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TOPIC 1: Multiple perspective

Modernism
Oncology: objectivism, there is an objective **reality independent of our knowledge of it**
- There is ***objective truth*** - its not subjective to other interpretation

Epistemology: Positivism - truth is discovered through conceptualisation/ theorisation and testing out logical against the reality found in the objective world
- Scientific enquiry - objective form of enquiry

- Organisations are 'real' entities that lend themselves to our sense (instrumental measures and values)

Example, if everyone does the same experiment, then everyone should get the same results

Theory:
Goals is to discover the **truths that govern organisations**
- 'Truths' are seen as objective and accurate accounts of organisational properties (eg powers and laws) and the event with which 'we' (ie management (must deal when we act.
- Through 'truth' 'we' avoid being distracted by speculation, hunches and lies of others
- **Truths possess instrumental value (practical utility)**

By knowledge the objective/truth we can formulate and accomplish goals (eg profit and money)
- The instrument and objective value of truth for management is in assisting them to establish control over an organisation, predict outcomes and learn about one's powers and vulnerabilities

- The instrumental and objective value of 'truths' for management is in assisting them to establish control over an organisation, predict outcomes and learn about one's powers and vulnerabilities.

- Through positivist epistemology, we discover the same version of truth

Application:
To create an innovative organisation a systemic organisational environment for discovery and innovation is required:
- A particular social organisation of innovation
- Interaction between departments, teams and 'cultures'
- Expenditure on research and development
- Rewards and incentives for taking risks

Critical Theory
Ontology: there is an objective reality independent of our knowledge of it. It is driven by natural laws.

Epistemology: subjectivist
- Knowing' the 'truth' is 'tainted' by dominant ideology and values of the those seeking 'truth'.
- Nature cannot be seen as it 'really is' or 'really works' except through a value window'

Focus of Critical Theory
- Concern with Ideology—ho**w distorted accounts of reality a**ttempt to conceal and **legitimate unequal power/material relations** (Marx's 'False consciousness').
- Unmasking the **'roots'** of domination
- Truth is objective and **independent of our knowing**
- However, the truth is **distorted** because of our **individual ideology**
- So even if the truth exists and is independent, we can only see **different versions** because of our individual ideology
- Truth is discovered through **subjective epistemology**

'Truth':
- **Capitalist organisations alienate and exploit workers.**

Implications
- A more critical analysis of dominant organisational ideas and management practices
- Raising the consciousness of organisational members
- Work towards a more equal and democratic organisations

Symbolic
Ontology - Subjectivism - what is real is that which we agree is real (meaningful)

Epistemology: Interpretivism: truth is relative to time and place and the individual who are involved in constructing meaning

- Organisations are meaningful and are (re)constructed by their members through meaningful interactions with one another

Example, you never see the tutor use the pen to write, however in a lecture instead the pen are interpreted as a pointer instead

Theory: The goal is to arrive at context specific and relative statements of the logic of organisational reality.

Social Constructionism:

- A social construct is an idea which may appear to be natural and obvious to those who accept it, but in reality is an invention of a particular culture or society
- Reality is socially constructed through an ongoing and dynamic process
- People act on their interpretations and knowledge about a given phenomena and thereby internalise and reproduce that idea/notion/reality

Practical utility:
- Used to frame or interpret, perceptions of organisational life.
- Highlights the fluid, diverse and subjective aspects of organisational activity and decision-making.
- Makes us consider the 'value' ladenness of 'facts' that organisations rely upon.
- To bring about organisational change requires 'rewiring' the minds of the 'constructors'.

Communities of practice
"A community of practice is a collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor. Communities of practice emerge in response to common interest or position, and play an important role in forming their members' participation in, and orientation to, the world around them.

- It provides an accountable link, therefore, between the individual, the group, and place in the broader social order, and it provides a setting in which linguistic practice emerges as a function of this link.

- "Two conditions of a community of practice are crucial in the conventionalization of meaning: shared experience over time, and a commitment to shared understanding."

Example:
"Communities of practice", therefore, as an emerging discourse describes:

- How social groups in organisations are negotiated, organised and reproduced (i.e. constructed) by our interpretations of events, the action of others and the symbols around us.
- How social groups in organisations are 'objectified' through repeating past behaviours and shared experience, understanding (i.e. meaning) and interaction.

Postmodernist
Ontology: there is not an objective reality independent of our knowledge of it. Reality is an 'illusion' created through language and discourse.

Epistemology: interpretations of the 'illusion' are made through conceptualisation/theorisation.

- Organisations are 'imagined' entities whereby power and social arrangements are reinforced through language.

Theory:
- Reject the distinction between 'truth' and 'untruth'.

- What a person regards as 'true' is either a function of the person's point of view or is determined by what the person is constrained to regard as 'true' by various complex social and organisational pressures.

- Rejects rationality and the Enlightenment vision that human freedom and emancipation can be achieved through the application of reason and search for ultimate meaning.

- We are a function of this discourse

To get this new knowledge, you need to reject what you know as truth/knowledge/beliefs
If you are holding onto your perception of truth and reality, how you going to learn new things and learn the ultimate reality of truth? (A limitation)

Postmodernist approaches to knowledge:
- Seeks to open up alternative interpretations of organisations and events surrounding organisation
- Built upon reflexivity: questioning the assumptions that underlie out interpretation and understanding of organisations
- Focuses on seeing how language constrict organisation

Practical utility:
- Provide alternative to established thinking which may be constraining, harmful and unproductive
- Makes 'us' question organisational knowledge, the application of this knowledge (decision-making) and organisational outcomes.

- There is no reality – rejects separation between truth/untruth
- Truth and power are found in language and discourse
- Truth is therefore discovered through epistemology of language deconstruction

In relation to "Communities of Practice":
Do groups of people use or create new meanings in language and discourse within organisations?

Postmodernists, therefore, are not interested in the social interactions, but discourse and language that results.
- Is there power in meaning?

- Folksonomies?
- Does analysis of organisational discourse uncover power relations?

How might different perspective and understands about organisation provide us different ideas about how to best to manage organizations?
Understanding the origin of the knowledge - if we can present these perceptions. As organisations are based on one or two perception, you will have an incomplete picture of knowledge and analysis.