

Hodkinson and macleod's argument and gage's paradigmatic war

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In 1972, Thomas Kuhn introduced the term “ paradigm” with meaning of “ an overall theoretical research framework” (Gage, 2009).

Dr. Jonathan Grix considered that to conduct understandable, transparent, and accurate research as well as evaluate researches of other scholars, it is required to comprehend the philosophical substantiation of methodology, questionnaires, and intentions (Gage, 2009). In his article, Nathaniel Gage (2009) suggested: “ paradigm wars may finally be resolved in the natural sciences, because the results of research in those sciences were unambiguous enough, consistent enough, and stable enough to compel the surrender of one paradigm community to another. But in the human sciences the results were not that unambiguous, consistent, and stable.” Hodkinson and Macleod agree with Gage on this point. They adduced an argument that different research methods have objectively powerful connections with specific conceptualization of learning.

It signifies that selection of a specific research method corresponds with a particular cognition of learning process (Gage, 2009). In Gage's article about paradigm wars, there are three versions of events that happened during the research on teaching since 1989. It is worth noting that Gage is discussing the situation in the USA particularly, but the paradigm debates he describes were ongoing in many other countries. First of all, he discussed anti-naturalist arguments: 1) teaching and learning has meaning and goal; 2) science has one-way causal links, but teacher and student have at least two-ways causal links. Second, Gage discussed the interpretivists who argued that individuals have possibilities to create their own societal reality. Third, he discussed critical theorists who claimed that education serves to the <https://assignbuster.com/hodkinson-and-macleods-argument-gages-paradigmatic-war/>

dominant social strata which represent the male, the white, and the rich in American society.

However, the critical theorists suggested that people who are properly educated can change the society and make it the better place for those who are in subordinate position (Gage, 2009). In their paper, Hodkinson and Macleod combined different researching methodologies of learning, and found out that there are strong connections between various methods and ways of learning comprehension. They examined several different methods to establish their strong and weak sides and spheres of applying (Hodkinson, 2010). First of all, they examined mini-ethnographic method. Their attention was concentrated on a social life of the participants. This method is focused on social aspect in common with approach of critical theorists.

The strengths of this method are: accuracy (the tutor was keeping a diary), objectivity (observations and interviews were repeated), and questionnaire data was collected from a wide range of students. However, by centring learning site, the scholars involuntarily decentred the students (Hodkinson, 2010). Secondly, they examined the method of Life history (learning as construction). This method has a constructive aspect in common with interpretivists. The investigation lasted for four years and studied the life histories and learning identity in peoples' lives.

There were 100 adult participants who were of differing ages and social status. The strength of the method is that in such complexity, it was comparatively easy to estimate the importance of formal and informal learning. Another strong point was that learning process could be observed

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in course of long time period, whereas mini-ethnographies operate with short time span. However, the method loses in comparison with mini-ethnographies in understanding of social influence and surrounding in course of learning process (Hodkinson&Macleod, 2010). Quantitative survey (learning as acquisition) was the third examined method.

The method has an individualistic approach in common with interpretivists. Panel survey followed an individual through time, so it gave a comprehensive understanding of social change. However, such learning happened to concentrate too much on one individual, so the data became rather subjective than objective (Hodkinson&Macleod, 2010). Moving cross-sectional questionnaire was the fourth examined method. The method has two-way links of learning in common with anti-naturalists' argument. It was an attempt to study an informal learning through participatory at the workplace.

Felstead and his team did an experiment by creating survey tools to measure acquisition learning and participation learning. This experiment is very useful; it helps to improve the employees' work performance. However, the method failed to conduct participatory learning. Moreover, despite of the obvious practical effect, the scientific effect tends to be minimal because acquisition and participation processes relate to different types of learning (Hodkinson&Macleod, 2010). Panel survey (learning as acquisition) was the fifth method.

Panel survey takes effort and time, and requires breaking the learning process into parts. The method has two-way links of learning in common with

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anti-naturalists' argument. This method also has individualism in common with interpretivists. The small parts provide the most significant and accurate data. However, using this method we could apply the parts that are already under supervision.

Therefore, the strength of such survey is in observing an individual as a member of specific group. Therefore, the panel survey can reveal an extensive and comprehensive data not only about personal learning, but also how this process is changing over time (Hodkinson, 2010). Therefore, there is no perfect method to research learning. The most effective way is applying the appropriate method in every specific case. However, if an investigator has already chosen to adopt a specific methodology of research learning, he likely will have the correct result to certain extent. In other words, different scholars have different understanding of learning phenomena from psychological, sociological, intellectual, and empirical points of view.

Thus, in order to understand each other, they need deep philosophical cognition of learning process.