Argumentative Essay On The Book Outliers By Malcolm Gladwell

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Being a master in a particular skill is something that every person wants since it leads to inner fulfillment, prestige, and wealth in the long run. While some people call for maximum working hours to perfect a skill, another proportion is for objective short hours of practice as the mean of achieving perfection. Mastering a skill is dependent on a wide range of factors intertwined with affecting the overall success of practicing a skill. Although the 10,000 rule suggests practice in the maximum number of hours, the kind of practice and other social factors also come to play in determining the speed of mastery.

Context of the Narration

In chapter 2 of Outliers, Gladwell introduces the 10,000-hour rule. His first evidence is drawn from research done by Ericsson, with violin students as the study group. Evidence from this study group illustrates that most of the students had put in approximately 10,000 hours in practice by the age of 20 years (Gladwell 38). Additionally, Gladwell estimates that the Beatles had put 10,000 hours in perfecting their skills between 1960 and 1964 while playing Hamburg. Bill Gates also put the same number of hours learning to program before his breakthrough in Microsoft. This is then brought out as a rule throughout the chapter; for one to become an expert in a given field, they have to put 10,000 hours of practice.

Confirmatory paragraph

Gladwell’s observation was based on the need for practice for an individual to achieve a set of skills. Through the stories of the Hockey players, Bill Gates and the Beatles, Gladwell successfully opens the readers' perception of the influence of investing10000 hours (Gladwell 44). Success is, however, dependent on this practice and the opportunity for a person to prove themselves. For instance, Gladwell shows that the success of Bill Gates was dependent on him being born in the right era attending the right school in the right location, and being surrounded by the right people. Bill Gates, therefore, had all the necessary opportunities to gain extensive knowledge of the computer revolution. The only difference between him and the friends surrounding him was his tendency to seize the opportunities in his way and dedication to accumulate 10,000 hours in practice for programming.

In four years, the Beatles had performed for 10,000 hours in Hamburg promotion in Germany (Gladwell 40). The idea in all the cases presented by Gladwell is that to be successful; one has to invest 10,000 hours in practice and seize the opportunities presenting themselves. The author cites Daniel Levitin, who notes that dedicating a person's time towards the achievement of a specific skill is purely done based on passion (Gladwell 44). In this, Gladwell is trying to mean that a person develops an innate satisfaction having sacrificed a significant amount of time towards the achievement of a skill. The three cases then reflect on the power of being at the right place at the right time and supported by social factors to access the opportunity

(Szalavitz).

Counterargument

However, it is a bit problematic to believe in the 10,000-hour rule as the ultimate vehicle to skill mastery. First of all, there is nothing magical about the number 10,000. It is just an arbitrary number that is easy to remember, but with little grounds of evidence. Gladwell was well aware that this was the average number of hours that most of the violin students had input, but not all, by the age of 20 (Shermer 58). It is also not easy to agree with the 10000 hours since Gladwell does not differentiate the type of practice, which would be an essential distinction in this case. A better technique of getting better at a skill is through deliberate practice. This is usually guided by a coach or an expert who gives a variety of feedback on areas requiring improvement by a person. Without this feedback, it is almost impossible to correct fallbacks and learn new insights. In sports, for example, deliberate practice to master a specific goal is central to the perfection of the same (Shermer 59). An instructor is an important component of the practice, to steer the player into acquiring the necessary skill (s), which will then lead to mastery.

The feedback on areas of weakness matched with objectivity is what matters most as opposed to 10,000 hours stipulated by Gladwell.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 10,000 rule is a fair way of gaining expertise in a specific field. However, the rule may result in a misconception that anyone can become an expert in a given area by investing more time. Nurture has its limits on the capacity of different individuals to become experts in a particular field. In addition to the time spent in practicing a skill, genetics and age are factors worth considering as critical determinants of success. The theory also calls upon opportunities for one to present themselves. Some people may never encounter the opportunities to make them outliers, thus leaving the notion that success is mostly a matter of chance. For instance, two students may be in different schools with different amenities but invest an equal amount of time in their studies. However, the results depending on a wide range of skills may be different, thus making the 10,000 hours rule not universal.

Works Cited

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