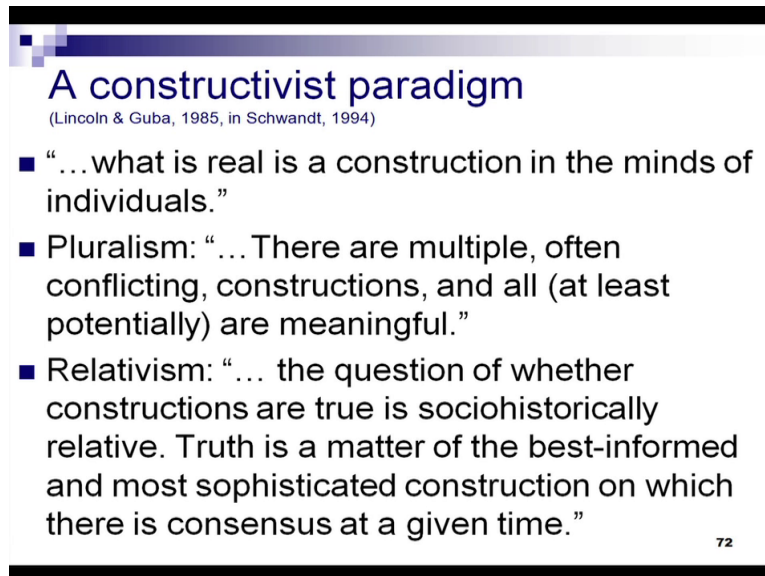


Qualitative Research Methods
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Lecture 11
Constructivism – Sub Paradigms

Welcome back to the NOC course titled Qualitative Research methods. My name is Aradhana Malik and I am helping you with the course and we are discussing constructivism as a paradigm of enquiry in qualitative research and we have discussed various aspects of constructivism in the previous lecture, we talked about radical constructivism and social constructionism, now in this lecture will discuss the subparadigms of constructivism.

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A constructivist paradigm
(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, in Schwandt, 1994)

- "...what is real is a construction in the minds of individuals."
- Pluralism: "... There are multiple, often conflicting, constructions, and all (at least potentially) are meaningful."
- Relativism: "... the question of whether constructions are true is sociohistorically relative. Truth is a matter of the best-informed and most sophisticated construction on which there is consensus at a given time."

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So, let's revisit whatever we were talking about little bit, what is a constructivist paradigm? Constructivist paradigm deals with the fact that what is real, what we considered as real, is actually a construction in the minds of individuals, is actually an interpretation, a creation in the minds of individuals.

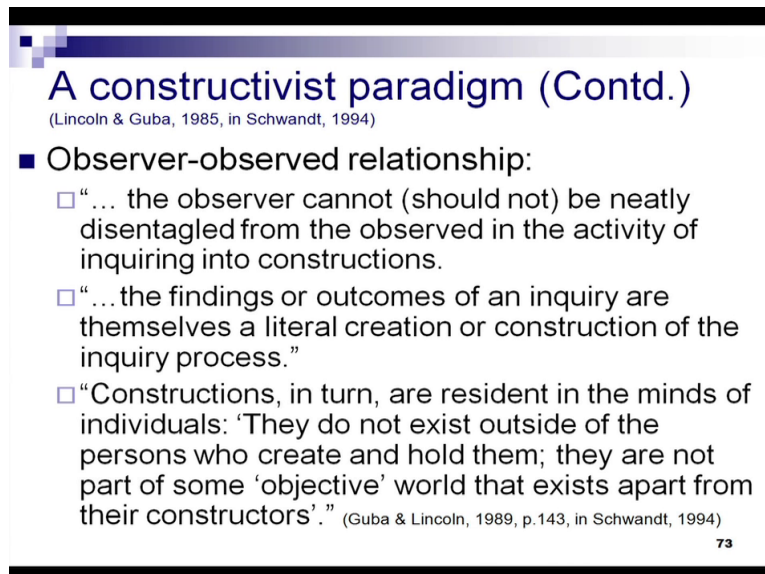
Pluralism is an aspect of constructivism according to which there are multiple, often conflicting constructions and all at least potentially are meaningful, so different any reality can be seen in a variety of ways and that's pluralism.

