

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?
- (ii) Explain why understanding cannot be passed on.
- (iii) Is the knowledge of understanding possible? If it is, how may it be passed on?
- (iv) How does the author explain that knowledge of understanding is not the same thing as the understanding?
- (v) How far do you agree with the author in his definitions of knowledge and understanding? Give reasons for your answer.

Comprehension

① How knowledge different from understanding?

Knowledge is different from understanding as understanding is the first step towards knowledge. Knowledge is based on concepts while understanding is not conceptual. Knowledge is like the final product & understanding is the raw material for that product.

② Explain why understanding cannot be passed on.

Understanding cannot be passed on because it is the immediate event that can only be talked about because no one understands what one person experiences. It is non-conceptual.

③ Is knowledge of understanding possible? If it is, how may it be passed on?

Yes, knowledge of understanding is possible & it can be passed on by myriads of means like through speech, writing or symbols.

④ How does the author explain that knowledge of understanding is not the same thing as the understanding?

As per author, understanding is raw material of the final product that is knowledge. These two are different as the prescription of medicine is different from medicine.

⑤ How far do you agree with author in his definitions of knowledge & understanding? Give reasons for your answer.

I completely agree with author in his concept of knowledge & understanding because according to me we cannot reach to the level of knowledge without understanding and these two are completely different things.

because understanding is limited to a person
while knowledge can be passed on.