

SHARP: Synthesizing High-quality Aligned Reasoning Problems for Large Reasoning Models Reinforcement Learning

Xiong Jun Wu^{1*} Zhenduo Zhang¹ Zujie Wen¹ Zhiqiang Zhang¹ Wang Ren²
Lei Shi² Cai Chen² Deng Zhao² Dingnan Jin² Qing Cui² Jun Zhou¹

¹ AI Alignment at Ant Group ^{1,2} NextEvo at Ant Group

{xiongjunwu2065}@qq.com, zhangzd18@mails.tsinghua.edu.cn

Abstract

Training large reasoning models (LRMs) with reinforcement learning in STEM domains is hindered by the scarcity of high-quality, diverse, and verifiable problem sets. Existing synthesis methods, such as Chain-of-Thought prompting, often generate oversimplified or uncheckable data, limiting model advancement on complex tasks. To address these challenges, we introduce **SHARP**, a unified approach to Synthesizing High-quality Aligned Reasoning Problems for LRMs reinforcement learning with verifiable rewards (RLVR). **SHARP** encompasses a strategic set of self-alignment principles—targeting graduate- and Olympiad-level difficulty, rigorous logical consistency, and unambiguous, verifiable answers—and a structured three-phase framework (Alignment, Instantiation, Inference) that ensures thematic diversity and fine-grained control over problem generation. We implement **SHARP** by leveraging a state-of-the-art LRM to infer and verify challenging STEM questions, then employ a reinforcement learning loop to refine the model’s reasoning through verifiable reward signals. Experiments on benchmarks such as GPQA demonstrate that **SHARP**-augmented training substantially outperforms existing methods, markedly improving complex reasoning accuracy and pushing LRM performance closer to expert-level proficiency. Our contributions include the **SHARP** strategy, framework design, end-to-end implementation, and experimental evaluation of its effectiveness in elevating LRM reasoning capabilities.

1 Introduction

Large Reasoning Models (LRMs), such as OpenAI-O1, O3/O4 (OpenAI, a,b), Qwen3 (Qwen), and DeepSeek-R1 (DeepSeek-AI, 2025), have demonstrated remarkable capabilities in complex domains like mathematics and coding (Chen et al., 2025). However, mastering complex, multi-step reasoning, especially within STEM domains, remains a significant challenge (Hochlehnert et al., 2025; Rein et al., 2024; Lewkowycz et al., 2022). In these fields, models must not only understand the problem but also perform rigorous logical deductions to arrive at accurate answers. While techniques like Chain-of-Thought (CoT) prompting (Wei et al., 2022) encourage models to produce intermediate reasoning steps, the quality, complexity, and logical soundness of these generated paths can be inconsistent, often limited by the scale and quality of the underlying training data. Generating high-quality reasoning data for STEM is notoriously difficult. It requires domain expertise, careful problem construction to avoid ambiguity, and verifiable solutions (Lightman et al., 2023). Manually creating such datasets is expensive and slow, while existing automated methods may lack the necessary depth,

*Correspondence Author.

diversity, or logical coherence required to train truly advanced reasoning models (DeepSeek-AI, 2025). This scarcity of suitable training data forms a critical bottleneck in advancing LLM reasoning capabilities towards expert-level or even superintelligence performance (Li et al., 2025).

To overcome these limitations and further enhance LRM's performance on complex STEM reasoning tasks, particularly those requiring Graduate or Olympiad-level knowledge and reasoning skills (e.g., GPQA), we introduce a novel **SHARP**(Synthesizing High-quality Aligned Reasoning Problems) approach. Specifically, the main components of **SHARP** approach include:

The SHARP Strategy: The strategy includes a set of self-alignment guiding principles covering problem difficulty (comparable in difficulty to graduate-level coursework or challenging Olympiads), reasoning consistency, answer format, authenticity, language, modality, structure, and output formatting, etc. This strategy focuses not only on alignment principles throughout the reasoning process, but also emphasizes answer verifiability and unambiguity.

The SHARP Framework: The framework comprise **Alignment, Instantiation, and Inference** phases. The **Instantiation** phase includes **Three-Tier Subject Categorization**, a hierarchical system (e.g., Subject → Category → Topic) enabling targeted generation of diverse samples across specific STEM sub-fields.

The SHARP Implementation: We first implement the **SHARP** framework leveraging an open-source state-of-the-art LRM (such as DeepSeek R1 DeepSeek-AI, 2025) itself to synthesize self-aligned generative challenging STEM problems systematically, their step-by-step problem-solving reasoning and reference answers, guided by the **SHARP** strategy. Then we evaluate these samples with general verifiers, such as Math-Verify (HuggingFace), to obtain the final ground truth. By utilizing these synthesized aligned high-quality and challenging samples, we train large reasoning models through reinforcement learning from zero (like DeepSeek R1 Zero (DeepSeek-AI, 2025)) and further enhance the model's reasoning capabilities in complex STEM problem-solving.

Extensive experiments demonstrate that our proposed **SHARP** strategy, particularly when coupled with the **SHARP** framework, through **SHARP Implementation**, can produce large-scale, high-quality samples capable of significantly boosting the complex reasoning performance of LLMs with reinforcement learning, pushing their reasoning capabilities closer to expert-level proficiency in STEM domains. Our main contributions are as follows:

- We propose a novel **SHARP** approach, comprising a set of carefully designed self-aligned core principles for synthesizing aligned generative complex and high-quality STEM reasoning samples.
- We detail the methodology in the **SHARP** framework, including **Alignment, Instantiation, and Inference** phases. The **Instantiation** phase includes a structured data fusion framework incorporating three-tier subject categorization for diverse and targeted sample generation.
- We implement the framework for LRMs with reinforcement learning for enhancing the complex reasoning capabilities of STEM problem-solving.
- Experiments demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed approach in improving model performance on challenging STEM reasoning tasks and benchmarks through comprehensive evaluations.
- The **SHARP** offers a potential pathway to significantly enhance LRM performance on challenging STEM reasoning benchmarks like GPQA (Rein et al., 2024).

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 introduces background concepts. Section 3 details our proposed **SHARP** approach. Section 4 outlines the experimental setup. Section 5 presents experimental results and analysis. Section 6 discusses related work. Finally, Section 7 concludes the paper.

2 Background

LLMs often struggle with problems demanding true logical reasoning. Optimizing LLM reasoning to enable systematic, human-like logical thinking remains a key research direction. Several techniques are proposed to elicit reasoning from LLMs.

Chain-of-Thought (CoT): CoT prompting improves LLM performance on complex tasks by guiding them to generate intermediate reasoning steps (Wei et al., 2022; Li et al., 2024; Yeo et al., 2025). By mimicking human thought processes, CoT breaks down complex problems into smaller, manageable steps, aiding comprehension and solution derivation. Variants include Self-Consistency (Wang et al., 2023a), which samples multiple reasoning paths, and Tree-of-Thoughts (Yao et al., 2023) or Graph-of-Thoughts (Besta et al., 2024), which explore more complex reasoning structures. However, CoT has limitations: it can be highly dependent on precise prompt engineering. Crucially, the final generated answers cannot easily be verified or even are usually not accurate.

Self-Alignment in Large Reasoning Models (LRMs): Self-alignment utilizes an LLM’s own capabilities to refine its behavior or training data (Wang et al., 2024), aiming to reduce reliance on human annotation and improve data quality and diversity through model self-generation, evaluation, or correction (Dong et al., 2025). Samples include LLMs generating responses to unknown questions with explanations of unanswerability or using multi-round bootstrapping for self-improvement (Deng et al., 2024). Self-alignment offers a promising direction for training more powerful and reliable LLMs (Cao et al., 2024).

Reinforcement Learning for LLMs: The LRM’s RL model OpenAI-O1, O3/O4 (OpenAI, a,b), Qwen3 (Qwen), and DeepSeek-R1 (DeepSeek-AI, 2025) involve self-play or self-critique mechanisms where the model learns from rewards generated based on its own outputs, akin to AlphaZero (Silver et al., 2017) but applied to text generation and reasoning.

In addition, several challenging benchmark datasets have been developed to evaluate LLM reasoning capabilities in STEM. GPQA (Graduate-Level Google-Proof Q&A Benchmark) (Rein et al., 2024) is designed by domain experts to be extremely difficult (PhDs achieve $\sim 65\%$ accuracy). Its “Google-proof” nature makes it ideal for assessing deep understanding and reasoning, as answers are hard to find via web search. Performance on this benchmark serves as a crucial proxy for evaluating the effectiveness of our proposed **SHARP** approach.

3 SHARP: Synthesizing High-quality Aligned Reasoning Problems

Our proposed **SHARP** approach aims to systematically generate high-quality, complex STEM reasoning samples by guiding a state-of-the-art LRM (such as DeepSeek R1) instance-alignment reasoning inference through the **SHARP** framework 3.2 governed by the **SHARP** following strategy.

3.1 The SHARP Strategy

The starting point of the entire **SHARP** approach is to apply the **SHARP** strategy, and Fig.1 illustrates the **SHARP** strategy pipeline, including instance-level problem generation and alignment inference phases. This indicates that all subsequent steps, especially the **Instance-Alignment Reasoning Inference** in Fig.1 (described in **Instantiation Phase** 3.2), will strictly follow the self-alignment principles in the **SHARP** strategy.

Compared with conventional Direct QA and Chain-of-Thought (CoT) reasoning, the core objective of the **SHARP** strategy shown in Algo.1 is to ensure that generated samples possess high-quality and challenging samples, and precise reference answers. These synthesized aligned questions are not only of high difficulty and topic diversity, but also strictly follow the high consistency requirements of logic, ground truth, authenticity, language, structure, modality, and format. More importantly, the verified reference answers of these high-quality questions will strictly meet the Ground Truth consistency and complexity expansion requirements, that is, it will be an objectively verifiable single value (or a specified aggregation form) and follow the format specification.

Specifically, we formalize the **SHARP** self-alignment strategy as shown in Algorithm 1.

3.2 The SHARP Framework

Building upon the **SHARP** strategy, we introduce an enhanced **SHARP** data fusion framework specifically designed for synthesizing high-quality reasoning problems in STEM sub-disciplines. The core of this framework is the construction of the “**Seed Topics library**”, which is built on a “Three-Tier Category” knowledge structure. This structure integrates the Magpie query generation approach (Xu et al., 2025b) with advanced semantic clustering and balanced sampling techniques, improving

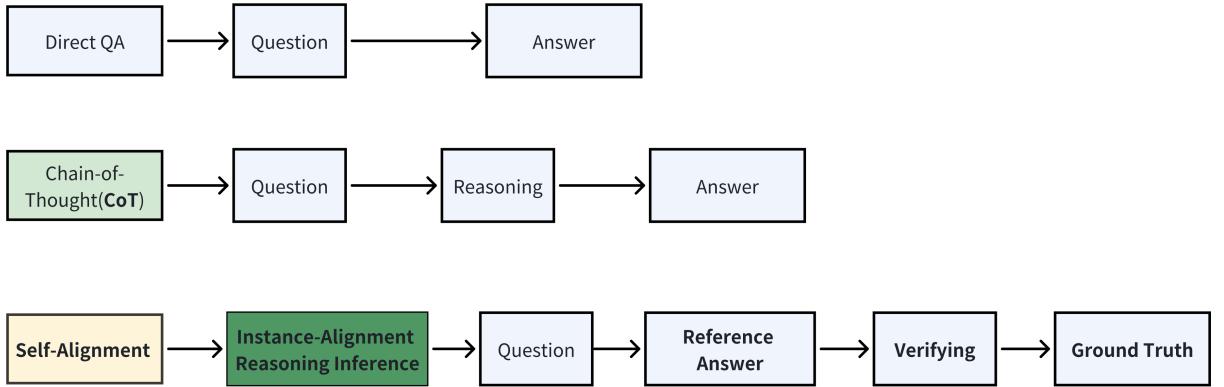


Figure 1: The **SHARP** Approach

Algorithm 1 SHARP Self-Alignment Problem Synthesis Strategy

Require: Seed topic set $S = \{s_1, s_2, \dots, s_N\}$; alignment strategy constraints $\{x_v\}$; base LRM model; reasoning spec R_{spec} ; verifier V

Ensure: Verified aligned question-answer pairs $Q = \{(q_1, a_1), \dots, (q_m, a_m)\}$

