

TOK EXHIBITION

What is the relationship between personal
experience and knowledge?
(Knowledge and the Knower)





This is a Rubik's cube. It is a puzzle that you have to solve by getting all of the blocks of the same colour onto the same side of the cube. This cube shows that unfamiliarity with something can be a barrier to knowledge because of the lack of personal experience that we have to rely on. In the hands of someone who does not know how to solve this puzzle it puts them in an unfamiliar situation. They don't know the problem and have to go through a process to try to solve it. It requires a lot of logical problem-solving skills to be able to solve it, so the person has to rely on their logic to help them rather than their experience, because they don't have any personal experience of solving the cube.

Some people solve the cube through detailed observation and finding patterns in the puzzle. But others use a set method that has been proven effective by other people. This method is achieved through multiple practices and an understanding of how the cube works, but a lot of that practicing and understanding is done by the other people who develop the method, so the person can skip a lot of that and use the method that has already been developed by other people. It still takes time and some practice to solve the cube even if you know the method. But it makes it a lot easier if you can use the knowledge of other people to help you solve the cube when you haven't got personal experience of doing it yourself.

This cube shows that not having personal experience can be a barrier to knowledge. But it is possible to overcome that barrier by using things like logic and by having other people who do know how to do something share their experience with you to help you.

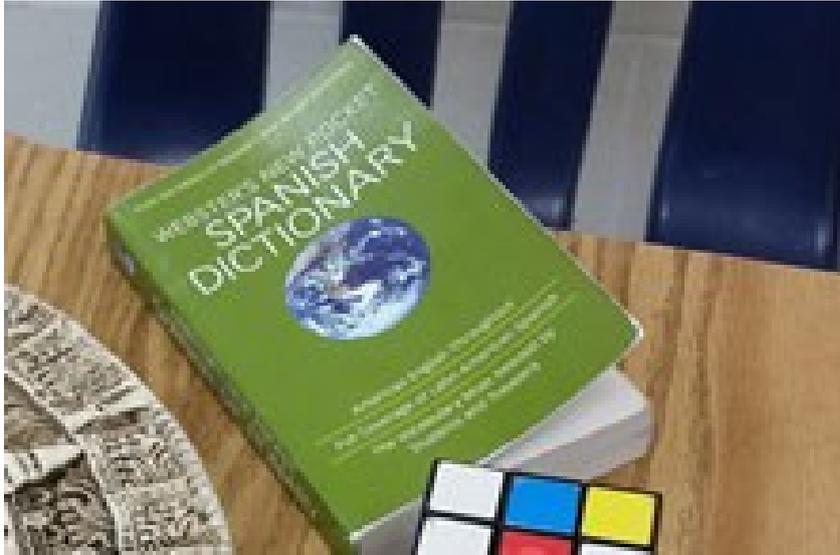


This is a replica of a Mayan tablet. These tablets come from a lost civilization.

This tablet shows that it can be difficult to have knowledge of things that happened in the past because we don't have personal experience of them and we have to rely on other kinds of evidence. In history, historians seek to use primary and secondary sources to try to uncover our past. However, with things like the Mayans we have a very hard time because of the unfamiliarity of the topic and huge gaps in history.

Evidence about the Mayans is difficult to find because a lot of the evidence was destroyed. However some tablets similar to this replica one have been found. For example, in 2015 an original Mayan tablet was discovered in a jungle in Guatemala. This shows that sometimes physical evidence survives that can help us to have knowledge of the past even though we were not there to experience it personally.

But even where physical tablets have survived we don't really know for sure what the Mayan people used these tablets for or what the symbols really mean. This tablet is a replica not an original tablet and it is in my house as a decoration. When I look at this tablet on my wall at home it does not have any spiritual or cultural significance for me because I do not know what the symbols really mean.



This is my Spanish dictionary. It can give me knowledge so that I can understand the Spanish language better.

Even though this dictionary helps me to learn Spanish I don't think that I know Spanish in the same way that a person who is Spanish knows it, because they have personal experience of the language that is impossible for me to have. The experience of learning Spanish for me now is different to a person who has been speaking Spanish from when they are a baby.

Although this dictionary helps me to know the words of the Spanish language, there is more to a language than just the words. Without personal experience of a culture it can be hard to understand these other things that go along with the words of a language. For example, in some languages gestures and body language are really important but this dictionary only provides the words.

Learning Spanish will allow me to talk to people in my life that otherwise I would not be able to talk to. This means that it will allow me to have personal experiences that I could not have otherwise. This shows that personal experiences can give us knowledge but also having new knowledge can help us to have different personal experiences.