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For most of my life, I have come to my understanding of the world by compartmentalizing my emotion separately from logical, reasoned, systematically analyzed facts about the world. This allows for an examination of knowledge to come to what can be seen as fair, just, and objective conclusions. This separation between perception and reality providing for calm, reasoned discussions seems to be the main point Ellerton (2017) is attempting to convey. Ellerton aims to show that, by separating how we feel and how we critically analyze information in our rhetoric, humanity would therefore be better enabled to collaborate on problems and reach the solution that benefits the most. Furthermore, by suspending belief when presented with an argument until facts can be verified, we set ourselves up for the best chance of being able to understand objective truth.

Is this really the best way to approach problems? By ignoring individuals' subjective perceptions, we subsequently close our minds to the experiences of others that we may not otherwise be exposed to as we may categorize those experiences as unverifiable opinion rather than justified fact. While dealing exclusively with utilitarian pieces of information that have been systematically examined through the scientific method provides objective common ground for individuals normally on the opposite sides of rhetoric and semantics collaborate effectively, these ideas of Ellerton's (2017) are effectively one-dimensional.

This lack of depth provided by the Ellerton (2017) approach to knowledge parallels the doubt I observed emerging in myself with respect to my utilization of this approach as I entered this PhD program. My new experiences with qualitative research exposed me to the importance of perception and emotion when approaching knowledge. The needs and experiences individuals bring to the table when examining knowledge help shape their interpretation and understanding,

as well as support their expression of how knowledge fits into their lives. This depth is addressed thoroughly by Rose (2013) by bringing attention to reflection.

This idea of the utility of organic reflection when examining knowledge was new to me, but through taking in the text of Rose (2013) I was able to understand the importance of natural thought when learning and interacting in social and collaborative contexts. It is one thing to have access to facts as objective as the scientific method and our current resources allow us to observe. It is another entirely to naturally take in these facts and reflect on them and allow the integration of concepts across domains and disciplines in a unique manner. Creativity, intuition, emotion, and perception have a role in understanding how individuals come to know things completely aside from and in addition to the objective knowledge Ellerton (2017) discusses.

Ellerton (2017) and Rose (2013) are advocating for specific ways of knowing on either end of a spectrum of knowledge; Ellerton exists on one end with analytical and objective thought, and Rose sits on the other end of the spectrum with natural, organic creativity. Ultimately, an infinite number of ways of knowing exist in between these two points. When I entered this semester, while I knew that individual perceptions to come to knowledge and understanding about topics had more validity than I had until that point understood, I still felt like there must be only one way all humanity could come to know. I was wrong. On this infinite spectrum of knowing, individuals can find a method of discovery, a way of knowing that not only suits who they are individually, but can evolve and develop with them over time. This is almost intimidating in a way; if the number of ways of knowing are infinite, how can we truly understand knowledge? There is comfort in this as well: if how we come to understanding is inherently flexible, then we have the flexibility to know to understand the world as others see it.

References

- Ellerton, P. (2017). *How do you know that what you know is true? That's epistemology*. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/how-do-you-know-that-what-you-know-is-true-thats-epistemology-63884>
- Rose, E. (2013). Why does reflection matter? In Rose, *On reflection: An essay on technology, education, and the status of thought in the twenty-first century* (pp. 17-35). Canadian Scholars Press.