And all these ways in which the reality is seen are integrated and are absolutely correct. So there is a story or poem called the six blind men and the elephant, maybe I will give the reference to it, we all see the things from our perspective, from our perspective meaning that is generated that is the plurality of reality. Then sometimes these days meaning maybe conflicting with each other and they are all meaningful.

The Relativism is, “that the question of whether Constructions are true is sociohistorically relative. Truth is a matter of the best-informed and the most sophisticated construction on which there is consensus at a given time.” What is truth? Truth is something that is situated in the socio historic reality of an event, of the inquired, so that is the truth and whoever comes up with the most informed, most thorough, most understanding, most sophisticated outcome.

That a large number of people agree to is accepted as the truth, as the most comprehensive truth. Okay, so that is relativity, relative to, truth is situated within the context that it is derived out of, so these are the various aspects of the constructivist paradigm.

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A constructivist paradigm (Contd.)
(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, in Schwandt, 1994)

- **Observer-observed relationship:**
 - “... the observer cannot (should not) be neatly disentagled from the observed in the activity of inquiring into constructions.
 - “... the findings or outcomes of an inquiry are themselves a literal creation or construction of the inquiry process.”
 - “Constructions, in turn, are resident in the minds of individuals: ‘They do not exist outside of the persons who create and hold them; they are not part of some ‘objective’ world that exists apart from their constructors’.” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p.143, in Schwandt, 1994)

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Now based on the aspects way we also talked about the observer in within the constructivist paradigm, we also talked about the observer observed relationship, we talk about the understanding and acceptance of the fact that just by virtue of being observed, a relationship will develop between the observer and the observed and this relationship will inform the interpretation of the observed, by the observer.

What happens is, when we observe something, when we observe a phenomenon and event, concept something that is going on, when we observe something, we have a prior notion, a prior understanding of what to expect from what we are observing or we have an understanding of what we already know about what we are observing or at the very least we have some clarity on why we are observing, what we are observing.

Right, even if we don't know it, we know why we are spending that much time, energy, effort, into observing and trying to understand what we are trying to understand, so it is already situated within a context, whether we like it or not, what we are trying to observe is already situated, is already connected to something in our minds, in the minds of the inquirer and that forms a relationship between the observer and the observed.

“The observer cannot and should not be neatly disentangled from the observed in the activity of inquiring into constructions.” Construction from the perspective of who, construction for what purpose, we can't completely disassociate ourselves and say this is what is meant by this, the meaning is situated in our reasons, is connected to our reasons for observing what we are observing, is situated in a social historical context that we have to inquire and understand.

And it is entangled with it and the observer knows what is being observed and the observed also has a sense that it is being observed, both animate and inanimate objects, phenomena, whatever and there may be some debate. But I have at some point I will share video with you with you, in which even inanimate objects can change, this video shows that inanimate objects change their behavior, just by virtue of being observed, very interesting.

The findings within this observer observed relationship so there is a connection between the observer and observed, the second part of this is, that “the findings on outcomes of an inquiry are themselves a literal creation of construction of the inquiry process.” The result of the inquiry, also imbibes some aspects of the way the inquiry has been conducted, that is what constructivism says, let's just put it all in black and white, let out.

What I am able to observe will be a function of why I am observing it, will be a function of my relationship with what I am observing, my connection with it, will also have, you know that the interpretation will also give an indication of how the inquiry was conducted. So how the inquiry was conducted also forms a part of the construction of meaning and how the


inquiry was conducted is something that the inquirer does and that is again a part of the inquirer enquired relationship.

