

**BEYOND KNOWLEDGE, TOWARDS KNOWING:
THE PRACTICE-BASED APPROACH TO SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE CREATION,
COMMUNICATION, AND USE FOR INNOVATION**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current conceptual article is to discuss the practice-based approach (*Practice-Based Studies*, PBS) to knowledge and knowing, and how its adoption enables the design of approaches to support knowledge creation, communication, and use in organizational contexts, in a way that is close to what matters to workers' practices and that acknowledges the situatedness and in-betweenness of knowing and knowledge. The excessive focus on knowledge as an object detached from the situated knowing actions in which such knowledge is needed, created, and used has guided most of those supportive approaches, particularly in supporting the knowing work. The rationalistic approaches to knowledge are reviewed and their limitations are explained. The practice-based approach and the two ways of engaging practice in research are detailed. In designing PBS-oriented supportive approaches to the creation, communication, and use of knowledge, gaps in communicating existing knowledge can be reduced, enabling the effective use of workers' time and efforts and reducing complexity in using existing knowledge to create new knowledge. The article systematizes and differentiates the approaches to knowledge and knowing, and explains the value of a practice-based approach to support knowledge creation, communication, and use. The article contributes to deepen the understanding of the different approaches to study knowledge, the impacts of adopting one or another, and the advantages of a practice-based approach to understand and support knowledge creation, communication and use in consonance with their dynamics, complexities, and nature.

Keywords: Knowing; Knowledge creation; Knowledge communication; Practice-based-studies; Epistemology of practice.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The work of creating knowledge to ground and drive business innovation and strategies, i.e. the knowing workⁱ, is essentially a meaning creation practice. The creation of knowledge is one of the most unstructured and difficult work practices to be facilitated and supported. The knowing work presents a particular nature and dynamics that is marked by emergent, unplanned and situational sense-making, demanding different approaches to communicate knowledge as inputs to and products of such practice. The distinct nature of the knowing work needs to be accounted for when existing knowledge is communicated to support it. So far, prior research has not considered how such knowledge is situationally needed and used for creating new knowledge, for the meaning creation in practice. Thus, there has been a disconnection between how knowledge is needed and used for knowingⁱⁱ (or knowledge creation) and how knowledge is communicated for such creative practice.

Contemporary research and managerial approaches to knowledgeⁱⁱⁱ in organizations have remained focused on considering knowledge detached from the human actions and interpretive acts in which it is needed, mobilized, communicated, and used, and to which it should contribute. The disconnection between the understanding of knowledge and knowing, knowledge communication and use practices^{iv} has been aggravated by typical knowledge management approaches. This is justified by the fact that “knowledge management tends to treat knowledge as a tangible thing, as a stock or a quantity, and therefore separates knowledge as some *thing* from the use of that thing” (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000, p. 22). Similar concerns were pointed out by Tsoukas and Mylonopoulos (2004), Tsoukas and Vladimirou (2001), and Cook and Brown (1999). Tsoukas and Mylonopoulos (2004) discussed one central problem of current approaches to the uses of knowledge in organizations:

“...one of the common fallacies concerning organizational knowledge is what we may call the apple-tree fallacy: the knowledge individuals make use of in their work is considered to be a collection of freestanding items waiting out there to be plucked from the tree of organizational knowledge (Gates, 1999; Stewart, 1997). The problem with this view, largely influenced by the emergence of, and the discourse on, the ‘digital economy’, is that *it tends to ignore, among other things, the constructed nature of knowledge: whatever knowledge is, the form as well as the*

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