- 1: Initialize $Q \leftarrow \emptyset$
- 2: **for** each seed topic $s_i \in S$ **do**
 - 3: **Alignment Phase**
 - 4: Configure alignment constraints: Alignment constraints $\{x_v\}$ (See Appendix A for details.)
 - 5: Construct reasoning blueprint (e.g., step-by-step, propose-verify)
 - 6: **Instantiation Phase**
 - 7: Generate prompt $p_i \leftarrow \text{INSTANTIATEPROMPT}(s_i, \{x_v\}, R_{\text{spec}})$
 - 8: Select reasoning structure using Three-Tier Category hierarchy.
 - 9: **Inference Phase**
 - 10: Query model with p_i to generate (q_i, r_i, a_i) :
 $q_i \leftarrow$ question text, $r_i \leftarrow$ reasoning trace, $a_i \leftarrow$ final answer
 - 11: Format output using SHARP conventions:
 $\langle\text{question start}\rangle q_i \langle\text{question end}\rangle$
reasoning: r_i , final answer: $\boxed{\{\$answer\}}$
 - 12: **Verifying Phase**
 - 13: **if** $V(r_i, a_i)$ passes all alignment checks **then**
 - 14: $Q \leftarrow Q \cup \{(q_i, a_i)\}$
 - 15: **end if**
 - 16: **end for**
 - 17: **return** Q

both the diversity and representativeness of the synthetic reasoning queries. Seed documents are meticulously curated from established benchmark question banks (we will not directly rephrase the query based on the validation set, but only analyze the topic keypoints covered by these benchmarks) and high-quality handcrafted corpora (STEM textbooks, papers, and data recalled through Common Crawl etc.), while cutting-edge LLMs, such as DeepSeek R1 and Qwen3, are employed to facilitate comprehensive topic extraction and “Three-Tier Category” generation, ensuring a broad coverage of critical reasoning domains. The clustering process, utilizing K-means algorithms (MacQueen, 1967) on BGE-m3 embeddings (Chen et al., 2024), in tandem with balanced sampling, addresses potential biases, ensuring uniform representation across a spectrum of reasoning topics.

Moreover, the integration of persona-based methodologies (Ge et al., 2025) and keypoint enhancements introduces a diverse array of reasoning contexts and enables the modulation of query difficulty levels, facilitating the generation of training data that reflects both problem complexity and cognitive challenges. This methodological approach ensures scalable reasoning problem synthesis that aligns

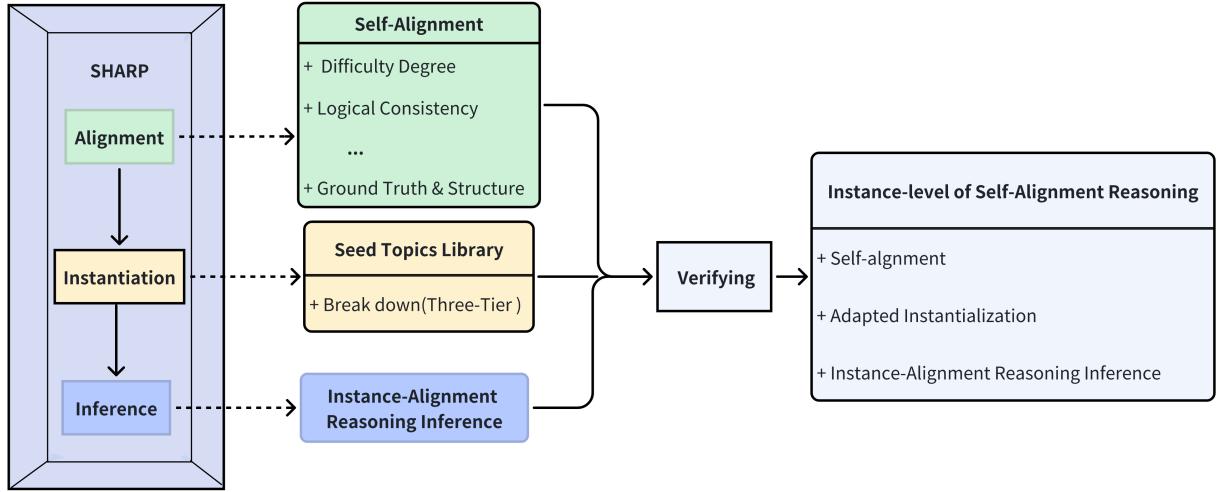


Figure 2: The **SHARP** Framework

closely with the depth and complexity required in STEM-related tasks. The **SHARP** framework, by leveraging sophisticated reasoning capabilities of LLMs like DeepSeek R1, synthesizes logically coherent, complex reasoning problems that are carefully aligned with the nuanced demands of STEM disciplines. The primary objective of this framework is to generate high-quality, diverse training samples that drive the optimization of reinforcement learning (RL) models, especially in the context of high-difficulty STEM benchmarks.

The **SHARP** framework is underpinned by its core modules, prominently featuring the **Self-Alignment** block (depicted in Fig. 2). This block guarantees the adherence to stringent quality standards for the generated content, encompassing aspects such as question difficulty, reasoning consistency, and answer verifiability. It systematically encompasses three fundamental phases: **Alignment**, **Instantiation**, and **Implement**, thereby constructing a comprehensive reasoning alignment pathway from the initial **SHARP** strategy formulation to the generation of specific instances. This structured approach ensures that all internal operations are cohesively aligned with the **SHARP** strategy, ultimately facilitating the synthesis of high-quality, aligned reasoning problems tailored for reinforcement learning in large-scale reasoning models. The three phases of the **SHARP** framework are detailed as follows.

Alignment Phase: This phase initiates the **SHARP** approach, and serves as its implicit input of the overall goal of applying the **SHARP Algo.1** strategy, corresponding to the “**Self-Alignment**” detail box on the right. The specific requirements set in this phase are the key manifestation of the **SHARP Algo.1** strategy in sample generation, and all subsequent steps will align strictly to it. It inherits and strengthens the core advantages of **Self-Alignment**, especially the structural requirements for the reasoning process, ensuring the reasoning consistency and reliability of the generated samples, and helping the training model to form more standardized and reliable reasoning capabilities. We begin this phase by operationalizing the **SHARP** principles into executable constraints, passing specific requirements (e.g., difficulty level, reasoning style, verification method, etc.) to the next phase. Then the **SHARP** plans a systematic reasoning framework or blueprint that meets logical consistency, ensuring that each step of deduction is supported by STEM theory or logic, eliminating jumps and intuitive guesses, and maintaining format requirements (such as the Math-Verify (HuggingFace)). It enforces that reasoning must be planned, orderly, and verifiable, rather than arbitrary heuristic deduction. For example, we set the “Difficulty Degree” to Graduate or Olympiad-level, mandate a “Step-by-Step” reasoning process, and employ a “Propose-verify” mechanism where the model internally proposes and verifies each reasoning step for validity and truthfulness. These standards are consistent with those in the **Verifying** stage.

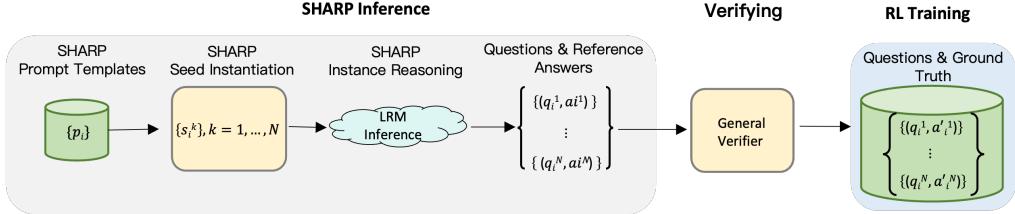


Figure 3: The **SHARP** Implementation for Large Reasoning Models Reinforcement Learning

Instantiation Phase: Building on the **SHARP** Algo.1 strategy of the **Alignment Phase** and a “Three-Tier Category” knowledge framework, a clear “reasoning structure” definition stage for the instantiations is introduced, distinct from the relatively free “Reasoning” step in traditional CoT. This instantiation phase integrates a “Three-Tier Category” knowledge framework to instantiate the strategy to different subjects’ characteristics and structures. The “Three-Tier Category” knowledge framework manages and organizes STEM knowledge hierarchically (e.g., Chemistry → Organic Chemistry, Spectroscopy → Elimination reactions, IR spectroscopy, Carbonyl compounds, Alcohols, Characteristic IR absorption frequencies). A comprehensive and easily expandable “**Seed Topics library**” (orange detail box) is organized in this hierarchy. This ensures the combination of broad thematic coverage and professional depth, enabling targeted generation of complex samples in specific STEM sub-fields. The structured topic information informs the **Verifying** stage for confirming instance topic attribution and generation relevance.

Inference Phase: Under the guidance of the “reasoning structure” defined in the **Instantiation Phase**, an instantiated aligned reasoning inference process generating a specific STEM sample that meets the **SHARP** strategy is performed. This involves leveraging the capabilities of the state-of-the-art LRM model (such as DeepSeek R1) to generate aligned reasoning instances. Then these aligned reasoning instances are submitted to the next **Verifying** stage.

The **Verifying** stage is mainly responsible for quality control, strictly verifying whether the adapted instance fully complies with the **Self-Alignment** detail box, and whether it is consistent with the three-level category theme of **All Seed Topics** it claims, to ensure that the final output sample meets the preset high standards detailed in **SHARP** strategy. The final output of the entire process - high-quality samples are generated that can elicit complex reasoning for LRMs RL training.

Building upon **SHARP** Algo.1, **SHARP** framework 2 introduces innovative “instance-level” reasoning, where each sample constitutes a complete and self-consistent reasoning structure. This is achieved through a refined three-level subject classification adaptation mechanism, a robust inference and verification process. These meticulously refined samples are invaluable for the model, enabling it to learn fine-grained knowledge and complex reasoning patterns. By systematically generating STEM samples with ultra-high complexity at the sample level, this comprehensive approach provides unique value and significant potential for enhancing the complex reasoning capabilities of LRMs, particularly in improving top STEM reasoning benchmarks, such as GPQA.

3.3 The SHARP Implementation

Based on the **SHARP** strategy and framework, we implement the **SHARP** approach with a state-of-the-art LRM model (like DeepSeek R1) and generate complex reasoning samples at the sample level, shown in Fig. 2. Then these synthesized high-quality self-aligned samples are used to enhance the complex reasoning ability of the RL Zero model training (inspired by RL Zero (OpenAI, a; DeepSeek-AI, 2025; OpenAI, b)). The system mainly consists of three core stages: **SHARP Inference**, **Verifying** and **RL Zero Training** and are detailed as follows.

SHARP Inference:

1. **SHARP Prompt Templates** ($\{p_i\}$): As the starting point of the process, initial aligned question prompt templates that meet the **SHARP** strategy (such as high difficulty, plain text, single question, factual accuracy, etc.) are constructed.

2. **SHARP Seed Instantiation** ($\{s_i^k\}$, $k = 1, \dots, N$, here N is the total number of topics): Extract an aligned prompt x_i from the **SHARP** prompt templates, and map the input general prompt x_i with the specific STEM knowledge points or topic “seeds” $\{s_i^k\}$ based on the “**Seed Topics Library**” according to “Three-Tier Category” knowledge framework in the **SHARP** framework. This provides context for the subsequent generation of domain-specific and depth-specific reasoning, and the output is the prompt x_i and its associated instance with adapted specific topic $\{s_i^k\}$ from **Seed Topics Library** in the “**Instantiation Phase**”.
3. **Questions and Reference Answers** ($\{(q_i^k, a_i^k)\}$, $k = 1, \dots, m\}$): Use the current best version of the reasoning model (e.g., DeepSeek R1) to generate candidate reasoning responses for the prompts and topic contexts, including high-quality questions $\{q_i^k\}$, its **SHARP** reasoning processes, and corresponding candidate reference answers ($\{a_i^k\}\)$).

Verifying: Verification is performed according to the **SHARP** strategy and a scoring rubric combining model self-check confidence and a rule-based reward model for the generated question and answer pairs ($\{(q_i^k, a_i^k)\}$). The purpose is to further screen out data with poor quality, logical errors, unreliable reward signals, or data that does not meet the final requirements, and ensure that only the highest quality and most reliable samples enter the LRM RL training stage.

