

Key Concepts in the TOK Essay

About this Module

Please continue to the next page **Welcome to workshop discussions**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

Welcome to workshop discussions

Welcome to this workshop on the assessment essay for Theory of Knowledge. A Level 3 workshop, it gives us a splendid chance to raise questions that come out of our experience, draw on each other's ideas, and "talk shop" with TOK colleagues from other schools and other parts of the world.

By the time you reach these words on your screen, you will have read through the generic introduction to this online environment and introduced yourself in all the appropriate places (your profile, your greeting in the forum, your message to your mentor). May we ask you to make sure that you have uploaded a photo with your profile? It would be quite chilling to spend three weeks exchanging ideas with a row of fixedly grinning yellow masks! If you have no digital photographs of yourself or prefer not to share one, then please feel free to upload some other image that you would be content to use to represent yourself (such as a pet or an icon of a sport or hobby).

Although you have entered this website at first through its set of clever technological tools, we hope that, as the tools become familiar, they will intrude less and less on your attention. This online environment usually becomes comfortable fairly quickly, with the friendliness, personal examples and humour of any group interchange entering our discussions. To make our interaction work well, we'd like to make some suggestions right from the outset:

- Please take an active role in contributing to discussions. This is a chance to give and exchange - to share your good ideas and class triumphs, your concerns and class disasters, and your thoughts on questions we pose. You'll be acknowledged for your participation at the end of the workshop with a certificate and an evaluation, whose rubric you will find in the Resource Folder.
- Please acknowledge other people and show your interest in what they say. When we're together in a room, we usually respond to others when they speak. We might smile, nod or give a few words in reply. In an online forum, though, nobody can see you nodding or shaking your head at your own computer screen. While you won't want to reply to every message, please do ensure that no one posting ideas is ignored and left speaking, in effect, to The Void.
- Please keep your postings fairly short, generally not more than the computer window can hold. A massive wall of grey text on a screen induces in many of us a serious case of brain-freeze. When you have a lot to say, it's better to break different ideas into separate postings or to save your thoughts for a reply to someone else. Contributing shorter points, more often, helps to maintain a comfortable conversation.

These points might seem pretty obvious, since they're part of ordinary social interaction when

we're in a room together. It may take a moment of consciousness, though, to make sure we transfer our normal courtesies and friendliness to a discussion online, especially when such a forum is unfamiliar yet.

One last point before we get into the TOK essay: would you please watch the calendar and make sure you keep up with the three modules? In an asynchronous workshop, we all enter the site at different times according to our time zones and schedules. However, we do move as a group from one week to the next through a sequence of discussions and activities, which open ahead of us.

Thanks. Welcome to this workshop. We hope it will be professionally worthwhile and personally enjoyable.

Please continue to the next page **The Week Ahead**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

The Week Ahead

Overview

During the next three weeks we will cover:

Module 1: Key Concepts in the TOK Essay

- the essay within the IB and TOK
- key concepts: knowledge issues, perspectives, analysis

Module 2: Guiding Students to a Draft

- aims and criteria: preparing students throughout the course
- tackling the essay: guiding students in the writing

Module 3: Final Stages

- predicting achievement: ranking essays
- reading drafts: what advice can we give?
- the assessment system

Outcomes

The expected outcomes of this module are that you will
enter the online environment:

- become familiar with the workshop site through the general introduction
- introduce yourself and upload a photo (via your profile), greet other participants and introduce yourself further (in Il Caffe), and send a message to your mentor (through the messaging system).

get ready for discussing the TOK essay:

- have the relevant resources ready
- renew your familiarity with the place of the presentation within IB and TOK goals
- refresh your awareness of the TOK concepts key to the essay
- warm up your thinking on Knowledge Issues

Tasks

- B1 Download resources.
- C Read summary of key concepts
- D Identify knowledge issues in articles and enter discussion.

Note that if a printed copy of workshop notes would be more convenient than reading on the screen, directions for printing them are in section F ahead.

