

Technical vs Practical
Or
Technical and Practical

Technical knowledge comes to us by a procedure that uses standards, rules and techniques to compare facts and how to certify that knowledge. Science, engineering and mathematics, usually through formal training, form the basis of technical knowledge.

Practical knowledge is acquired through experience. It is used because it produces a predictable outcome from years, or even generations of experience. It is knowledge gained through experience without going through a process other than observations and the transferring of observations from person to person.

Technical knowledge is designed to represent reality through its rules and procedures. It is most beneficial when it gives us information that our senses cannot reach, giving us greater understanding.

Practical knowledge is taken directly from reality and how we experience it. Because one's experience is real, one does not need a complicated procedure to ensure the capture of all relevant information. Nothing represents reality like reality.

Wisdom comes from the correct use of both technical knowledge and practical knowledge. Often technical knowledge helps greatly on the understanding of "why" something happens. Practical knowledge is centered mostly on "what" happens as captured by our senses.

There appears to be a strong trend in government toward accepting work based on technical knowledge. Without the benefit of experience to accompany technical knowledge, we often lack wisdom needed in all branches of our government, the executive, judicial and legislative. Without experience and practical knowledge, technical knowledge is often applied incorrectly.

The use of computer models can be the best technical tool in some instances, but it can also be expensive to create and worthless in use. These technically generated reports can easily be inaccurate by not reflecting reality. Sadly, many people, especially in government and politics, accept results from computer models as scientific fact when often it is just inexact science.

Living in a bayou community Technical vs. Practical is experienced every day. There are boat captains who can pass any test the government requires but cannot navigate through a floodgate. There have been great boat captains who could not read but could handle boats in any situation anywhere in the world because of a lifetime of experience. There are professionals in many fields who get only basic certification, but spend a lifetime perfecting their work. These professionals are often dismissed if an individual decorated with more certifications and degrees gives an opposing incorrect opinion. Often the professional with no detailed knowledge or experience is believed over the knowledgeable, experienced professional.

Although this happens in business to some degree, government fails more often to find the best truth. This occurs because government falls into the trap that certified training is more important than experience and observation. Part of that reason is that government's goofy cousin, politics, is based on perception, not necessarily truth or facts.

The best truth comes from the gauging of technical knowledge with experience and observation from practical knowledge. It is the fountain which produces the waters of wisdom.

Will our State, through CPRA, use science and practical knowledge well? The decisions our State and CPRA make over the next few years will be made using a great deal of inexact science. We must be wise in using that information. Practical truth, working truth, is critical as we work to deal intelligently with the issue of living on a subsiding delta. It is the intersection of technical and practical knowledge which can give us the best future.

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