“Constructions, in turn are resident in the minds of individuals; ‘They do not exist outside of persons who create and hold them; they are not part of some ‘objective’ world that exists apart from their constructors’.” So Constructions are created here, like here as I said Constructions are a meanings, are a part of how, are meanings are result of what, what is going on in here does to what is received in here, you know putting it very, very simply.

So constructions are held within the mind of the constructor, meanings are an indication of where the observer is coming from. And again I will go to what I told you about Bakhtin, you know, an utterance is or carries with the emotional aspect of communication. The intention of whatever, of the person observing, whatever is observed, the biases, the understanding, the abilities are all reflected in the manner in which something is interpreted.

The way the inquiry was conducted all of this adds to the meaning that is created by the constructor or constructors of meaning. So their personality is, are also reflected, however subtly. The personalities, the thinking process is the time that has been spent so they become a part of the meaning that is created, through the process of qualitative inquiry and qualitative inquiries says fine, we are accepting all this is happening, despite that this is a valid way of inquiring into situations or this is a valid way of conducting scientific inquiry, Okay.

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Constructivism: Sub-paradigms


(Moshman, 1982)

- Exogenous constructivism
- Endogenous constructivism
- Dialectical constructivism

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Then some sub-paradigms, three sub-paradigms are there, so Moshman describes three sub-paradigms of constructivism.

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Exogenous constructivism

(Moshman, 1982)

- : “... emphasizes the reconstruction of structures preformed in the environment.”
- “Structures of knowledge are adequate or ‘true’ to the extent that they accurately copy (or at least adapt or accommodate to) the external structures that they ideally represent.”

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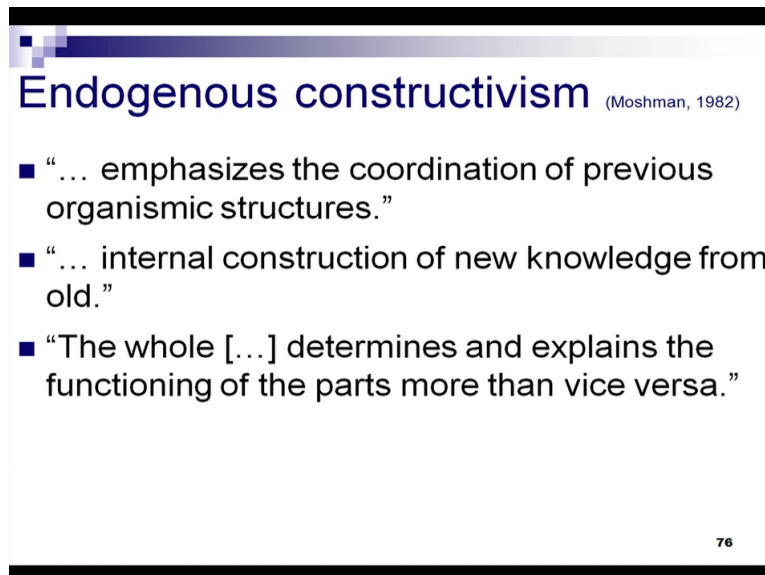
The first paradigm that describe that was the exogenous constructivism which “emphasizes that constructivism is reconstruction of the structures performed in the environment.” It is a representation of what is out there; it is a reconstruction, so according to Moshman reconstructivism is regurgitation of what we receive from the environment and nothing more.

To the extent these reconstructions are or “Structures of knowledge are adequate or through to the extent that the accurately copy or at least adaptor accommodates to the external structures that the ideally represents.” As long as we are discussing the structure that we have inquired into, as long as we are describing what we have seen, as long as our description

matches with the description of others observing the same event of phenomenal, they are adequate and that is exogenous constructivism.

Constructivism, we construct only to the for the purpose of adequately reproducing our interpretation of the observed.

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Endogenous constructivism (Moshman, 1982)

- "... emphasizes the coordination of previous organismic structures."
- "... internal construction of new knowledge from old."
- "The whole [...] determines and explains the functioning of the parts more than vice versa."

