

Knowledge acquisition

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Knowledge is obtained through different sources. Personal experiences, tradition, authority and intuition are factors in helping one acquire knowledge. In the human services discipline, these areas are essential in learning how knowledge is attained. Carper's (1978) four types of knowledge best explain how personal experiences, tradition, authority and intuitions are essential in knowledge acquisition.

First and foremost, ethical knowledge pertains to moral issues and one's judgment based on professional principles and values. Intuition usually tells an individual when an action or event is deemed acceptable by society or not. In the field of human services, it is important to know what is morally good and bad and this can be considered as the strength of ethical knowledge.

It helps a human services practitioner determine the action that would result to the improvement of the person's well-being. However, this is contrary to the characteristics of science which entitles one to be objective wherein biases or value judgments are removed from the scientific process. Human services is a science wherein knowledge is obtained through systematic observations (Monette, Sullivan & De Jong in Hutchison, 2003).

Second, aesthetic knowledge is concerned with the art of the disciplines. These arts may be in the form of a systematic process that a practitioner follows in her field (Carper in Walsh and Wiggins, 2003). In this case, it can be perceived that the discipline of human services is rigid and static. On the contrary, as a science, it is an open-ended practice wherein discoveries and ideas continue to occur over time. Tradition best exemplifies this case

wherein negates the idea that remains the same over time rather, it is dynamic.

Third, personal knowledge is obtained from one's experiences and interactions with his environment (Carper in Walsh and Wiggins, 2003).

Personal experiences help one acquire values and biases that he applies to his daily life. It can be argued that personal knowledge cannot be a basis for knowledge because it is not systematic and not based on empirical findings. However, in the discipline of human services, this type of knowledge is essential in understanding behavior and actions of individuals.

Lastly, empirical knowledge is based on observations and experimentations. In other words, it is founded on hard data and it is considered a fact. It is acknowledged that the field of human services is a science that strongly relies on empirical data. Since it is such, it is also a transformative process or a never-ending cycle that is constantly tested and questioned (Monette, Sullivan & De Jong in Hutchison, 2003). Facts and information are constantly updated in order to make them more accurate and correct. This is needed in the field of human services because human behavior actions and their meanings are not static.

Overall, the four types of knowledge that is applied in the discipline of human services complements and is further reinforced by the characteristics of science. Its being a science does not contradict knowledge acquisition, rather, it strengthens the field in terms of dynamicity, accurateness and precision in gathering information and data.

References

1. Hutchison, Elizabeth. (2003). Dimensions of Human Behaviour: Person and Environment. UK: Sage Publications.
2. Walsh, Mark and Lynne Wigen. (2003). Introduction to Research. UK: Nelson Thornes.