Homework 7.1: Reinventing Discovery

(1) Why does collective intelligence fail sometimes?

In the book, we read about the experiment performed by Stasser-Titus.

In this experiment it was shown that groups don't do a good job of taking advantage of their collective information. Groups would rather focus on information that is available to every member or focus on the knowledge of a high-status member of the group rather than a lower status member of the group.

This was shown by having people separated into small groups and have them discuss their political views in a specific matter. However, it is important to note that each individual of the group only received partial information about the candidates. The collective focused the discussion on the points that were common knowledge instead of focusing on the knowledge that was unique to each participant. Showing that the group didn't take advantage of each individuals knowledge.

(2) Why is it particularly suitable for scientific challenges?

Collective intelligence "requires" shared knowledge or shared praxis. Which basically means that if the individuals can't agree on the basis of the question, their collective thinking won't result in the correct answer.

Many fields, like politics, don't have this shared praxis. However, science does have it, so it can take advantage of collective thinking!

This is because the basis of science are agreed upon by most scientists, making these facts the "truth", in the opposite way, if someone makes a wrong statement, this person can in turn be proven wrong.

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