

Knowledge is acquired when we succeed in fitting a new experience in the system of concepts based upon our old experiences. Understanding comes when we liberate ourselves from the old and so make possible a direct, unmediated contact with the new, the mystery, moment by moment, of our existence. The new is the given on every level of experience – given perceptions, given emotions and thoughts, given states of unstructured awareness, given relationships with things and persons. The old is our home-made system of ideas and word patterns. It is the stock of finished articles fabricated out of the given mystery by memory and analytical reasoning, by habit and automatic associations of accepted notions. Knowledge is primarily a knowledge of these finished articles. Understanding is primarily direct awareness of the raw material. Knowledge is always in terms of concepts and can be passed on by means of words or other symbols. Understanding is not conceptual and therefore cannot be passed on. It is an immediate experience, and immediate experience can only be talked about (very inadequately), never shared. Nobody can actually feel another's pain or grief, another's love or joy, or hunger. And similarly no body can experience another's understanding of a given event or situation. There can, of course, be knowledge of such an understanding, and this knowledge may be passed on in speech or writing, or by means of other symbols. Such communicable knowledge is useful as a reminder that there have been specific understandings in the past, and that understanding is at all times possible. But we must always remember that knowledge of understanding is not the same thing as the understanding which is the raw material of that knowledge. It is as different from understanding as the doctor's prescription for pencitin is different from penicillin.

Questions:

(i) How is knowledge different from understanding?

Knowledge is different from understanding because the former is based on information, and information is given by someone else. However, understanding comes when one experiences a thing himself. It means that it cannot be told by others. In this way, knowledge and understanding are different from each other.

(ii) Explain why understanding cannot be passed on.

Understanding cannot be passed on because it is not conceptual. In fact, it is the awareness of raw material. Besides, it deals with one's experience, and experience cannot be shared in words. For example, no one can feel the issues of others unless he faces them himself. Given all that, one can say with a fair degree of certainty that understanding cannot be passed on.

(iii) Is the knowledge of understanding possible? If it is, how may it be passed on?

The knowledge of understanding is possible. It can be passed on through symbols, speeches and writings. In short, the knowledge of understanding is possible, and there are a few methods to pass it on.

(iv) How does the author explain that knowledge of understanding is not the same thing as the understanding?

According to the author, there is a difference between knowledge of understanding and understanding. He explains this difference by giving the example of a doctor that he has two separate prescriptions for pencitin and penicillin. In this way, the author differentiates between the two: knowledge of understanding and understanding

- (v) How far do you agree with the author in his definitions of knowledge and understanding? Give reasons for your answer.

No one can disagree to the author's views about knowledge and understanding. He is very right in asserting that knowledge is different from understanding. The reason is that knowledge has nothing to do with practical work. It is only based on theories. However, understanding has a direct connection with practical work because it is hinged on one's experience. Besides, knowledge cannot have its impact on an individual since it is passed on from others. However, understanding has its profound impact on a person because he understands a few things through his experiences. In a nutshell, the author's remarks about knowledge and understanding are true.