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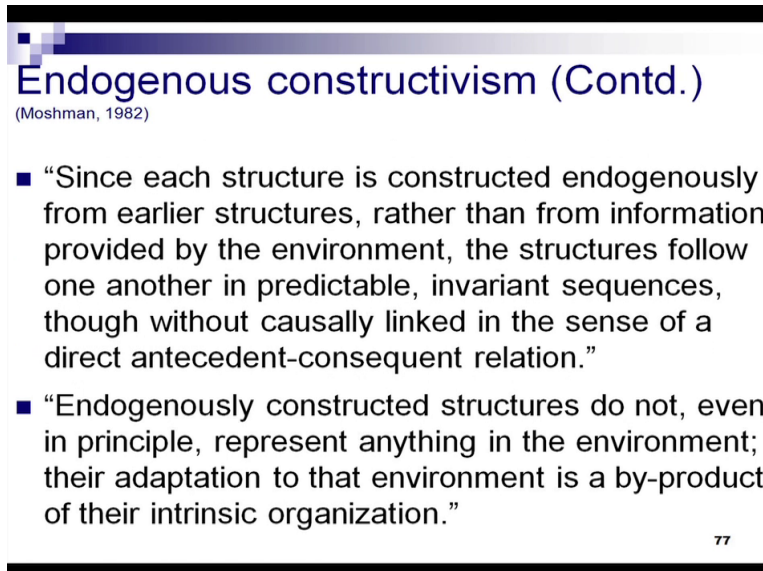
The second paradigm is endogenous constructivism, which is what **(()) (11:46)** also talked about, so it “emphasizes the coordination of previous organismic structures” we situate whatever we are observing, within what we already know, we connected to whatever we know and we come up with an interpretation that reflects what we know and the connection of what we know to what we are trying to know, okay.

It’s “an internal construction of new knowledge from the old” so that is endogenous constructivism, which means that I am constructing whatever I am getting from the environment, the meaning of whatever I am observing is being constructed in light of the meanings I have constructed in the past and will be connected to the meanings and likely to construct in future, it's all the same.

“The whole determines and explain the functioning of the parts more than vice versa.” To whatever meaning I am drawing from whatever I am understanding has to situate itself or has to fit into something that has already happened and something that is going to happen, so it forms a part of a much larger whole, it is not a simple representation, it is connected to anyone who is involved even and observing that representation.

That is endogenous constructivism, it is connected to everything or it is connected to whatever it is situated in the past and whatever it is connected to in the past and how it will situated itself in the future that is endogenous constructivism. Okay.

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Endogenous constructivism (Contd.)
(Moshman, 1982)

- “Since each structure is constructed endogenously from earlier structures, rather than from information provided by the environment, the structures follow one another in predictable, invariant sequences, though without causally linked in the sense of a direct antecedent-consequent relation.”
- “Endogenously constructed structures do not, even in principle, represent anything in the environment; their adaptation to that environment is a by-product of their intrinsic organization.”

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“Since each structure is constructed endogenously from earlier structures, rather than from information provided by the environment, the structures follow one another in predictable, invariant sequences,” so its constructed in light of whatever we knew in the past, so if there is a pattern that is being followed, then the structure that is created, is likely to be predictive.

Invariant, so “the structures follow one another in predictable, invariant sequences, though without causally linked in the sense of a direct and antecedent-consequent relation.” Because it is construction, there is no direct cause and effect relationship, but still probed deep enough, one may be able to predict some patterns, you know they will not be too much of a variations, in the way these structures are constructed.

Because they are connected to what happened in the past and they are likely to be connected to the way these structures are constructed in future. Endogenously constructed structures do not, even in principle, represent anything in the end their adaptation to that environment is a by-product of their intrinsic organization.” They are sufficient within what they are, within themselves, so they are not accurate representations.