RL Training: Using the high-quality and verified samples created by the **SHARP Inference** and **Verifying**, RL Zero training is carried out based on an RL algorithm (e.g., PPO (Schulman et al., 2017), or GRPO (Shao et al., 2024)).

The unique value of **SHARP** inference system lies in its focus on quality and complexity, adaptive sample generation of higher quality and more complex reasoning samples, and thereby can train a more powerful LRM model through RL zero and push the upper limit of the model’s reasoning capabilities in STEM fields dimensions.

4 Experimental Setup

Our experimental setup was meticulously designed to rigorously evaluate the **SHARP** approach. The Training Data consisted of two primary sets: a baseline dataset generated using standard CoT prompting on existing STEM samples and a substantial dataset of 190,000 samples generated via the **SHARP** methodology. Our comparison models included distinct sets for distillation training and RL zero training. For distill training, the **Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill** model served as a baseline, representing capable LRMs without specific STEM reasoning dataset training. This was compared against state-of-the-art **DeepSeek-R1-Distill-Qwen-7B** (DeepSeek-AI, 2025) and **SHARP-Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill** (Qwen et al., 2025), where the latter was the baseline model further distilled on **SHARP**-generated and verified samples. In the RL Zero Training comparison, **Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B** (Hu et al., 2025) was the baseline, evaluated against **SHARP-Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B**, which was trained using **SHARP**-generated problems through an RL Zero process. The training details for distillation involved standard procedures on the respective datasets. For **SHARP**-RL Zero training, we employed the GRPO algorithm, with a rule-based reward function, alongside specified hyperparameters and computational resources detailed in the appendix. Finally, evaluation metrics centered on model performance on the challenging GPQA STEM reasoning benchmark, using accuracy metrics like pass@k to compare models trained with and without **SHARP**-generated samples, thereby demonstrating the efficacy of our approach.

5 Experiments: Results and Analysis

Building upon the described experimental setup, our evaluations demonstrate the significant advantages of the **SHARP** methodology in enhancing large reasoning models. The experiments were conducted in two primary modes: high-quality complex reasoning knowledge distillation with supervised fine-tuning, and the utilization of challenging **SHARP**-generated samples to elicit complex reasoning capabilities in LRMs.

The results, presented in Table 1 and 2, are compelling. Approximately 190,000 STEM samples were constructed using the **SHARP** approach. In the distillation experiments (Table 1), the **SHARP-Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill** model, trained on **SHARP** data, achieved a GPQA Diamond score of 54.7. This represents an 8.3 percentage point improvement over the **Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill**

baseline (46.4) and a 4.8 percentage point increase over the **DeepSeek-R1-Distill-Qwen-7B model** (49.9). This notable outperformance, even without RL refinement, underscores the superior quality of data generated by the structured **SHARP** approach. The **SHARP**-trained model also showed consistent improvements across GPQA Physics (71.1 vs. 60.6 baseline), Chemistry (38.8 vs. 31.3 baseline), and Biology (57.9 vs. 55.9 baseline).

Models	GPQA Physics	GPQA Chemistry	GPQA Biology	GPQA Diamond
Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill (Baseline)	60.6	31.3	55.9	46.4
DeepSeek-R1-Distill-Qwen-7B	70.1	31.9	43.4	49.9
SHARP-Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill	71.1	38.8	57.9	54.7

Table 1: Performance on GPQA benchmark (Diamond subset: most difficult tier), comparing distilled models trained with and without **SHARP**-synthesized data.

Models	GPQA Physics	GPQA Chemistry	GPQA Biology	GPQA Diamond
Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B (Baseline)	41.4	27.4	48.7	35.5
SHARP-Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B	44.6	26.3	54.9	37.0

Table 2: Performance on GPQA benchmark (Diamond subset: most difficult tier), comparing RL Zero models trained with and without **SHARP**-synthesized data.

In the RL-Zero reasoning training experiments (Table 2), the **SHARP-Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B** model, leveraging SHARP-generated STEM problems, achieved a GPQA Diamond score of 37.0, marking a 1.5 percentage point improvement over the **Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B** baseline (35.5). This outcome offers initial validation for the efficacy of **SHARP**-synthesized data in supporting RL-Zero reasoning training. Notably, performance enhancements were recorded in GPQA Physics (44.6 vs. 41.4 baseline) and GPQA Biology (54.9 vs. 48.7 baseline). Conversely, GPQA Chemistry exhibited a marginal decrease (26.3 vs. 27.4 baseline). We attribute this to the inherently high dependence of chemistry problems on deep, structured domain knowledge and nuanced symbolic reasoning, which may not be as effectively acquired through unsupervised RL Zero methods without pre-distilled domain-specific priors, , as detailed in Appendix C.2. Detailed analyses of these discrepancies, including sample difficulty metrics (e.g., response length and reward signal distribution), are provided in Appendix B.2.

To further substantiate these findings and provide a more granular understanding, Appendix B includes comparative evaluations of **SHARP**-based distillation and ablation studies across STEM fields and mathematical data. Specifically, we present controlled experiments analyzing the performance impact of different **SHARP**-generated sub-corpora—physics, chemistry, biology—on both distillation and RL Zero models. Representative subject-level ablation examples further demonstrate how **SHARP**’s three-tier taxonomy enables precise control over difficulty and topic diversity. Additionally, Appendix C systematically evaluates the 190,000 **SHARP**-generated samples, showcasing balanced distributions across 600+ granular STEM subcategories and pass rate analyses that correlate with human expert assessments. Together, these results confirm that **SHARP**’s aligned and structured synthesis framework successfully generates high-difficulty, verifiable problems—spanning quantum mechanics to organic reaction mechanisms—that directly enhance LRM’s capacity for expert-level scientific reasoning.

Collectively, these findings highlight the **SHARP** approach’s effectiveness in generating high-quality, complex training samples. The consistent performance gains observed across different models and evaluation subjects, particularly on the demanding GPQA-Diamond set, demonstrate that **SHARP** significantly enhances the capability of LRMs to tackle complex STEM reasoning tasks, pushing their performance closer to expert-level proficiency.

6 Related Work

LLM Reasoning Enhancement: As discussed in Section 2, numerous efforts focus on improving LLM reasoning via prompting (CoT, ToT, GoT) (Wei et al., 2022; Yao et al., 2023; Besta et al., 2024) or specialized fine-tuning (Trung et al., 2024; Lobo et al., 2025). However, scaling up verifiable

signals for long CoT remains challenging due to the limited availability of high-quality, verifiable samples (Yeo et al., 2025). Unlike **CoT**, **SHARP** focuses on generating high-quality samples, ensures answer verifiability, and removes prompt engineering reliance via structured self-alignment.

Synthetic Data for LLM Reasoning: Synthesizing data plays a crucial role in training large language models (LLMs) to enhance their reasoning abilities. Approaches like Self-Instruct and Alpaca (Wang et al., 2023b) have pioneered the use of generated instructional data to align LLM behaviors with desired outcomes. (Shao et al., 2023) introduced a method where a limited set of handcrafted samples prompts the model to autonomously create additional data, selectively incorporating high-quality demonstrations to bolster reasoning performance. Nemotron-CrossThink (Akter et al., 2025) leverages cross-thought reasoning to enable self-improvement within mathematical domains, while Qwen2.5-Math and Qwen2.5-Coder (Yang et al., 2024; Hui et al., 2024) focus on generating domain-specific data for mathematical problem-solving and coding tasks, respectively. Phi-4-Reasoning (Xu et al., 2025a; Abdin et al., 2025) demonstrates the effectiveness of compact architectures in handling complex reasoning tasks. (Goldie et al., 2025) introduced SWiRL for multi-step reward shaping; such signal shaping is partially mirrored in our SHARP RL reward design. Together, these studies highlight the significance of sophisticated data synthesis strategies in improving LLM reasoning capabilities. Unlike these approaches, **SHARP** specifically targets the synthesis of challenging STEM problems by enforcing a unique combination of explicit self-alignment principles for reasoning consistency, thematic diversity, and strict answer verifiability, aiming to overcome the limitations in generating consistently complex and reliable reasoning samples.

Self-Alignment: Self-alignment has emerged as a training paradigm reducing reliance on external supervision. Research (Liang et al., 2024) proposes the SelfFeedback framework for Internal Consistency Mining, exploring whether Self-Feedback truly works. Our work relates to these but specifically focuses on designing a self-alignment strategy to generate high-quality STEM reasoning samples for enhancing LLMs’ complex scientific problem-solving capabilities. Unlike general alignment, our focus is especially on improving the quality and complexity of the reasoning sample itself.

Our **SHARP** approach distinguishes itself through its combination of explicit, multi-faceted principles for STEM reasoning, a structured self-alignment framework, integrating with the LRM inference to bootstrap the generation of complex, reliable reasoning samples at scale.

7 Conclusion, Limitations and Future Work

We presented a novel **SHARP** approach to address the critical need for high-quality, complex, and verifiable training problems for enhancing the reasoning capabilities of LLMs, particularly in STEM domains. By employing **SHARP** inference and **Verifying** process, our approach systematically guides LRMs to generate challenging problems and logically sound, verifiable solutions efficiently and at scale, addressing the limitations of traditional CoT methods in producing difficult, diverse, and logically rigorous STEM reasoning samples. We presented the **SHARP** inference integrating with **Verifying** process, enabling iterative RL foundation model training and performance enhancement on complex reasoning tasks. Experimental results demonstrate significant performance gains on challenging STEM benchmark GPQA compared to baselines trained on CoT data and public STEM datasets, as well as substantial improvement over the state-of-the-art baseline model. For instance, SHARP-augmented distillation training resulted in an 8.3 percentage point improvement on the GPQA Diamond benchmark over the baseline. This validates the effectiveness of our proposed approach in enhancing the ability of large reasoning models to tackle complex STEM problems.

Future work could explore applying this approach to other domains and more complex reasoning tasks, and further optimizing the **SHARP** approach on various larger-scale RL reasoning foundation models. Besides, designing a reward function that weights principles from the **SHARP** strategy will be carried out. And distinctions among different subjects, such as chemistry and biology, have different subject attributes from physics and mathematics, which may involve the further improvement of logic, knowledge graph, and symbolic reasoning capabilities.

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A SHARP Self-Alignment Strategy Constraints

SHARP Self-Alignment Strategy Constraints Details

Problem Difficulty & Thematic Diversity Alignment: Generate highly complex problems (Graduate or Olympiad-level) covering a wide range of STEM topics, covering Superintelligent AI themes. Difficulty is benchmarked against top exams and datasets (GPQA, etc.). Thematic coverage uses role-playing prompts template and a three-tier subject-category-topic framework.

Logical Consistency Alignment: Problem-solving must rely solely on rigorous reasoning or systematic derivation, avoiding pattern matching, heuristics, shortcuts, or fabrication. All intermediate steps require justification, preventing logical gaps or errors due to intuition.

Ground Truth & Structure Alignment: Answers must be single, verifiable numerical values (plain numbers, units, ratios, STEM formulas/equations). Avoid hard-to-verify formats (set operations, free text). For multi-solution problems, mandate a specific aggregation (e.g., sum or sum of squares, etc.) for a unique, objectively verifiable answer. Expand beyond single QA to include multi-solution problems (requiring summary values) (e.g., “calculate total moles of all possible products”).

Problem Authenticity Alignment: Problems should be novel, based on authoritative knowledge, but not directly copied. They must be unambiguous, unbiased, accurate, and internally consistent, avoiding nonsensical or hallucinated scenarios.

Language Consistency Alignment: The entire generation process (problem statement, reasoning method, solution presentation) must use a single language (e.g., English or Chinese) to prevent multilingual confusion leading to reasoning errors or bad verification cases.

Problem Structure Consistency Alignment: Problems must contain only a single primary question, avoiding sub-questions, derivatives, or branching logic that leads to unverifiable cases.

Modality Consistency Alignment: Problems must be strictly text-based, describing any necessary complex structures (e.g., chemical molecules, genetic diagrams) textually.

Formatting Alignment: Use specific delimiters (e.g., `<question_start>`, `<question_end>`) for the problem statement and a standardized format (e.g., `\boxed{{\$answer}}`) for the final answer.

