

Social Practice Theory

Social practice theory is to learn in a social structure. With social practice, we analyze what people do, achieve, and receive when they are together. When we talk of social practice, the issue in question is “coparticipation,” its structures and its consequences. It is the place of an encounter in the “engagement of intellectuality” that is “provoked” with the discussions and interaction, according to Wenger (1991). It has an evolutionary factor. As people engage in a community, relating ideas, objects, and artifacts, they “experience a transformation in identity” as a byproduct of their relationship and agreement on issues. For instance, children’s development, with their “full participation,” in “adult social worlds,” called “socialization,” is an example of social practice theory. It is an example of “historical legitimate peripheral participation,” which initiates the learning process, in a fashioning manner. Theoretically and socially speaking, to have knowledge and learning, there must be activities. Deductively, “people, activity, and the world” are engaged to induce learning, thus social practice theory.

Social practice is the primary generator of knowledge, “and learning is one of its characteristics.” For learning to be actuated and knowledge conceived, participation has to be legitimated, meaning there must be full immersion in the community of practice. In instances, there may be peripheral involvement, which is a reference to the world at large. This implies that a community practitioner may be engaged in more than one community. Then, the participation in each community is understood to be peripheral, interchanging among communities. With such a variance in a community of practice, learning is limited. To benefit from the resources of a community of practice, full participation is required as the “whole person” immerses with his/her “thought, speech, and knowing in his/her surroundings.

Whether you speak of a school or apprenticeship, what the world contains is human productions in “a socially and culturally structured” system. It is true that “most learning theories” focus on the cognition of the individual working on the “environment for acquisition and assimilation” (Wenger, 1991). In other words, with those theories, it is the cognitive ability of the human being reflecting and objecting on matter. “The focus is on the person.” It is not so in the case of a “social learning theory.” In social learning theory, the person and the world compile into a whole. It is a “reciprocal” relationship whereas the person affects the world, and the world affects the person. The person and the world form an inseparable unit, acting on each other. In this context, the word, “world” is synonymous to “people, objects, activities, tasks, functions, and understandings that do not exist in isolation.” The practitioner faces the challenge of “using and understanding artifacts in a complex relationship of conflict and synergy” whereas “learning is by doing.” Thanks. Good

Quiz' Questions and Answers

1. What is social practice theory?

It is to learn in a social context.

2. What do we analyze with social practice?

We analyze what people do, achieve, and receive when they are together.

3. What does social practice imply?

It implies co-participation.

4. What is the evolutionary factor in social practice?

Participants experience a transformation in identity.

5. How are other learning theories compared to social learning theory?

In Social learning theory, the learner and the world form a whole. In other learning theories, the learner acts on the world.

Reference:

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (2018). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge University Press, University Printing House, Cambridge CB2, BS8, United Kingdom.