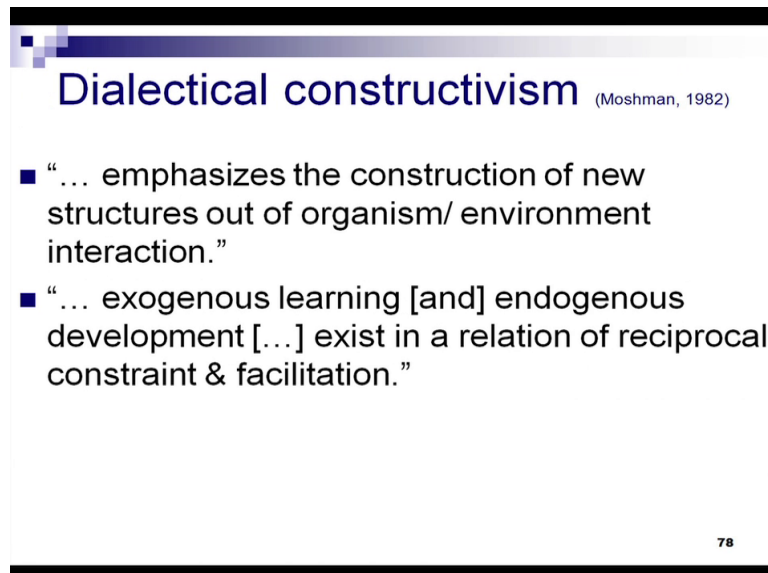
They are not connected to what is happening now, they are connected to the past and the future, but not to the now which is where they are drawn from, so the meaning that I am

interpreting is understood, is constructed in light of the meaning I drew in the past and is going to be fitting in, with the meaning I'm likely to draw in the future.

So it is not a representation, it is not going to be a replication, a representation of anything that is happening in the environment today by, because I am so busy situating it or because I am not busy, but because its forms a part of a larger whole, that may or may not have relevance, in what is going on or in the isolated event that is going on today.

So endogenous constructivism assumes, that everything forms part of a large picture, so it cannot be a representation of what is happening independently of the large picture or what seems to be happening independently of the large picture, okay.

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The slide features a title 'Dialectical constructivism' in a large, bold, blue font, with '(Moshman, 1982)' in a smaller font to its right. Below the title are two bullet points, each preceded by a small blue square. The first bullet point reads: '... emphasizes the construction of new structures out of organism/ environment interaction.' The second bullet point reads: '... exogenous learning [and] endogenous development [...] exist in a relation of reciprocal constraint & facilitation.' The slide has a white background with a blue header bar at the top and a black footer bar at the bottom. The number '78' is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide area.

Dialectical constructivism (Moshman, 1982)

- "... emphasizes the construction of new structures out of organism/ environment interaction."
- "... exogenous learning [and] endogenous development [...] exist in a relation of reciprocal constraint & facilitation."

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The third type of constructivism that Moshman talks about is the Dialectical constructivism, dialectical constructivism "emphasizes the construction of new structures out of organism environment interaction." So dialectical constructivism emphasizes discuss that new structures come out of the interaction between the organism and the environment, again they are not connected or they are not accurate representations of what is happening today.

