

Does some knowledge belong only to particular communities of knowers?

Object 1: An IB exam discussion thread from Reddit

The screenshot shows a Reddit post from the community r/IBO, posted 28 days ago by the user IB-Exam-Schedule-Bot. The post title is "Exam Discussion: Chemistry HL paper 2" and the description is "The official r/IBO discussion thread for Chemistry HL paper 2". The post has 48 upvotes and 174 comments. The first comment is from user tajemniczymysisprzet, asking for help with a question involving FeSO4 and ammonia. A second comment from Automatic-Ad-634 provides an answer: "I got x= 1 and pH was something with 10". A third comment from iamasianjesus provides another answer: "I got x=1, and yeah I think the pH was 10.6 since pH = 14-3.375".

reddit.com

reddit Use App

r/IBO • 28 days ago
Posted by IB-Exam-Schedule-Bot I am a bot beep bo...

Exam Discussion: Chemistry HL paper 2

The official r/IBO discussion thread for Chemistry HL paper 2

48 174

tajemniczymysisprzet • 28 days ago

In question with FeSO₄ what value of x did you get?
was it one? oh please tell me I got it right.

what pH value did you get in ammonia question??? I think I did it the right way and then crossed it out only to solve it the wrong way.....

18 Reply

Automatic-Ad-634 • 28 days ago

I got x= 1 and pH was something with 10

17 Reply

1 more reply

iamasianjesus M... • 27 days ago

I got x=1, and yeah I think the pH was 10.6 since
pH = 14-3.375

13 Reply

1 more reply

25 more replies

This is a post from the Reddit IB community where IB students discuss their 2022 exams, which in this case is the chemistry HL exam. The knowledge here is the questions that appeared in the exam.

The title of the post shows that it is specifically aiming at students who take chemistry at higher level, which excludes students who do not do chemistry, and also the students who take chemistry at standard level. These students are not able to be involved in this discussion since they do not know what questions were in the exam. The knowledge of the exam does not belong to them until the exam paper is released in the future for practice purposes.

Furthermore, the fact that the post is posted in the IB community indicates that the knowledge only belongs to students who study IB. Those that do not take IB may not even understand what 'HL' means in the title and they would not take the exam. This again highlights the idea that knowledge only belongs to particular communities of knowers, which in this case are the IB chemistry HL students.

However, the knowledge, which are the questions in the exam paper, not only belongs to the students, but also to the examiners who wrote the exam, and those who are going to mark it. In this case, the examiners possess a different aspect of the knowledge: the mark scheme of those questions. This specific aspect of the knowledge is specific to them and not to the students, but the students are able to acquire it when it is released in the future.

The exam is a shared experience by this year's IB chemistry HL students, which makes the knowledge special to them, forming this specific online community. The fact that it is online renders the community to be formed without being constrained by geographical barriers, potentially involving everyone that shared the experience.

Object 2: Author's own photograph



My second object is '冥币', which if directly translated into English will be 'dead money'. The official English name for it is 'Joss paper' or 'Paper money'. It is burnt by Chinese people to the dead. We believe that people will be living in another world when they pass away, and

thus we burn the paper money to give them enough money so they can live happily in the other world.

Firstly, The Mandarin on the paper money indicates that it is particularly used in Chinese culture. The tradition of burning paper money may occur in a number of countries; therefore, the language and the image that appear on the money act as the first barrier of usage since different countries have their own language and beliefs, which may cause differences in how the paper money is designed. This means that this particular form of paper money may belong only to the Chinese community. Different countries may also have different opinions on the reason for burning paper money. Therefore, the reason that I explained above may be specific to Chinese culture.

It is possible for people to learn about the tradition and its purpose through the internet or personal experience. However, to truly appreciate the significance behind it is difficult. People from other cultures may only understand the surface meaning and not form an emotional connection with it. It is more likely that only people from the culture can truly appreciate the tradition and be emotionally connected to the event. This object also shows that some knowledge, which relates to beliefs and traditions, belongs only to particular culture groups. People from other cultures are able to learn the knowledge, but they can probably never fully understand it.

Object 3: Moonlit light - translated by Hawkes, D.

The moon shines in Fuzhou tonight,
In her chamber, she watches alone.
I pity my distant boy and girl-
They don't know why she thinks of Chang'an.
Her cloud-like hair is sweet with mist,
Her jade arms cold in the clear moonlight.
When shall we lean in the empty window,
Together in brightness, and tears dried up?

This is an English translation of the Chinese poem “月夜” (Moonlit light) by Du Fu. The poem was written to express his yearning for reuniting with his family when he was trapped in Chang'an imagining his wife longing for him to return home.

To be able to understand the poem, one will need to have the knowledge about the poet's life and what happened to him at the time that caused him to write this poem, which can all be learnt from multiple sources. However, since the poem was originally written in classical Chinese, the poem may belong only to people who know classical Chinese. Even though people can read the translated version, the message that the poem is trying to convey may be lost due to translation, especially if it is translated at a literal level. When it is translated at a literary level, the meaning may retain, but the beauty and the structure of the poem are

lost. Therefore, only people who are able to read the original version may truly appreciate the poem. In fact, this excludes virtually everyone besides experts studying classical Chinese. As a result, the knowledge belongs to these experts in particular and other people can learn the knowledge through those experts.

The object indicates that knowledge belongs to particular people, which in this case are the experts, or the authorities. The experts possess the propositional knowledge as they can tell others why the poem is well-written or what is its meaning in an analytical way. However, personal knowledge, the emotions, may only be accessed by the poet himself. Though through the poem, Du Fu was able to pass on his personal knowledge, which allows his personal emotions to be shared.

Experts can learn the meaning and connotations of the poem, but whether experts can truly understand the poem, the personal knowledge, may be a question. The object therefore suggests that interpretation of personal knowledge can be subjective, which may mean that non-experts' opinions are as valid as the experts'.

Reference:

1. Reddit.com. 2022. [online] Available at: <https://www.reddit.com/r/IBO/comments/ut9w7q/exam_discussion_chemistry_hi_per_2/> [Accessed 17 June 2022].
2. Du Fu. 2022. Moonlit Night. Chinese-poems.com. [online] Available at: <<http://www.chinese-poems.com/d51.html>> [Accessed 17 June 2022].
3. Object 2: photograph from author's private collection