

## Abstract

Personal epistemology, the beliefs of individuals about knowledge and knowing (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997) play a crucial role in various aspects of cognitive processes and learning, such as argumentation, problem-solving, and conceptual change learning. Despite this importance, children's personal epistemology is rarely subject to empirical research. This interview study conducted with ninety-eight 4th graders revealed not only that children around the age of ten are able to verbalize epistemic beliefs, but that the latter are more diverse and profound than initially expected by the research community, such as different knowledge definitions, beliefs about the origin, acquisition, and verification of knowledge. It was demonstrated that children held similar epistemological positions as adults, such as absolutist, multiplists, and evaluativist (Chandler, Hallet, & Sokol, 2002; Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002); except that these are based on a less broad and abstract conceptualization of knowledge. Furthermore, the results imply that teachers' personal epistemology and classroom education in general have an impact on students' personal epistemology. Stemming from the current results and literature on personal epistemology and curriculum and instruction, the Educational Model for Personal Epistemology Enhancement (EMPEE) is introduced and provides a framework for how different classroom factors can influence learner's personal epistemology and how these factors can be taken into account to enhance personal epistemology in a diversity of educational contexts. Several educational implications and suggestions for future research are discussed in terms of the model.

# Table of contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Table of contents</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Was Kinder über Wissen wissen - Vorwort von Barbara Moschner</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Literature review</b>	<b>5</b>
<hr/>	
2.1. Conceptual frameworks in personal epistemology	5
2.1.1. Developmental models	5
2.1.2. Epistemological beliefs as moderately independent dimensions	11
2.1.3. Epistemological theories	14
2.1.4. Epistemological resources	16
2.1.5. Implications for learning and instruction	17
2.1.6. Summary	25
2.2. Personal epistemology change	26
2.2.1. Mechanisms of change differ across conceptual frameworks	26
2.2.2. Personal epistemology and conceptual change research	28
2.2.3. The conceptualization of personal epistemology change	35
2.2.4. Implementations for learning and instruction	41
2.2.5. Summary	46
2.3. Children's personal epistemology	47
2.3.1. State of the art personal epistemology research in children	47
2.3.2. Issues of interest	51
2.3.3. Working definition of personal epistemology	54
2.3.4. Research questions.	54
2.3.5. Summary	55
<b>3. Research methodology and design</b>	<b>57</b>
<hr/>	
3.1. Participants	57
3.1.1. Students	58
3.1.2. Teachers (pilot study)	58
3.1.3. Classrooms and schools	58
3.1.4. Sampling procedure	59
3.1.5. Consent and research approval	59
3.2. Materials	60
3.2.1. Interview questions	60
3.2.2. Technology	61
3.2.3. Software	61
3.3. Procedure	62
3.3.1. Warming up procedure	62

3.3.2. Data collection	63
3.4. Data analysis	64
3.4.1. Raw data processing	64
3.4.2. Development of the coding scheme	67
3.4.3. Structure of the coding scheme	67
3.4.4. Coding in Atlas.ti	69
3.4.5. Retrieval of information from Atlas.ti	69
3.4.6. Description of results	70
<b>4. Results</b>	<b>71</b>
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4.1. Verbalizing epistemic beliefs	71
4.2. Definitions of knowledge and knowing	74
4.2.1. Knowledge and knowing as a state of mind	74
4.2.2. Further definitions of knowledge	79
4.2.3. Summary	81
4.3. Domains of knowledge and knowing	82
4.3.1. Distribution of procedural and declarative knowledge across domains/disciplines and sex	82
4.3.2. Domain-specific beliefs across two school subjects: Mathematics and Human Society and Its Environment	89
4.3.3. Summary	92
4.4. Beliefs about the origin of knowledge	93
4.4.1. Seven different beliefs to explain the origin of knowledge	93
4.4.2. Discrete and multiple beliefs about the origin of knowledge	105
4.4.3. Dating back to the origin of knowledge, the people involved, their participation, and motivation	112
4.4.4. The belief that knowledge has changed over time	121
4.4.5. Summary	124
4.5. Beliefs about knowledge acquisition	125
4.5.1. Seven different beliefs to acquire new knowledge (first hand)	125
4.5.2. Comparisons of beliefs about first hand knowledge acquisition and beliefs about second hand knowledge acquisition and the origin of knowledge	132
4.5.3. Summary	137
4.6. Beliefs about knowledge verification	138
4.6.1. Five beliefs about independent knowledge verification	140
4.6.2. Six beliefs about dependent knowledge verification	144
4.6.3. Resource selection criteria	150
4.6.4. Comparisons of beliefs about independent knowledge verification with beliefs about dependent knowledge verification and beliefs about the origin/acquisition of knowledge	154
4.6.5. Summary	157
<b>5. Discussion</b>	<b>159</b>
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5.1. Summary of research results	159
5.2. Interpretation of the results	161
5.2.1. General issues	161

5.2.2. Developmental issues	165
5.2.3. Educational issues	169
5.2.4. Limitations of the study	172
5.3. The Educational Model of Personal Epistemology Enhancement	173
5.3.1. Aim of the model	173
5.3.2. Description of the model	174
5.3.3. Educational implications of the model	181
5.3.4. Summary of the model	183
5.4. Future research	183
5.5. Conclusion	184
<b>6. References</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>7. Appendix A: Interview transcript</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>8. Appendix B: Codes and Paraphrases</b>	<b>215</b>

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