B Distilling and RL Zero Model Reasoning Training Performance Analysis

B.1 Distilling Training Model Performance Analysis

The following Figure 4 is a comparison of the reasoning model trained with **Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill (Baseline)** combined with **SHARP** problems and the relatively strong DeepSeek distillation benchmark model **DeepSeek-R1-Distill-Qwen-7B** in physics (Physics), chemistry (Chemistry), biology (Biology) STEM subjects, and GPQA scores. As shown in Table 1 and Figure 4, after we added **SHARP** problems to the **Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill (Baseline)** for distillation, the GPQA of the DeepSeek distillation version model **DeepSeek-R1-Distill-Qwen-7B** increased by 4.8pt, and the **Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill (Baseline)** without STEM increased by 8.3pt. In addition, the physics, chemistry, and biology subjects all had positive improvements, and the chemistry and biology subjects compared with the DeepSeek chemistry subject improved significantly, indicating the effectiveness of our designed **SHARP** self-alignment strategy and reasoning training model, reflecting the improvement of the model in general knowledge and reasoning ability.

Also, model trained with **SHARP** problems only are significantly better than mathematical only distillation problems in improving the ability of physics, chemistry, and biology, as shown in 5 and 6, and thus significantly better than mathematical only distillation problems in the overall GPQA benchmark. In addition, according to the experimental results in Table 1 and Figure 4,

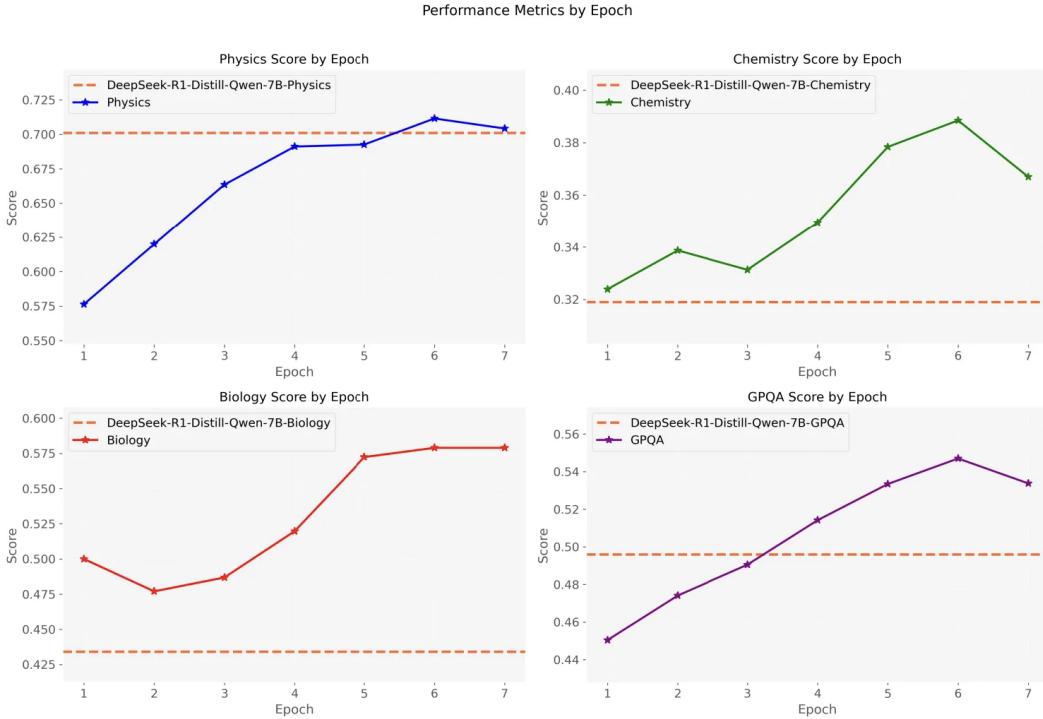


Figure 4: **SHARP-Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill** performance in overall ablation of STEM data generated by the **SHARP** approach and fused with some open-source mathematical data.

SHARP problems can further improve the effect of mathematical distillation data. The overall GPQA benchmark has been improved by 0.464->0.547 (+8.3pt).

B.2 RL Zero Training Model Performance Analysis

As shown in Table 2 and Figure 7, after we added **SHARP** problems as the main training data (about 73%) for RL Zero enhanced reasoning training in **SHARP-Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B**, it has exceeded the pure mathematics RL Zero mathematical reasoning model **Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B (Baseline)** by about 4.22%, and the single subjects of physics and biology have exceeded the **Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B (Baseline)** model, and the chemistry subject is basically the same, which shows that the **SHARP** self-alignment strategy and inference training system implemented have improved the pure complex reasoning ability of the model. Especially for chemistry, we compare two key metrics for evaluation RL Zero training model: the response length (which usually is used to indicate the complexity of the problems) and reward value (whose values are usually used to indicate the difficulty degree of the problems) in three different problems datasets, 1) problems synthesized through traditional COT, problems augmented synthesized referencing to real challenging chemistry exercises and problems synthesized **SHARP** approach.

Through the experimental comparison of each stage, the difficulty of the sample questions generated by our **SHARP** approach has significantly increased the response length for the correct answer, and the distribution of rewards has shown a significant downward trend. Combined with the gradual and significant improvement of the experimental evaluation indicators, it demonstrates the effectiveness of the **SHARP** approach in improving the complex reasoning ability of the model, and also indicates that increasing the model's own complex problems to obtain the groundtruth can further significantly increase the effect of the model.

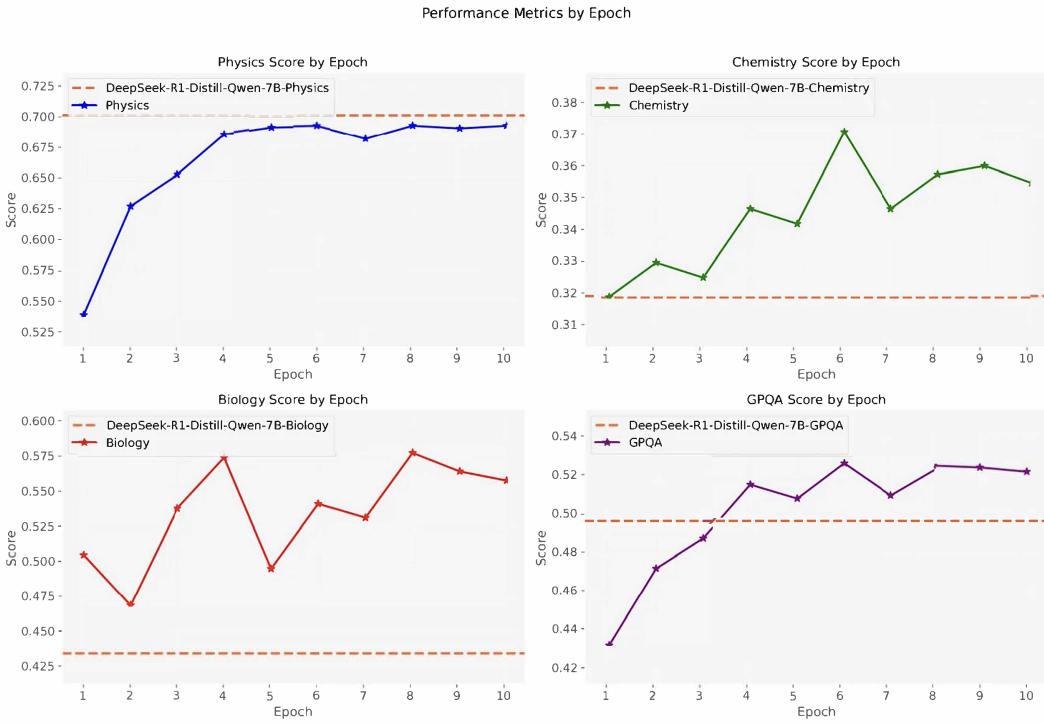


Figure 5: **SHARP-Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill** performance in ablation of STEM data generated by the **SHARP** approach.

C STEM Challenging Problem Datasets Analysis

We have carefully analyzed the 190,000 STEM problems generated by the **SHARP** approach. The overall subjects distribution of physics, chemistry, and biology is shown in Figure 8. And following are the analyses of the distribution of physics, chemistry, and biology generated by the **SHARP** approach.

C.1 Key Knowledge Point Distribution

Through statistical analysis of the distribution of labels and knowledge points, we found that the GPQA benchmark is unevenly distributed, relevant key points distributions shown as in Figure 9, 11, 13 and basic knowledge points shown in Figure 10, 12, 14. Therefore, in the SHARP data synthesis method, we sampled according to the distribution of disciplines and the corresponding knowledge points to ensure that the synthetic data fully covers the relevant knowledge points of GPQA in terms of distribution.

C.2 Category Distribution Analysis

Physical Category Distribution Analysis The category distribution of the synthetic dataset is presented in the following figure 15. As observed, the data adheres to a scientifically structured three-level taxonomy. The first-level category "Theoretical Physics", "Mechanics", and "Electromagnetism" are the top three categories, encompassing critical second-level disciplines such as Quantum mechanics, Fundamental mechanics, and Electrodynamics. These branches further decompose into highly specialized third-level categories like Theoretical Mechanics, Wave Functions and Schrodinger Equations, Electrostatic Fields, Laws of Thermodynamics—domains particularly effective for evaluating models' reasoning and computational capabilities. Notably, the dataset maintains substantial diversity despite this concentration, boasting over 200 distinct third-level categories. This compreh

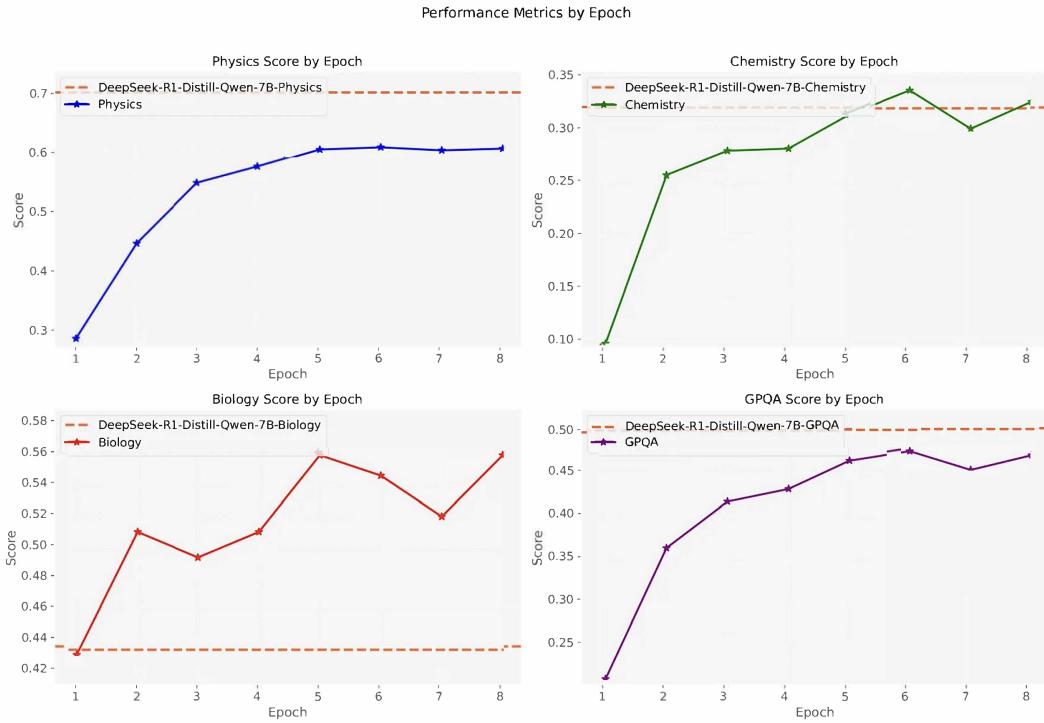


Figure 6: **SHARP-Qwen2.5-7B-Instruct-Distill** performance in ablation of some open-source mathematical data.

hensive coverage across diverse physics domains ensures robust training signals, enabling models to develop balanced proficiency in both dominant and niche scientific reasoning tasks.

