Promoting apt epistemic performance in a complex digital world

Clark A. Chinn
Rutgers University

Educators face new challenges as they try to prepare students for a so-called “post-truth” world. In this world, conflicting information is rampant, misinformation spreads rapidly, and even basic factual claims are contested. Further, many people increasingly doubt formerly trusted sources of knowledge (e.g., the media, science). In this talk, drawing on recent collaborations with Sarit Barzilai and Ravit Golan Duncan, I will present an overview of how educators can effectively respond to these “post-truth” challenges. I will begin with an analysis of apt epistemic performance as the goal of epistemic education—that is, education directed at fostering students’ epistemic growth. This analysis identifies five aspects of apt epistemic performance. Many post-truth challenges can be viewed as involving breakdowns in these five aspects of apt epistemic performance. I will then present a set of design principles to improve education to address these breakdowns. These principles specify new ways to design learning environments that can foster the individual and collective abilities needed to think well in the modern world.