

Question answered: 1

By stating that 'a little learning is a dangerous thing' the author suggests that it is safer to know nothing about something than to know a little. This is because of the misconception that you actually know more than you do.

There are, however, many situations in which a little knowledge is extremely beneficial. A basic knowledge of first aid can save a person's life, even if it is the mere bandaging of a wound. The fact that the individual may not be aware of the need to elevate an injured limb is of negligible importance in comparison to the little knowledge they had of the need to call for an ambulance and to keep the victim calm and reassured.

In other circumstances, an individual who has witnessed a baby being delivered on television, will be better equipped to assist in the emergency delivery of the baby than someone who has not had the same exposure to this 'little knowledge'. They may not be at all as experienced as a midwife but, in emergency situations, it is better to have a little knowledge than none at all.

The matter that determines whether or not learning is dangerous is the way in which the individual uses their knowledge. As long as they do not become too overconfident of what they have learnt, and do not use it to the harm of others, their knowledge is not dangerous. However, if someone viewing a heart transplant on television believes they are now equipped to perform one themselves, then in this case, the 'little learning' has become a danger, particularly if they have no concept of human physiology or surgical procedures. It is essential that knowledge is used cautiously and sensibly and never to the disadvantage of others. In this way, a 'little learning' will not be dangerous.

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