOR TALK: Let us therefore begin this course of study by taking a brief look at the science of Cognitive Psychology.



FACT FILE: J. Drever’s ‘**Dictionary of Psychology**’ defines ‘Cognition’ as “A general term covering all the various modes of knowledge – perceiving, remembering, imagining, conceiving, judging, reasoning.”

In the early days of Cognitive Psychology, a British psychologist by the name of Kenneth Craik, proposed that the brain is like a computer capable of modelling or parallelling events. If, he said, “the organism carries a ‘small-scale model’ of external reality and of its own possible actions within its head, it is able to try out various alternatives, conclude which is the best of them, react to future situations before they arise, utilise the knowledge of past events in dealing with the future, and in every way to react in a much fuller, safer and more competent manner to the emergencies which face it.” (Craik, K. (1952), *The Nature of Explanation*, Cambridge University Press)

However, the cognitive approach to human growth and the fullness of life is today associated in the main with Albert Ellis. (‘Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy,’ 1962.) and with R. Harper. (‘A guide to Rational Living.’ 1968). Ellis theorises that a human being is uniquely rational and irrational. All emotional and psychological problems are traceable to irrational or illogical thinking and ideas. This irrational thinking and the consequent distortion of ideas come mostly from learning experiences in early life, though such experiences are not limited exclusively to childhood.

Ellis maintains that people are not emotionally and psychologically disturbed by events or things but by the negative views they take of such events or things. For example – being small, bald, or sick are not problems in themselves which necessarily result in emotional or psychological disturbance. However, if we distort the significance of these conditions or exaggerate their importance, then we will have painful problems. Consequently, Ellis sees all hope for happiness and a full life being rooted in the re-organisation of one's thinking.

In this course of study it is our aim to set out for the student in clear, concise form the basic laws of health, happiness and achievement. None of us is well, successful, happy, ill, inefficient, by chance. All of life is under the inexorable rule of cause and effect. In attempting therefore to set out the laws of more abundant living, we are actually ferreting out the causes of success and failure; happiness and misery; health and sickness, so that having established the laws the student might work in harmony with these laws and in consequence achieve a more abundant life.

The Physical Basis

The first laws which we will consider in this course of study are the laws of health and effective living on the purely physical plane. These are the laws of:

- Oxidation
- Elimination
- Motion
- Nutrition
- Relaxation

However much we may emphasise the fact that the mental element is supreme in life, that “as a man thinks – so he is,” we must never forget that life has an essentially physical basis. We are spiritual and psychic beings functioning through a physical body. There are certain fixed laws governing the well-being of this physical body, the violation of which attracts unfailing penalties.



TUTOR TALK: It may be of interest to the student to appreciate that there are classic examples of men who have performed great service to the race despite the limitation of bodily weakness. Emerson did not speak the entire truth when he defined success as, “a logical outgrowth of rugged bodily organism.”

- Julius Caesar was reported by Plutarch as being of slender build, fair, of delicate constitution and subject to violent headaches and epilepsy.

- William of Orange was described by Macaulay as being weak and sickly, his slender frame shaken by constant coughs.
- Alexander Pope was a confirmed invalid.
- John Calvin's body was racked with incessant pain.
- William Pitt constantly complained that he was never well.
- David Livingstone, before his African explorations, was perceived by his doctors as being doomed to complete invalidism.

But these men are to be seen as the exceptions. In the main, this is a healthy man's world where the race is to the strong. Other conditions being equal, the person who enjoys abounding physical health is the one who prevails. We can all radiate good health if we learn and obey the laws.

The Law of Oxidation

The first and most important law of physical well-being is that of oxidation. Oxygen is essentially a life element.

You can live for several weeks without food, for a number of days without water, but only a few minutes without breathing oxygen into the lungs.

Most of us use about one-third of our lungs in breathing; we are consequently about one-third alive. We drag ourselves through our daily routine complaining that we have no energy, are only partially efficient in performing our daily tasks, grumbling about aches and pains, when the fundamental cause of our difficulty is that we are cheating the system of the basic life element in proper quantity. We live in an immense sea of oxygen and it is inexcusable for us to be oxygen starved, when all we need to do is to breathe it in effectively.

When we breathe oxygen into the lungs, unites with the blood stream through the lining of the lungs in the process known as oxidation. In this process the toxin in the blood is counteracted, life-giving oxygen is substituted for the dead cells carried in the blood stream, germs are killed off, and the oxygen carried to every part of the body to aid the building of new, healthy cell structure. The dead cells and other refuse matters are cast out in the process of exhalation in the form of carbon dioxide gas, a deadly poison.

In essence it is this gas which kills us when we cease breathing. When we fail to breathe properly, using all our lung capacity, this deadly gas collects in the unused portions of the lungs, remaining there as a gaseous cesspool.

When you start to breathe more adequately, persistently and constantly filling the lungs with life-giving oxygen, your headaches, backaches, impaired eyesight, defective hearing and other physical complaints will tend to leave you in proportion as you obey the law of oxidation.

The Law of Elimination

The clean system is the healthy system. There are many people who are exceedingly scrupulous about keeping themselves externally clean, but who are very careless about the infinitely more important matter of keeping clean internally. The clean system will throw off infection readily, whilst one that is not is fertile territory for the cultivation of almost any disease. If you allow food to stand in a warm place it decays, ferments and becomes a repulsive, sickening mass. This is precisely what happens when the waste foods are held for a considerable time in the intestines. Regular elimination is therefore obviously a necessity.

The intake of an adequate amount of water is also an important item in securing proper elimination. The body is nine-tenths composed of water. We use water in every bodily function down to the winking of the eye, or the registering of a thought. If nature is cheated and the system not given a sufficient amount of water, then it is compelled to extract moisture from the toxic refuse and discarded liquids held in the body.

The Law of Motion

Our bodies were made for constant physical activity. Our ancestors used to chase many miles a day in their quest for food or in their endeavours to elude stronger adversaries. They fought with their hands, their teeth, hurled large stones, climbed trees and wielded hefty clubs. Our bodies are not as yet readily adjusted to a sedentary form of life. Atrophy sets in if we fail to use our bodies. Failure to use the arms, for instance, will cause them to become lifeless.

Exercise is mandatory to strengthen the muscular system both internally and externally. When you exercise, your circulation is accelerated by the repeated exertion. This results in a demand by the lungs for more oxygen and further oxygenation of the blood. The tissue broken down through exercise is then carried away by the veins, and the body is nourished by the fresh arterial blood pumped from the heart.