

Each they provide a  
broader and deeper  
understanding



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Each of these perspectives focuses on a different aspect of reality: (i) Functionalism, primarily on social order and stability, (ii) Conflict theory, primarily on tension and change, and (iii) Interactionist, primarily on ordinary experiences of everyday life. Each of the perspectives has a part to play in the analysis of society. All these three perspectives could be applied, for example, to the study of education, although each would focus on a different aspect of the institution. A functionalist approach would emphasise the functions that education plays in maintaining the social system as a whole. A conflict approach would emphasise that education is believed to be an important avenue to social and financial success in life. It stresses on the social class background of the pupil affecting his academic achievement. An interactionist approach would emphasise the daily activities within school. It would point to the forms of interaction between teachers and pupils, the influence of the student peer group over its individual members. None of these approaches can claim itself to be the only "true" one. Because, taken together they provide a broader and deeper understanding of the entire institution of education.

Sociology makes use of all the three perspectives since each offers unique insights into the same problem being studied. These perspectives overlap as their interests overlap.