
What Is The Disciplined Imagination?

Write introduction to Disciplined Imagination?

The disciplined imagination means processes and contributions. It was written by Weick in 1989. Many commentaries had considered the process of theory construction as a mechanistic and linear process of moving from problem statements to constructs and testable propositions. Disciplined imagination poses an evolutionary process of theory construction that is characterized by simultaneous rather than sequential thinking and revolves around three components. They are problem statements, thought trials and selection criteria. These components represent reference points in the process where researchers can act differently and produce theories of better quality.

As Weick remarks theory construction can be modified at the step where the problem is stated make assumptions more explicit, make representation more accurate, make representation more detailed, at the step where thought trials are formulated increase number of trials generated, increase heterogeneity of trials generated, and at the step where criteria select among thought trials apply criteria more consistently, apply more criteria simultaneously, apply more diverse criteria. Four characteristics of disciplined imagination are important to fully understand and appreciate this particular perspective upon theory construction.

A first characteristic is that disciplined imagination assumes an active role for researchers who construe theoretical representations, rather than seeing such theoretical representations as deductively or naturally following from problem statements. In other words, disciplined imagination is rooted in the view that the logic of scientific discovery, including the process of theory construction, is psychological, that is, a matter of heuristics and not just logical, that is, composed of deduction and predictions.

We then move on to a more specific and detailed discussion of the way in which metaphors work and contribute to theoretical representations using insights from cognitive linguistic research on metaphor as well as selected case studies of metaphors in use organizational improvisation as jazz and organizational behavior as collective mind within organization studies. Following on from this discussion, we also explore the heuristics that play a part in the development and selection of effective metaphors in organizational theory. We then integrate the insights from this exploration within the existing framework of disciplined imagination to provide a theoretically augmented and more robust account of the process of theory construction.

What is disciplined imagination?

We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our extension to disciplined imagination for theory construction within organization studies. In what follows, we will first provide a synopsis of the concept of disciplined imagination and its contribution to the subject of organizational theorizing. Here, we will also consider the evolutionary epistemology associated and what this suggests for metaphorical imagination and the body of knowledge in organization theory. Because of this neglect in the literature, we aim to augment Weick's conception of disciplined

imagination by clarifying how metaphors are used in organizational theorizing and how rich and meaningful metaphors can be imagined. This discussion is illustrated with different metaphors in use within organization studies, including the organizational improvisation as jazz and collective mind metaphors which he himself has worked with and promoted through writings.

We then use the insights from this exercise to refine the process of disciplined imagination, particularly in terms of specifying the particulars of metaphorical imagination and of imagining effective metaphorical images, and in turn provide clear pointers for the use of metaphorical imagination in the process of theory construction. discussion of disciplined imagination effectively placed metaphor at the core of theory construction, he did not further elaborate on how is it that metaphors actually work, nor did he mention what kind of heuristics organizational researchers may use to produce and select useful metaphorical images of organizational subjects.

At the heart of disciplined imagination lies the role played by metaphor as the vehicle through which imagination takes place and as the source as a simulated image for theoretical representations that as mentioned may come to be selected and retained for extended theorizing and research. Here, he joins ranks with a long line of commentaries in organization studies and beyond that have emphasized the use of metaphor, as a cognitive and heuristic device, in schematizing theoretical perspectives, in inviting academic researchers to view and understand phenomena in a new light and to recognize conceptual distinctions that were inconceivable before, and in providing the groundwork and models for extended organizational theorizing construct specification, formulation of hypotheses etc. and research.