Biology Category Distribution Analysis The category distribution of the synthetic dataset is presented in the following figure 16. As observed, the data adheres to a scientifically structured three-level taxonomy. The first-level category "Fundamental Biology" dominates with over half of the samples, encompassing critical second-level disciplines such as molecular biology, genetics, and cell biology. These branches further decompose into highly specialized third-level categories like molecular genetics, gene expression, and DNA repair mechanisms—domains particularly effective for evaluating models' reasoning and computational capabilities. Notably, the dataset maintains substantial diversity despite this concentration, boasting over 100 distinct third-level categories. This comprehensive coverage across diverse biological domains ensures robust training signals, enabling models to develop balanced proficiency in both dominant and niche scientific reasoning tasks.

Chemistry Category Distribution Analysis The analysis of category distribution within the synthetic chemistry dataset is illustrated in the accompanying figure 17. A careful examination reveals that the data adheres to a rigorously structured three-tier category. At the first level, the category of "Organic Chemistry" is predominant, representing more than 75% of the total samples. This primary category encompasses significant second-level disciplines, including unsaturated hydrocarbons, pericyclic reactions, and the methodologies for characterizing organic compounds. These second-level classifications are further delineated into specialized third-level categories, such as olefins, electrocyclic reactions, and H-NMR nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, which are particularly effective in assessing the reasoning and computational capabilities of the models employed. Importantly, notwithstanding the dominance of "Organic Chemistry," the dataset exhibits a commendable level of diversity, with over 300 distinct third-level categories represented. This extensive range of coverage across various domains of chemistry fosters robust training signals, thereby facilitating the development of models that exhibit balanced proficiency in both mainstream and niche scientific reasoning tasks.

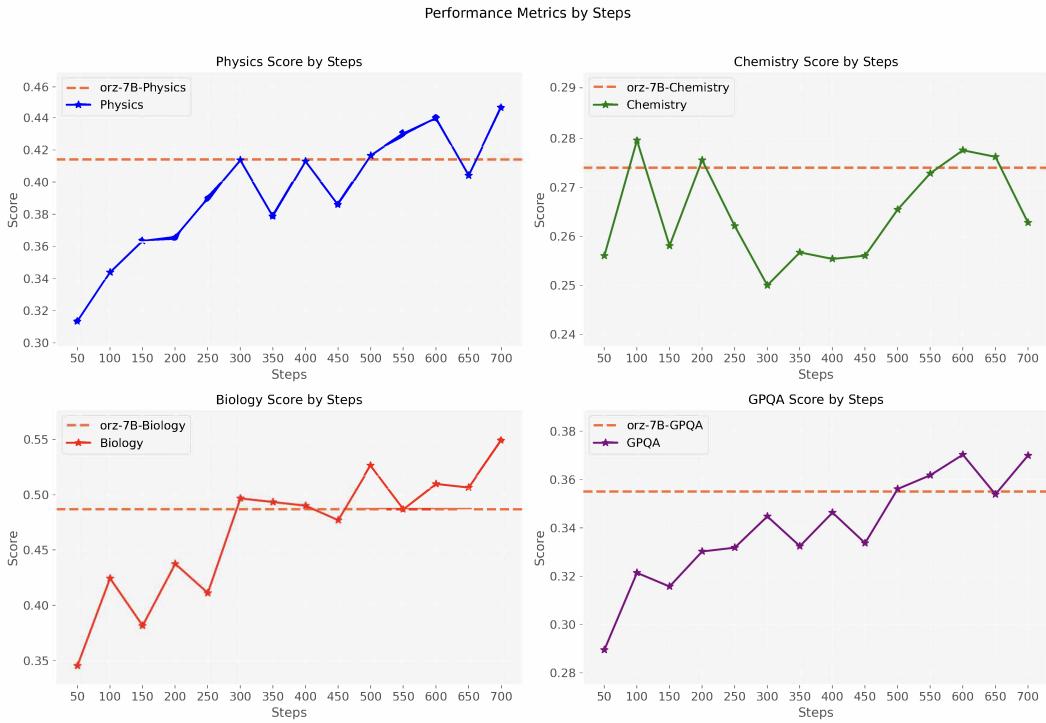


Figure 7: **SHARP-Open-Reasoner-Zero-7B** performance in ablation of STEM data generated by the **SHARP** approach.

C.3 Problem Datasets Difficulty Degree Analysis

Biology Pass Rate Distribution Comparison The figure below 18 illustrates the pass rate distributions of three datasets: the open-source dataset, the traditional CoT synthetic dataset, and our SHARP synthetic dataset. The pass rate is defined as the percentage of correct answers generated by the Qwen2.5-32B-Instruct model over five attempts, where a lower pass rate indicates a higher difficulty level of the question. As shown in the figure, the difficulty distribution of the SHARP synthetic dataset closely aligns with that of the real-world open-source dataset, making it a viable extension for enhancing the diversity and representativeness of real data. In contrast, the traditional CoT synthetic dataset exhibits an imbalanced difficulty distribution, with a skewed concentration of either very easy or very challenging questions. Furthermore, the SHARP dataset demonstrates a well-distributed pass rate across intermediate difficulty levels, providing a multi-level difficulty spectrum for model training. This balanced distribution enables hierarchical enhancement of the model’s reasoning capabilities, ensuring progressive learning and robust performance across tasks of varying complexity.

Physics Pass Rate Comparison on the SHARP Dataset The figure below 19 illustrates the pass rate distributions of two models on the **SHARP** dataset: Qwen2.5-32B-Instruct (based on ten independent responses) and QwQ-32B (?) (based on five responses). As shown, the QwQ-32B model, which exhibits stronger reasoning capabilities, achieves a significantly higher overall pass rate compared to the Qwen2.5-32B-Instruct model. This is evidenced by a notable reduction in the proportion of questions with a pass rate of 0 and a corresponding increase in the proportion of questions with a pass rate of 1. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of the **SHARP** dataset in distinguishing the reasoning capabilities of models. By clearly differentiating between models of varying strengths, the SHARP dataset serves as a robust benchmark for evaluating and advancing the performance of reasoning models in complex tasks.

Biology Pass Rate Comparison on the SHARP Dataset The figure below 20 illustrates the pass rate distributions of two models on the SHARP dataset: Qwen2.5-32B-Instruct (based on five independent

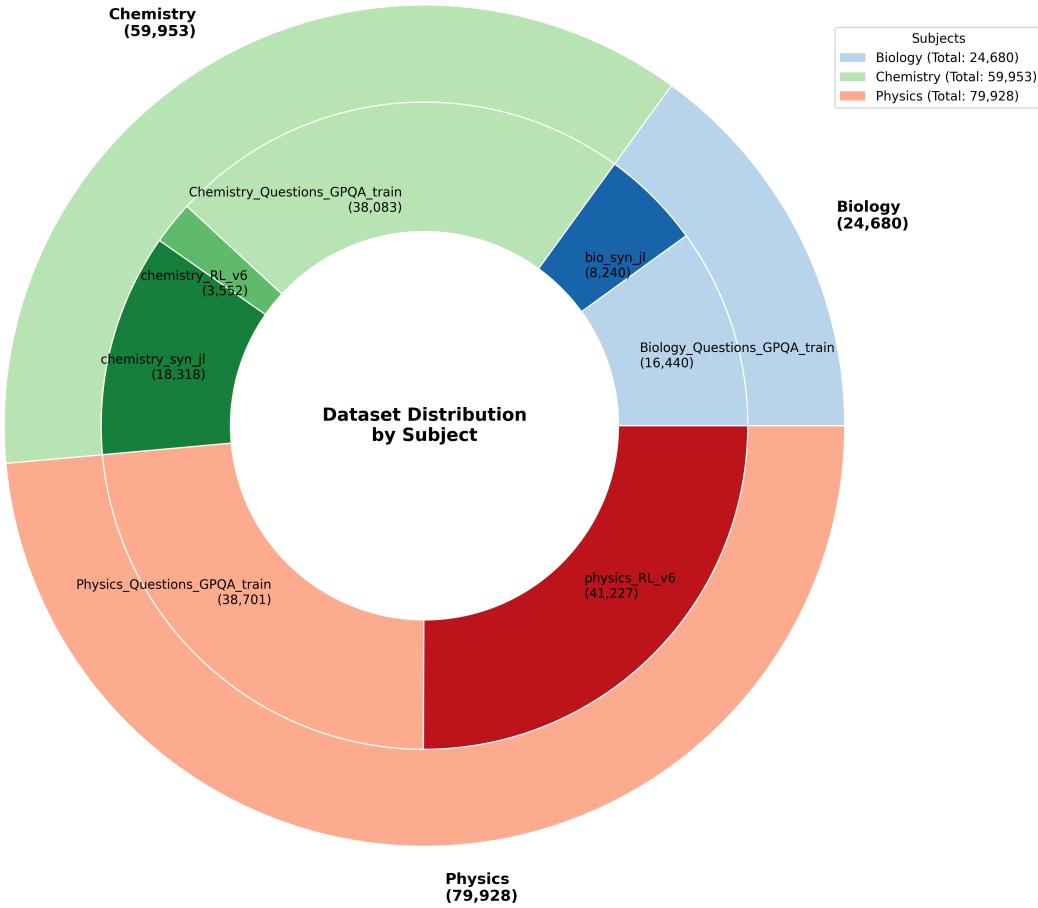


Figure 8: The overall subjects distribution of STEM problems generated by the **SHARP** approach.

responses) and QwQ-32B (based on a single response). As shown, the QwQ-32B model, which exhibits stronger reasoning capabilities, achieves a significantly higher overall pass rate compared to the Qwen2.5-32B-Instruct model. This is evidenced by a notable reduction in the proportion of questions with a pass rate of 0 and a corresponding increase in the proportion of questions with a pass rate of 1. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of the SHARP dataset in distinguishing the reasoning capabilities of models. By clearly differentiating between models of varying strengths, the SHARP dataset serves as a robust benchmark for evaluating and advancing the performance of reasoning models in complex tasks.

Comparative Analysis of Pass Rates Chemistry on the SHARP Dataset The following figure 21 presents a comparative analysis of the pass rate distributions for two distinct models evaluated on the SHARP dataset: Owen2.5-32B-Instruct, which is based on ten independent responses, and QwQ-32B, which relies on five singular responses. The data indicates that the QwQ-32B model, characterized by superior reasoning capabilities, achieves a markedly higher overall pass rate in comparison to the Qwen2.5-32B-Instruct model. This is evidenced by a significant decrease in the proportion of questions that registered a pass rate of 0, alongside a corresponding increase in the proportion of questions attaining a pass rate of 1. These findings underscore the efficacy of the SHARP dataset in differentiating between the reasoning capabilities of various models. By effectively distinguishing between models with disparate strengths, the SHARP dataset serves as a robust benchmark for the evaluation and enhancement of reasoning models engaged in complex task performance.

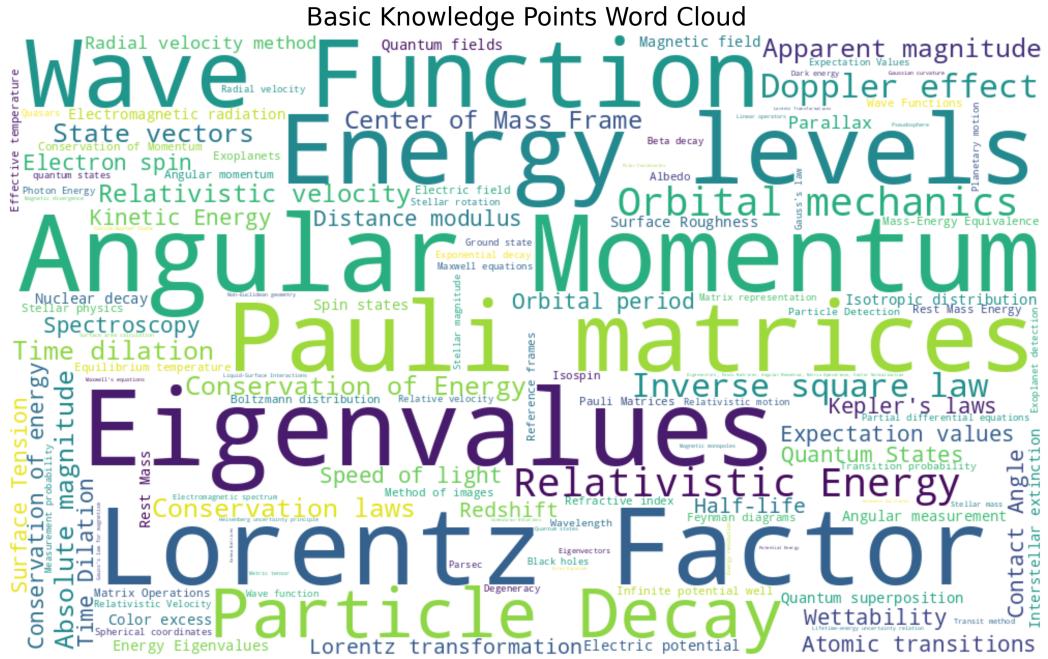


Figure 9: The physics subject distribution of basic knowledge points word cloud of GPQA benchmark.

