

VISUALIZING RESEARCH

A GUIDE TO THE RESEARCH PROCESS IN ART AND DESIGN

FIG 1.2 Paradigms of inquiry (adapted from Guba, 1990)

	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theory	Constructivism	Artistic ?
ONTOLOGY (the nature of reality, the 'knowable')	Realist - reality exists 'out there' and is driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms. Knowledge of these entities, laws and mechanisms is conventionally summarised in the form of time- and context- free generalizations. Some of these latter generalizations take the form of cause-effect laws.	Critical realist - reality exists but can never be fully apprehended. It is driven by natural laws that can only be incompletely understood.	Critical realist - reality exists but can never be fully apprehended. It is driven by natural laws that can only be incompletely understood.	Relativist - realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them.	
EPISTEMOLOGY nature of relationship between inquirer and the 'knowable'	Dualist / objectivist - it is both possible and essential for the inquirer to adopt a distant, noninteractive posture. Values and other biasing and confounding factors are thereby automatically excluded from influencing the outcomes.	Modified objectivist - objectivity remains a regulatory ideal, but it can only be approximated, with special emphasis placed on external guardians such as the critical tradition and the critical community.	Subjectivist - in the sense that values mediate inquiry.	Subjectivist - inquirer and inquired are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two.	
METHODOLOGY How should the inquirer go about finding out 'knowledge' ?	Experimental / manipulative - questions and/or hypotheses are stated in advance in propositional form and subjected to empirical tests (falsification) under carefully controlled conditions.	Modified experimental / manipulative - emphasise critical multiplicity. Redress imbalances by doing inquiry in more natural settings, using more qualitative methods, depending more on grounded theory, and reintroducing discovery into the enquiry process.	Dialogic, transformative - eliminate false consciousness and energize and facilitate transformation.	Hermeneutic, dialectic - individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus.	

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