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Knowing

What is knowing? When people say I know about this or I know about that, one can assume that they are fairly familiar with the topic. Contrastingly, when citing an expert, the affirmation of the individual knowing becomes stronger and the statement “I know about \_\_\_\_\_” becomes a perceived fact. Questioning the definition of knowledge and ‘knowing’ becomes important in a world where facts are published daily, whether it be through means of technology or published texts and journals. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, knowing is defined as, “having understanding, being well informed, being knowledgeable, practiced or an expert” (OED) Having come to important conclusions about a subject or idea, should it not be interesting to understand the means through which that conclusion was reached? In addition to different perceptions defined as points of view or experience, other cognitive thought processes actively contribute and work along with perception, processes like reason and faith. From a more creative perspective, an important area of knowledge lies in the arts, from music to visual arts, creativity requires an in-depth reflection of how abstract ideas come to be known as truth.

Any semblance of truth itself comes as a broad cluster of ideas that can range from creativity to undeniable fact as seen in art and science. The organization of ideas and thought processes is an important step in recognizing mere knowledge as truth. Through the use of intellectual senses, emotion and reason all find an important place in the pursuit of coming to know. It is found that though both emotion and reason it is possible to come to a conclusion of what can be in both creative and empirical modes of thought. The interconnectedness of what is already known in union with the intricacies of the unknown can be related through the union of creativity and reason as both rely on each other and contribute to ideas that are known as truth. The importance behind knowing truth through many means of knowing validates the truth as it withstands challenges from many perspectives.

The most important perspective when recognizing knowledge as truth is the internal subjective point of view. Each individual creates their own thought process, from creative ideas to the rational deduction of information. This is strongly related to creativity and the use of imagination and creation of something original. When using creativity as a means of knowing, it is important to realize the subjectivity of imagination and individual originality, which strongly relates to the subjectivity of point of view. A creative idea is original in a way that supports knowledge from a view that can challenge other ideas. Making connections between what is known as fact and what is derived from imagination creates a better-rounded knowledge base. When considering the role of creativity in knowing, it is of extreme importance because it provides root for all ideas. Without creativity, the empirical ideas themselves would not exist as originality must have an origin. From ideas stemming from science to ideas within the arts, knowledge of one field connecting with knowledge of the other confirms the idea as relative truth.

The most important relationship between knowing and creativity comes as innovation and ideas that fuel thinking which sustains humanity. As Einstein once said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge”, which supports the fact that creativity as a way of knowing leads into further knowledge, over the stagnation of not using creativity as a means of confirming knowledge as truth. The importance of creativity is also supported by the fact that change of times comes with change of ideas. Truly knowing must contain the ability to support the change in union with creativity and knowledge. Using imagination to support knowledge catalyzes the change in an adaptive way, leading to further knowledge. Creativity is undoubtedly important as it not only opens the mind to new ideas, but supports oncoming, constant change that affirms what is known as fact.

In a way, creativity and imagination are the highest form of intelligence as it challenges the facts that are granted. Manipulating ideas that challenge our thinking is the greatest test of awareness, as the conscious and unconscious are now registering information that is not directly presented. From this comes the idea of originality and whether there exists such thing. Some contest that originality has no beginning as an idea always stems from another idea, but in reality, the power of perception is what creates the originality. It is now up to the thinker to perceive and acknowledge a new idea as original as a product of their creative thinking. This idea of originality also supports the importance of point of view in relation to imagination and creativity.

Equally as important, exists the idea of faith, “Faith is the assured expectation of what is hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities that aren’t seen” (NWT) This passage is taken from Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1 in which faith is portrayed as an ‘assured expectation’ what ‘is hoped for’. From a literal point of view, this passage does not assure any fact as truth or assured knowledge of something. The great perspective offered by faith is that it allows the challenging of the senses by relying on what is not directly perceived by the eyes, hearing or sense of touch. The challenge of thinking and coming to know though faith is seen when ideas not immediately recognized by the senses are expected to be true. The expectation of truths through faith has allowed humans to believe in miracles, the ‘supernatural’ and even a higher being. Much like creativity, faith as a means of establishing knowledge allows for the offer of ideas that perhaps would have never been explored if we only used reason. The brain finds itself to be stimulated by the exploration of ideas that are not graspable by the immediately seen, which is essentially what separates us from other animals and organisms. Humans have the ability to manipulate abstract ideas that are incomprehensible to other organisms that don’t enjoy the privilege of establishing truth though faith. Ultimately, the truth can be completely personal, the greatness of having the capability of believing lies in personal truths that lead to other ideas.

Closely tied to creativity and faith exists another universal way of knowing, emotion. For the purposes of coming to establish a personal truth, emotion acts as a response to sensory data. Every action comes with a conscious or unconscious emotional reaction that allows us to think in a different way. A good question to ask as sensory data is registered would be: how does this idea make me feel and how does this affect my perception of truth as reflected by immediate emotions? The importance of emotions rests in the idea that our biological responses are built not only to assist in survival, but intellectual processes as well. Without emotion faith and creativity would take little to no effect as human motivation would not be internalized by the way we feel. Our personal perspective seen as emotion make for a deeply rooted passion in whatever we take in as knowledge. Additionally, emotional responses weigh heavily on how the individual perceives what will be recognized as knowledge, how we feel is highly important to the decision each and every one of us make.

In the long run, what is the importance of thinking and questioning ones thinking?

I personally believe that knowledge is a strong representation of personal identity, reflecting how the individual relates personal experience to what he or she believes. Perceptions of truth that lead to understanding can also lead to the misunderstanding of one another as individuals. World issues today create separation because of little consideration given to the thinking about our thinking. Socrates encouraged the people of Athens to consider their thinking through what is now referred to as metacognition. Through this process, individuals can ponder on the origins of their truths and opinions, to reconsider what is perceived as knowledge. The better we understand not only our personal opinions, but each other, a better world can become a reality. Similarly, differences will only stagnate intellectual progress as what is not in common will trump similarities that unite humanity. Similarly, though metacognition, the individual can gain a better understanding of themselves as an important part of humanity as a whole, seeing themselves as a positive agent among many.