NeurIPS Paper Checklist

1. Claims

Question: Do the main claims made in the abstract and introduction accurately reflect the paper's contributions and scope?

Answer: [Yes]

Justification: The abstract states that this paper introduces **SHARP**, a unified approach for synthesizing high-quality reasoning problems for LMRs reinforcement learning with verifiable rewards (RLVR). It claims **SHARP** encompasses self-alignment principles and a three-phase framework. The abstract also claims experiments demonstrate **SHARP**-augmented training substantially outperforms existing methods. The introduction reiterates these points, highlighting **SHARP**'s aim to overcome limitations in generating complex STEM reasoning problems and its main components: the **SHARP** strategy, framework, and implementation. These claims appear to be consistent with the detailed descriptions of the **SHARP** strategy, framework, implementation, and experimental results presented.

Guidelines:

- The answer NA means that the abstract and introduction do not include the claims made in the paper.
 - The abstract and/or introduction should clearly state the claims made, including the contributions made in the paper and important assumptions and limitations. A No or NA answer to this question will not be perceived well by the reviewers.
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2. Limitations

Question: Does the paper discuss the limitations of the work performed by the authors?

Answer: [Yes]

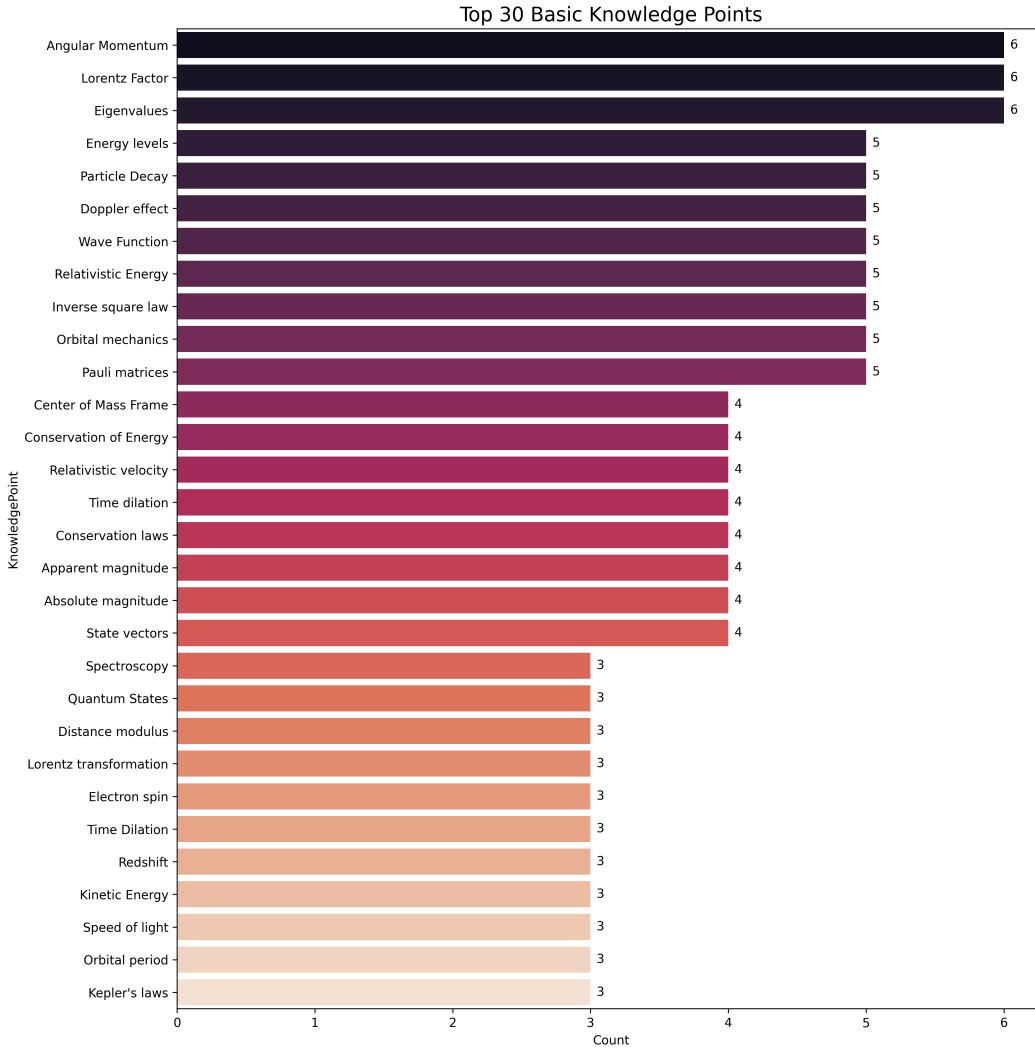


Figure 10: The top 30 basic knowledge points of the physics subject of the GPQA benchmark.

Justification: The paper identifies several limitations in the end. Future work could explore applying this approach to other domains and more complex reasoning tasks, and further optimizing the **SHARP** approach on various larger-scale RL reasoning foundation models, designing a reward function that weights principles from the **SHARP** strategy and diving into the distinctions among different subjects, etc. Besides, this paper acknowledges a marginal decrease in GPQA Chemistry performance for the RL-Zero model and attributes it to the nature of chemistry problems and the limitations of unsupervised RL Zero methods without pre-distilled domain-specific priors.

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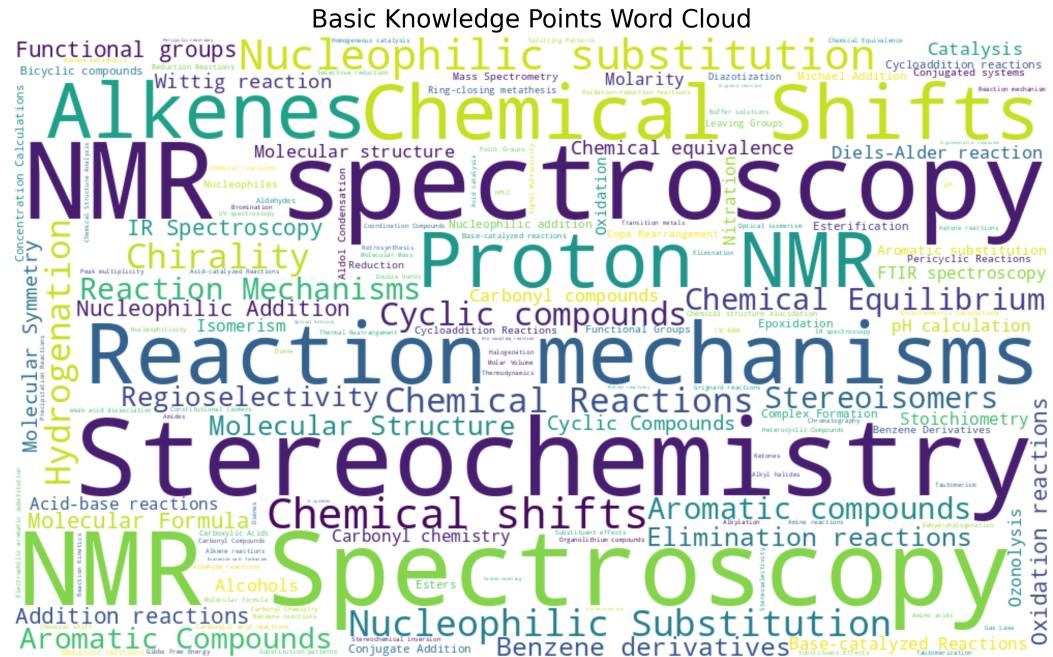


Figure 11: The chemistry subject distribution of basic knowledge points word cloud of GPQA benchmark.

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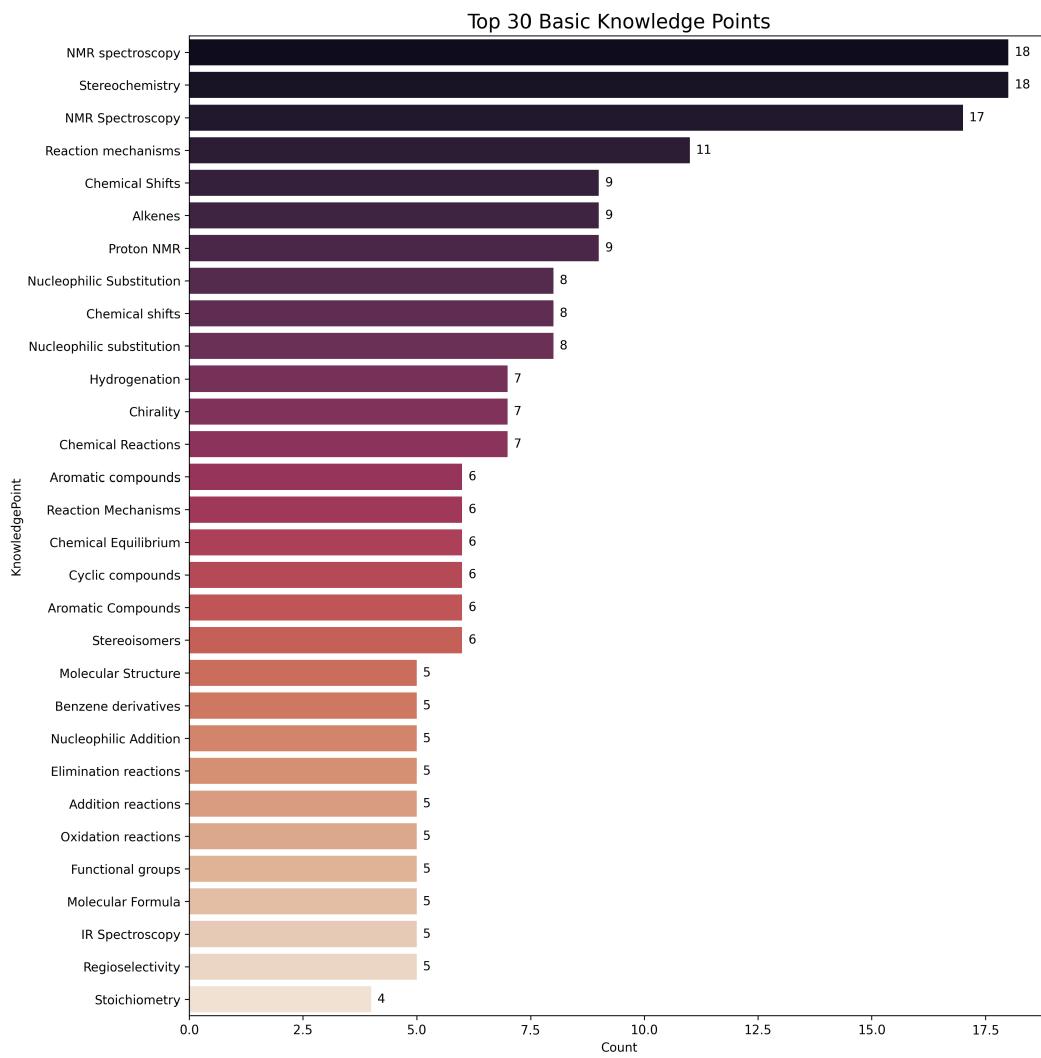


Figure 12: The top 30 basic knowledge points of the chemistry subject of the GPQA benchmark.

