

BRANCHES OF PHILOSOPHY

EPISTEMOLOGY

AND

EPISTEMOLOGY AND EDUCATION



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WHAT IS EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge and is also referred to as “theory of knowledge”. Etymologically the word epistemology has been derived from the Greek words *episteme*, meaning “knowledge, understanding”, and *logos*, meaning “study of”. In other words we can say that Epistemology is the study of the nature, source, and validity of knowledge. It seeks to answer of the basic questions as “What is true?” and “How do we know?” Thus epistemology covers two areas: the *content* of thought and *thought* itself. Or in educational terms: *curriculum* and *instruction* or *content* and *method*. The study of epistemology deals with issues related to the dependability of knowledge and the validity of the sources through which we gain information.



TYPICAL EPISTEMOLOGICAL QUESTION

- What is knowledge and how does it differ from belief or opinion?
- What is truth, and how can we know if a statement is true?
- What are the sources of knowledge?
- Do absolutes exist, and if so, can we know them?
- What is the relationship between faith and reason?



SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

EMPIRICISM

(knowledge obtained through the senses).

Empirical knowledge appears to be built into the very nature of human experience



SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE(CONTINUE)

REVELATION

A second influential source of knowledge throughout the span of human history has been *revelation*. Revealed knowledge has been of prime importance in the field of religion. It differs from all other sources of knowledge because it presupposes a transcendent supernatural reality that breaks into the natural order.



SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE(CONTINUE)

AUTHORITY

A third source of human knowledge is *authority*. Authoritative knowledge is accepted as true because it comes from experts or has been sanctified over time as tradition. In the classroom, the most common source of information is some authority, such as a textbook, teacher, or reference work. Accepting authority as a source of knowledge has its advantages as well as its dangers.



SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE(CONTINUE)

RATIONALISM

A fourth source of human knowledge is reason. The view that reasoning, thought, or logic is the central factor in knowledge is known as *rationalism*. The rationalist, in emphasizing humanity's power of thought and the mind's contributions to knowledge, is likely to claim that the senses alone cannot provide universal, valid judgments that are consistent with one another.



SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE(CONTINUE)

INTUITION

A fifth source of knowledge is *intuition*- the direct apprehension of knowledge that is not derived from conscious reasoning or immediate sense perception. In the literature dealing with intuition, one often finds such expressions as “immediate feeling of certainty.”



EPISTEMOLOGY AND EDUCATION

Epistemology and education are tacit companions since both are primarily the act of knowing. Epistemology is the motor of education in a sense because it drives the educational process. Whatever educational theories and practices one employs will be consistent with his or her theories and practices of epistemology. Epistemology has a direct impact upon education on a moment-by-moment basis. For example, assumptions about the importance of various sources of knowledge will certainly be reflected in curricular emphases and teaching methodologies.



EPISTEMOLOGY AND EDUCATION(CONTINUE)

Because Christian teachers believe in revelation as a source of valid knowledge, they will undoubtedly choose a curriculum and a role for the Bible in that curriculum that differs substantially from the curricular choices of nonbelievers. In fact, the philosophic worldview of their faith will shape the presentation of every topic they teach. That, of course, is true for teachers from every philosophic persuasion and thus constitutes an important argument for educating Adventist youth in Adventist schools.



THANKING YOU

