

The symbolic analyst essay sample



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Robert Reich brought forward the theory of the symbolic analyst to describe a growing trend in the American economy. He saw that economics were no longer populated largely by laborers as they once were, but that as time went on more and more people were becoming employed in what can be described as the information services. This notion of the non-laborer describes symbolic analysts as people who work with arbitrary symbols, be they words, numbers or computer programming language, to manipulate data that will eventually have some physical manifestation later on in the process (Reich 51). He believes that the switch from labor-intensive jobs to symbolic analysis has represented a fundamental shift in economics and given the huge and growing portion of the economy that is reliant on such employees, this is a fair assessment.

Symbolic analysis can seem very similar to what are termed critical thinking skills, however there is a significant difference between the two. Basically, symbolic analysis is the understanding and manipulation of information on a purely arbitrary scale; critical thinking skills are what is utilized by people in order to better understand not only arbitrary symbols but any situation that often includes physical problems and situations (Reich 75). Critical thinking is used in every aspect of life and work; symbolic analysis refers only to the use of symbols to deal with information.

Thomas Kuhn's paradigm concept is also related to symbolic analysis, however its applications refer specifically to scientific study. The paradigm, as explain by Kuhn, is a specific set of principles and practice that are employed by scientific researchers during a specific period of time (Kuhn 60). Each experiment and study project, therefore, will have its own specific

paradigm that affects how the research will be carried out and what parameters will be put in place as well as what kind of information should be gathered. This is different again from the symbolic analyst framework because of its specialization in the scientific field and because, like critical thinking, will be applied to physical elements.

As relates to educational aspirations, Reich's theory of the symbolic analyst shows that the growth of the information industry could make for a solid career in any number of fields such as law, computers and technology, and administration. Keeping this in mind any student is well advised to become savvy in the ways of data manipulation because even if that is not the primary aspect of the job, it will surely come into practice sooner or later. The symbolic analyst is a role that more and more workers will have to take on in the coming years, regardless of the industry they choose to work in.

As a business student pursuing a degree and subsequent career in investment banking, the theory of the symbolic analyst is very relevant. I intend to work essentially with numbers and investment portfolios and in doing so would be required to understand and manipulate data for clients. According to Reich, this is the right kind of career to be looking into because of the multitude of jobs being created in the information sector of the economy; based on his theory investment banking is quite possibly one of the most lucrative careers that I could have given the sector and the proximity to financial planning.

Works Cited

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Kuhn, Thomas. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Reich, Robert. The Rise of the Symbolic Analyst.