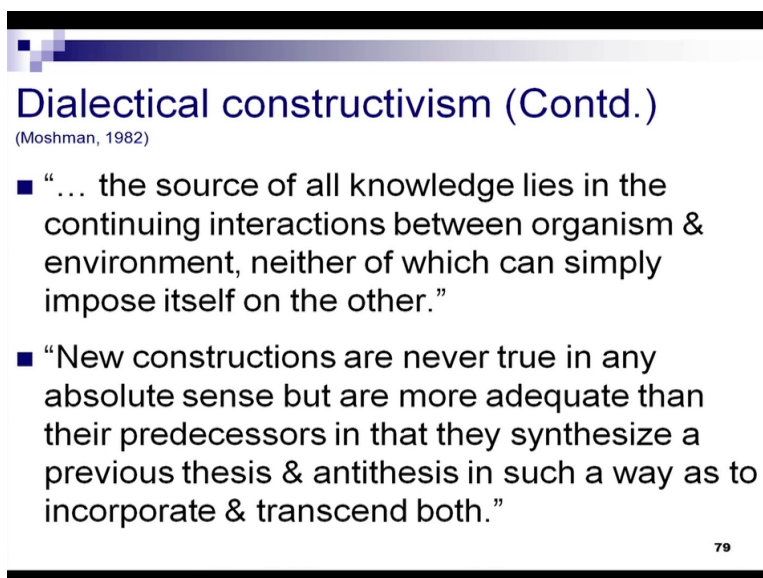
But they are created jointly in the minds of the organisms involved in these structures and they are created, when we talk about dialectics, we are essentially talking about conversation, we are essentially talking about negotiations, we are essentially talking about negotiation meanings between people who are experiencing this observation and the phenomenon, so that is dialectical constructivism.

“Exogenous learning and endogenous development exist in a relation of reciprocal constraint and facilitation.” So exogenous learning what is out there and what we interpret need to match, that is exogenous learning. Whatever we are constructing should be an accurate representation of what we see, what others see, so that is how the construction acquires its meaning.

Endogenous development how we related to, what we already know and how it is going to fit into the future and these two exist in a relation of reciprocal constraints, so they provide an opportunity, construction provides an opportunity for us, it also limits in the sense that it has to be situated, it can't just be out there, so these exogenous learning and endogenous development exist in the relation of reciprocal constraint, they both hosts constraints on each other and they both facilitate each other, in and through dialogue.

So construction takes place in and through dialogue and the meanings are created, that are on the one hand representation of these seemingly disconnected or these events in the present and also situated in the past or situated in the context in the minds of those connected with these events, okay that is what dialectical constructivism says.

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Dialectical constructivism (Contd.)
(Moshman, 1982)

- “... the source of all knowledge lies in the continuing interactions between organism & environment, neither of which can simply impose itself on the other.”
- “New constructions are never true in any absolute sense but are more adequate than their predecessors in that they synthesize a previous thesis & antithesis in such a way as to incorporate & transcend both.”

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Dialectical constructivism also says that “the source of all knowledge lies in the continuing interactions between organism and environment, neither of which can simply impose itself on the other.” The organism acquire is a meaning by virtue of its situatedness in the environment, so out of the environment you organism doesn't have a meaning, but the organism is unique in the sense that even though it is connected to the environment.

It still has some unique characteristics, that are not, that may or may not accurately represent the environment and the interaction between the organism and environment then ultimately leads to knowledge creation. "New Constructions are never true in any absolute sense but are more adequate than their predecessors in that they synthesize a previous thesis and antithesis in such a way as to incorporate and transcend both."

So new constructions, newer developments of meaning are neither true nor false; they are never truly absolute sense, why? Because the meaning can change with its situatedness, the construction can change with its situatedness in the changing environment, but is more adequate than their predecessors, in that this synthesis previous thesis. So they are connected to what happened in the past, they are representing what is going on.

And how are they representing by way of fitting in with whatever is going on currently in and through conversation, or interactions between the knower and the known and between the organization and the environment and antitheses in such a way as to incorporate and transcend both, so they are connected and they are still transcending the knower, known, context and what is known in the past.

So dialectical constructivism brings exogenous and endogenous constructivism together and adds a new flavor to these mixture of both, that is all we have time for in this lecture, this will be too heavy for you, but just try and understand it. Exogenous is representation of what is there on the outside, endogenous is what we make of what we observe outside in light of what we already know.

And dialectical is taking these two and situating them in the context with conversations through those involved and then creating a meaning that is connected to the store and it still transcending the meanings created with this two and we will stop here and you will talk a little bit more about constructivism in the next class thank you very much for listening.