

Reasons of Classification of Academic Disciplines

Introduction

As we have already studied about the meaning of 'Discipline' and 'Academic Discipline' in the first block of this course. Did you ever think of how these disciplines come into existence? Do you think knowledge emerged as we study and teach today in our schools? No! Knowledge neither emerged nor developed in the past as we see it today. There was a time when knowledge was not classified as physics, chemistry, history, etc. In the past, Knowledge was considered under a single discipline known as 'Philosophy'. At the time of geographical invasions, people could discover more and more places, and as a result their knowledge got widened. They found that knowledge is so vast, that one person in his life time cannot learn everything and therefore only a part of it can be studied. Hence, they started analysing knowledge in order to classify it. Thus, the single and all-encompassing knowledge started getting classified under different disciplines. You are familiar about the degree called 'Doctor of Philosophy'. This degree will be given in disciplines like Mathematics, History, Languages and other subjects also. This is because all the subjects were studied under a single discipline 'Philosophy'. This story of the classification of the 'whole knowledge' is very interesting. Let us study how knowledge was classified, what are the different classifications and the criteria for classification.

Reasons of Classification of Disciplines:

Before discussing about how academic disciplines have been classified, let us understand the reasons for classification.

Classification is a very common and natural activity. Whenever we see some object, or person or place, we categorise them with related previous knowledge. It helps us in number of ways. It helps us to recall and retrieve. Hence, people in the past realised the advantages of classifying knowledge and made attempts for it.

Classifications or Typologies are important because:



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É They help to bring order to a chaotic world. Just imagine, you have a bulk of information and you want to make a study of that. What will you do first? You will categorise the information under different headings to comprehend better, or to make more meaning out of it.

É Typologies allow scholars to group things under few categories that assist in grasping relationships and trends. For example, if you have information about different animals, and if you classify them on the basis of some criteria, it will help you to know the differences and similarities among them. This will help you to understand the relationship among different aspects like colour of the animal and its food, size, geographical condition, strength, mobility styles etc.

É Preliminary classifications of new sets of objects or phenomena can lead to the detection of previously undiscovered patterns and to the generation of theory to be tested. The more you study based on the classification, better will be your understanding. You understand the objects or phenomena in depth, collect more information, go for more observation leading to formulate theories. Many of the theories have been put forward based on typological studies.

É Makes our study simple and clear

É Allow to gather more details about specific aspect.

É Makes our path of study easy.

É Allows for the investigation of further knowledge through the processes of compare, contrast, and application of observed knowledge.

É In both scientific and non-scientific fields, as in daily life, classification is a common activity. It is employed with the purpose of getting more clarity of content. There is no one general classification of academic disciplines. Different researchers take different bases of their organizations. However, the majority of them have some identical features.