

Table 3.1 Defining Assumption of the Epistemological Paradigms

	Knowledge of Discovery	Knowledge of Interpretation	Knowledge of Criticism
Nature of reality	There is one knowable reality that can be discovered.	There are multiple realities that are socially constructed.	There are multiple realities that are socially constructed.
Role of knower	Reality can be known by any knower.	Reality is interpreted from the standpoint of a knower.	Reality is shaped by the knower's social, political, economic, ethnic, gender, and ability values.
Role of context	The method of knowing is detached and decontextualized.	The method of knowing is subjective and contextual from the participants' perspective.	The method of knowing is subjective and broadly contextual.
Process characteristics	The process of knowing is precise, systematic, and repetitive.	The process of interpretation is creative and value laden.	The process of interpretation is revelatory.
Purpose	The purpose of research is to accurately represent reality.	The purpose of research is to understand how meaning is created.	The purpose of research is to reveal hidden structures and instigate social change.
Goal accomplishment	Accurate representation is accomplished by classifying objects and identifying universal rules or laws.	Understanding meaning is accomplished by describing participants' perspective as contextually situated.	Instigating social change is accomplished by identifying historically and culturally situated hidden structures, especially as they related to oppression.

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