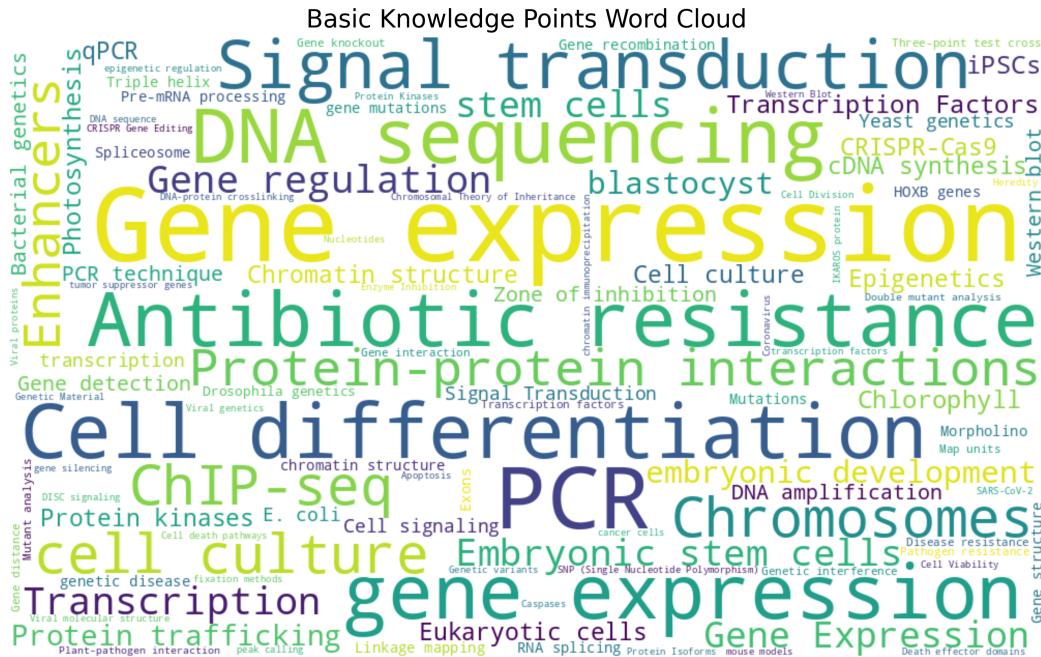


Figure 13: The biology subject distribution of basic knowledge points word cloud of GPQA benchmark.

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Justification: The paper describes the training data, including the baseline dataset and the **SHARP**-generated dataset of 190,000 samples. It specifies the comparison models used for distillation and RL zero training. It mentions that training details for distillation involved standard procedures, and for **SHARP**-RL Zero training, the GRPO algorithm was used with a rule-based reward function, with hyperparameters and computational resources detailed in the appendix. The evaluation metrics are centered on the GPQA STEM reasoning benchmark using accuracy metrics like pass@k. The appendix also provides further details, including ablation studies and analysis of the generated dataset's distribution.

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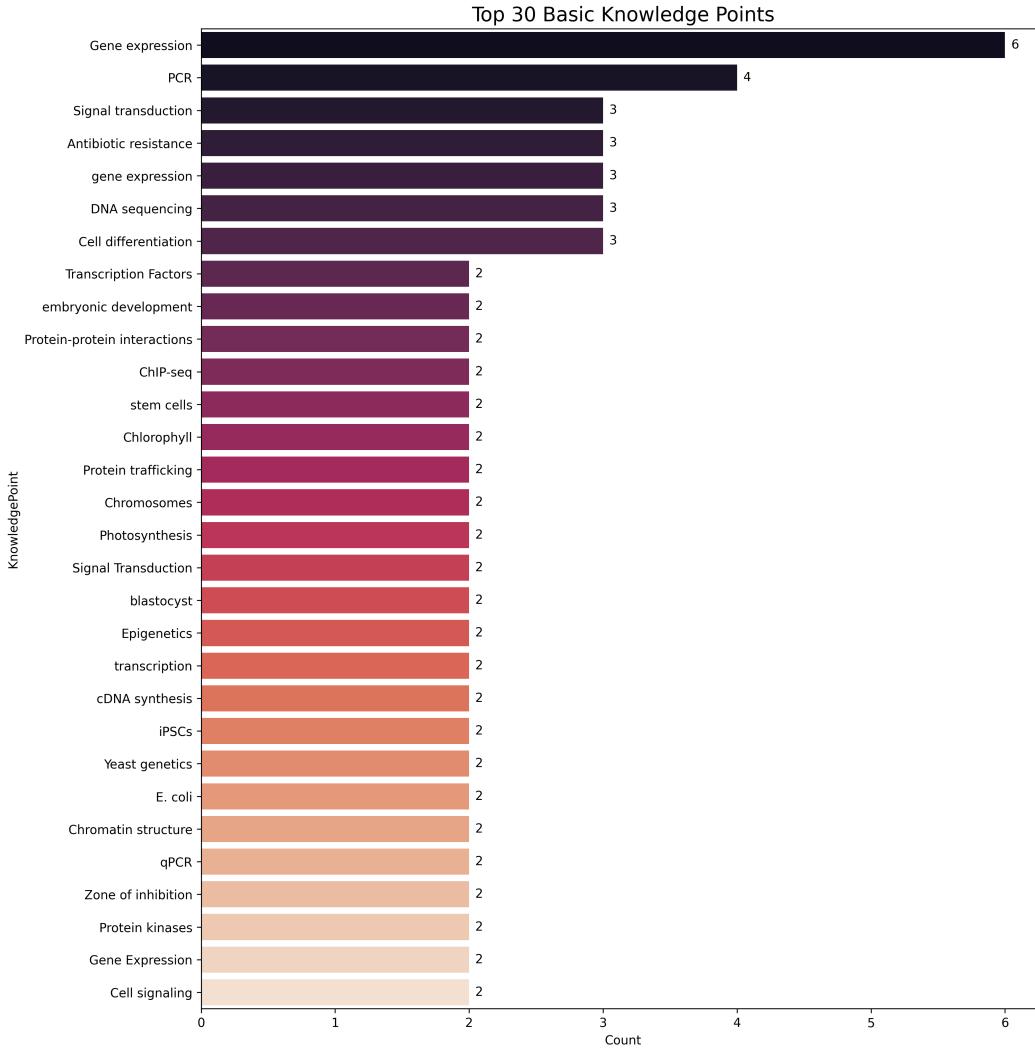


Figure 14: The top 30 basic knowledge points of the biology subject of the GPQA benchmark.

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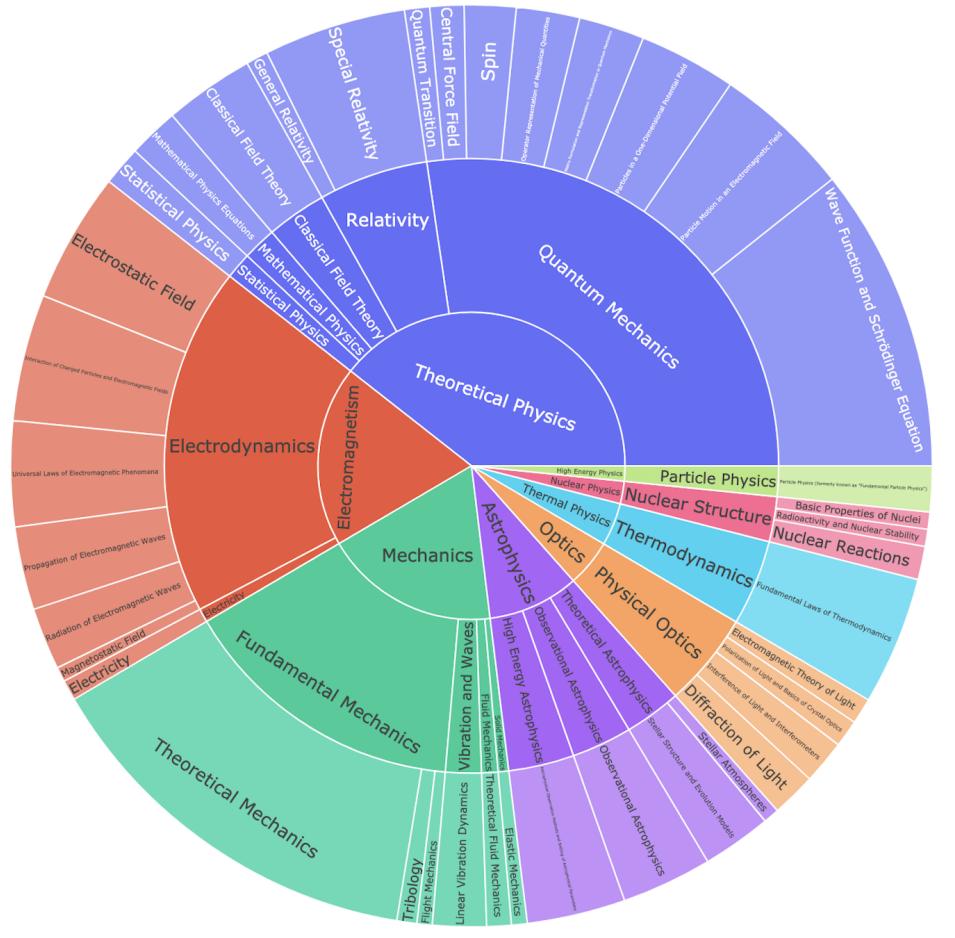


Figure 15: The “Three-Tier Category” category distribution of physics subject for problems generated by the **SHARP** approach.

- (c) If the contribution is a new model (e.g., a large language model), then there should either be a way to access this model for reproducing the results or a way to reproduce the model (e.g., with an open-source dataset or instructions for how to construct the dataset).
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Question: Does the paper provide open access to the data and code, with sufficient instructions to faithfully reproduce the main experimental results, as described in supplemental material?

Answer: [Yes]

Justification: Essential **SHARP** strategy prompts template and specific problems for different subjects are included in the appendix. Moreover, we will open-source all necessary codes and related data for industry use during the review period.

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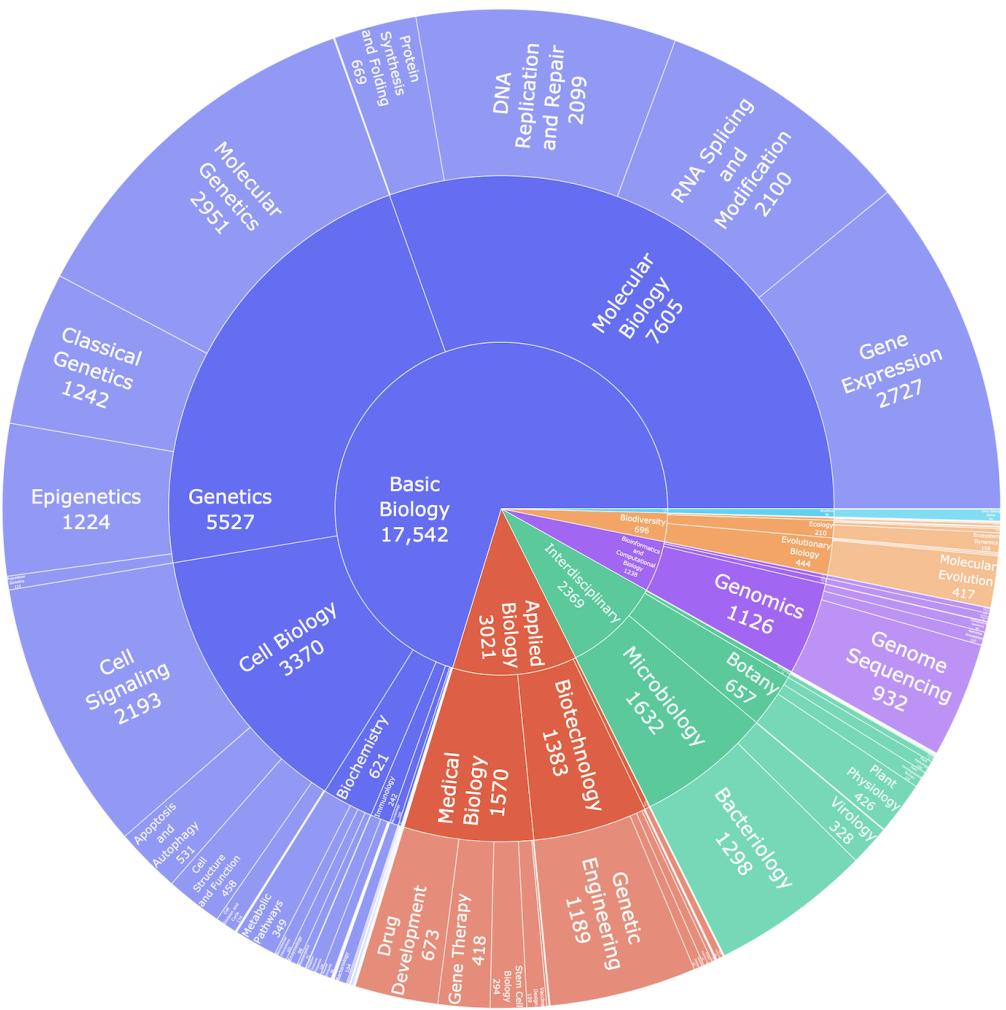


Figure 16: The “Three-Tier Category” category distribution of biology subject for problems generated by the **SHARP** approach.

