

Questions to Encourage Class Discussion on OPCW FIRES Film - [A](#)

Teacher's Mission

Chrétien Schouteten, a retired chemistry teacher, has spent most of his career being concerned about chemists' responsibilities towards society. A scientist's knowledge is a powerful tool that can serve many purposes, but what is the value of science to humanity without ethics?

Long before the signature of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Nobel Peace Prize, Mr. Schouteten was already sensitizing his pupils to the issue of ethics and chemistry, challenging them to imagine what they would do if their knowledge were demanded not for noble causes, but for evil purposes.

To address a wider audience on this theme, Schouteten wrote a theatrical play about the life of Fritz Haber, the father of modern chemical warfare who also won the Nobel Prize for inventing the synthesis of ammonia – an invention that enabled the mass production of fertilizers and has fed the world ever since. Schouteten shows his play in Berlin, where Haber was based. His enduring aim is to create awareness about the potential misuse of chemistry.

Questions

1. Can science be taught as an isolated subject, without regard to its societal and other implications?
2. On what basis can a scientist claim that a new WMD could be developed for the good of humanity? (Can science foresee the future? Why would a scientist take the risk to become an apprentice sorcerer?)
3. What larger purposes do scientists and teachers serve?
4. Why is it important to keep abreast of scientific development, from a disarmament perspective?
5. Why is disarmament important?