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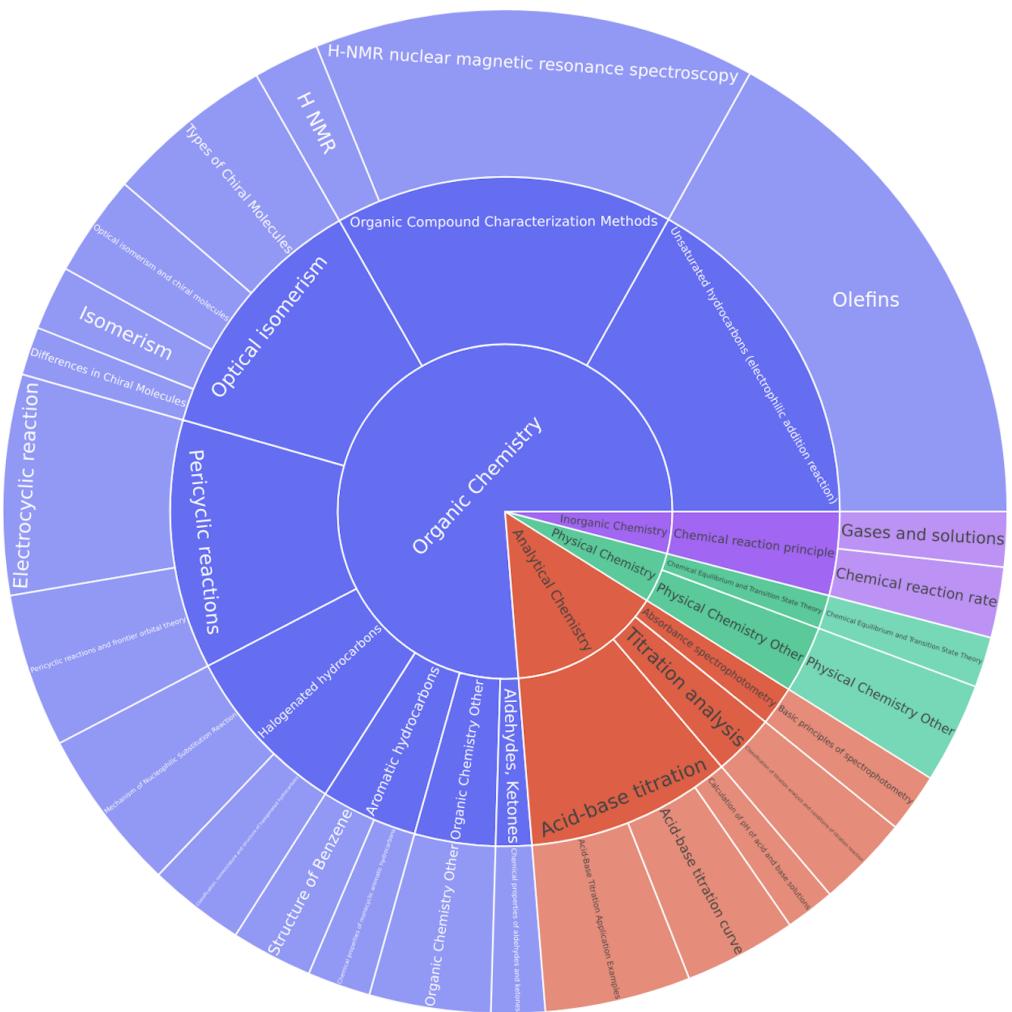


Figure 17: The “Three-Tier Category” category distribution of chemistry subject for problems generated by the **SHARP** approach.

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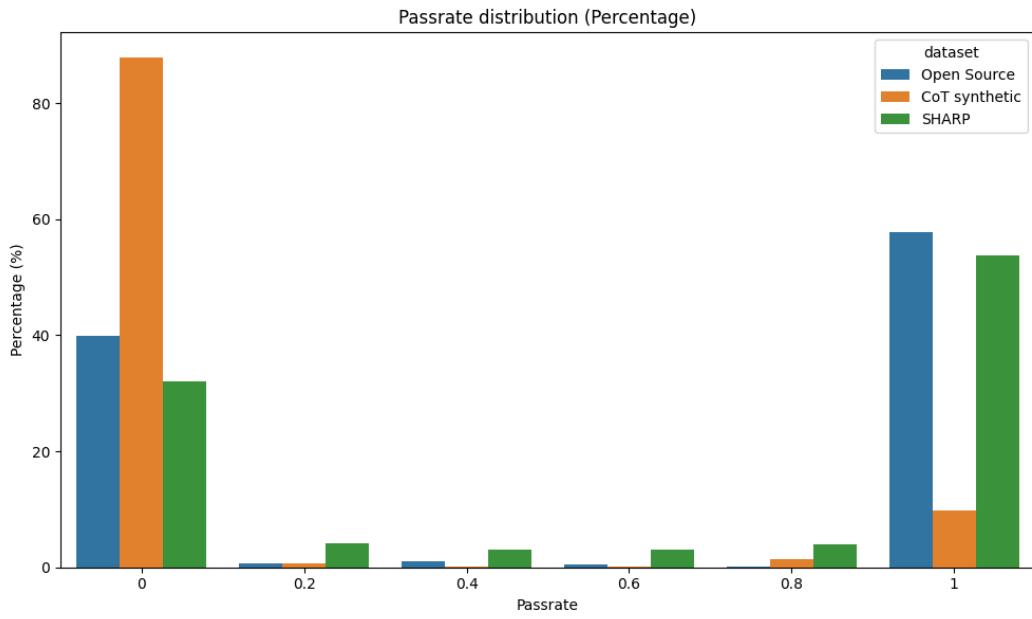


Figure 18: The passrate distribution of the open-source problems, the traditional CoT synthetic problems, and biology problems generated by the **SHARP** approach.

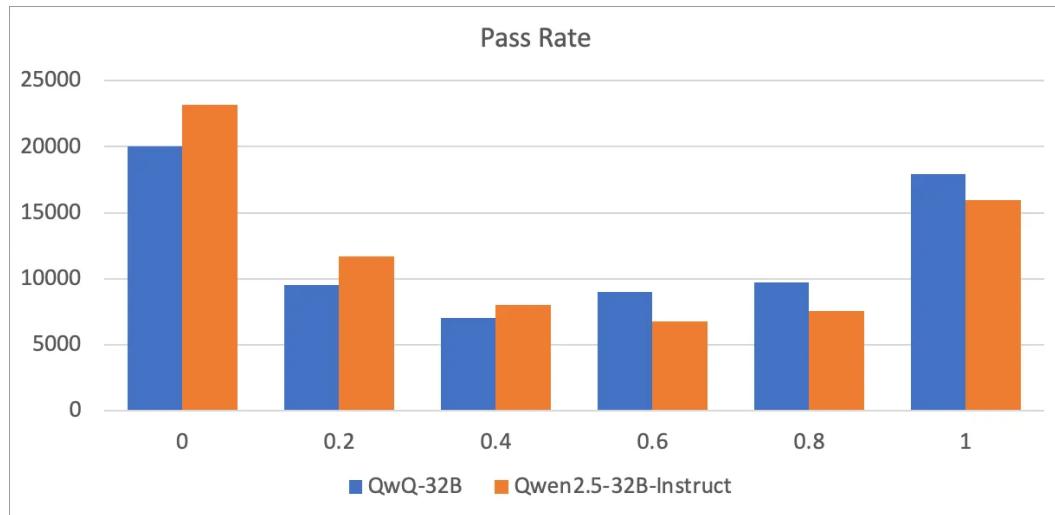


Figure 19: The passrate distribution of physics problems generated by the **SHARP** approach.

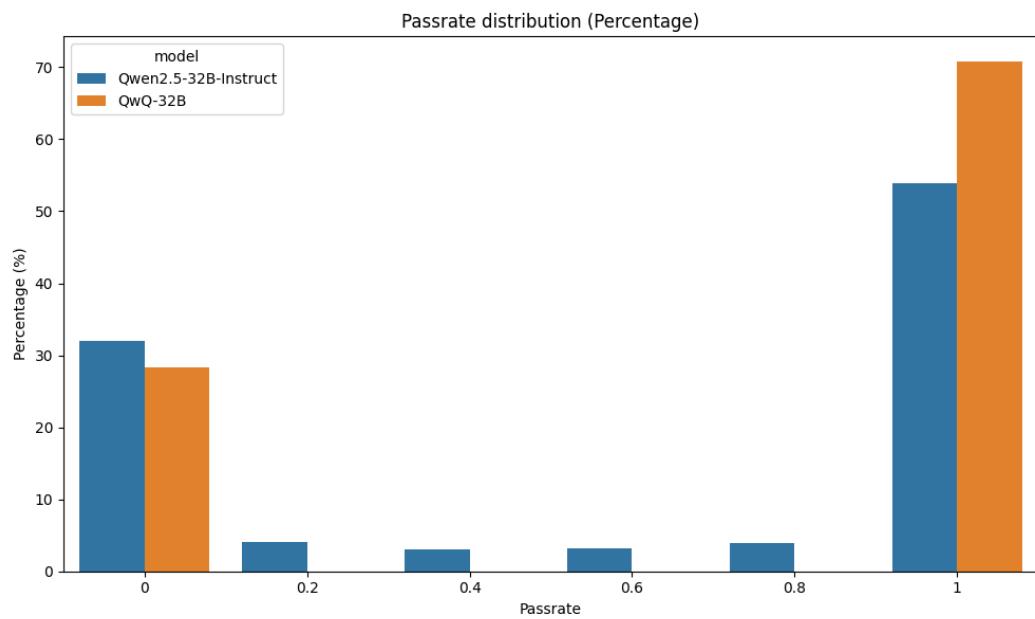


Figure 20: The passrate distribution of biology problems generated by the **SHARP** approach.

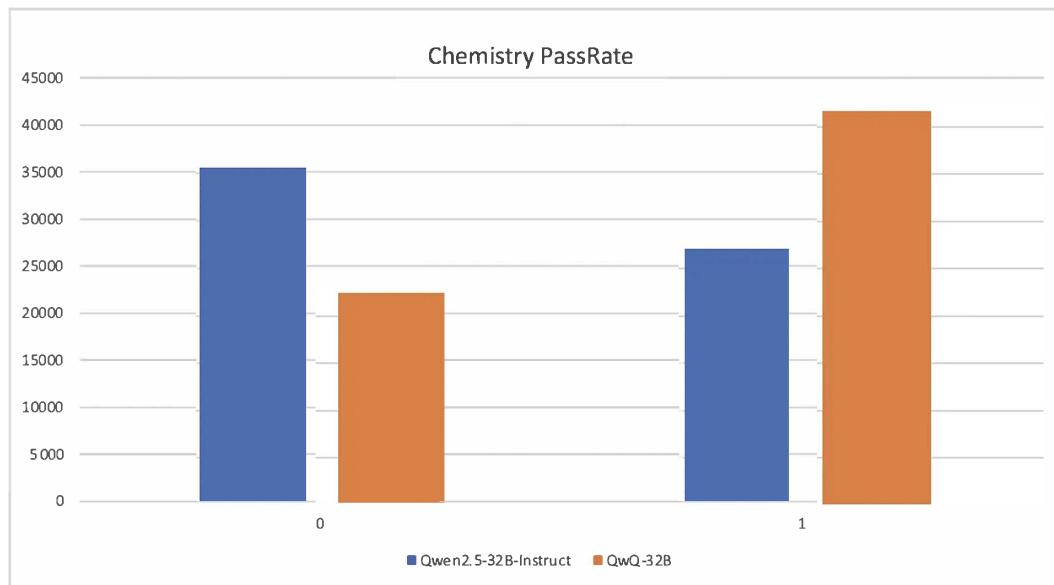


Figure 21: The passrate distribution of chemistry problems generated by the **SHARP** approach.

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