Please continue to the next section **The essay within the IB and TOK**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

The essay within the IB and TOK

Please continue to the next page **Download Resources**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

Download Resources

As experienced teachers, you will already have the relevant resources for TOK to which we will refer in this workshop. If you do not have copies handy, though, we suggest that you download them from the Resources Folder. There you will find:

- [The IB Learner Profile](#)
- [The TOK Guide](#)
- [Guide excerpt: TOK essay marking criteria](#)
- [TOK Subject Report May 2006](#)
- [TOK Subject Report May 2007](#)

- [TOK Subject Report May 2008](#)
- [TOK Subject Report May 2009](#)
- [TOK Subject Report May 2010](#)
- [TOK prescribed titles November 06 May 07](#)
- [TOK prescribed titles November 07 May 08](#)
- [TOK prescribed titles November 08 May 09](#)
- [TOK prescribed titles November 09 May 10](#)
- [Understanding Knowledge Issues 09](#)

You can also use the above links to download them.

Hint: If you right click on the links above or the links in the resource library and choose 'Save target as' (Internet Explorer) then you can save copies of the documents to your own computer.

Please continue to the next page **TOK within the IB**. Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.

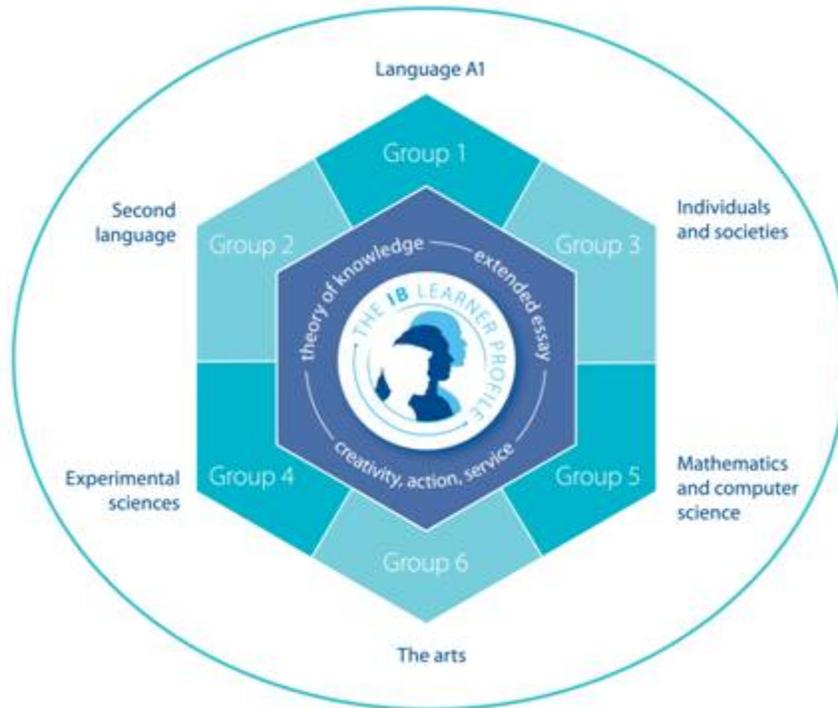
TOK within the IB

Experienced teachers scarcely need to be told what TOK is all about. That's what we spend a lot of our own time doing! Still, as we launch into three weeks together talking about the very things we already know - seizing a chance to talk shop with colleagues - we might open by sweeping over some central concepts of our shared subject.

The upcoming notes in sections B and C are not likely to tell you things you don't know already. However, they will ensure that we're all starting with a common understanding, recently refreshed, before we get into the discussion set up in section D. They may also raise some issues you might like to discuss, as some of the key concepts have undergone some revision in the latest TOK guide with its associated marking criteria.

TOK, The Big Picture

As experienced teachers, we are all very familiar with the IB hexagon and probably quite like our own spot within it: Theory of Knowledge is right there at the centre. We are also familiar with the responsibility that placement gives us to reflect outward on all other parts of the Diploma programme and, in the way we teach our course, to give students a holistic understanding of the education they are gaining. The TOK essay distils that central placement in its demand that students treat concepts that run through many or all areas of knowledge, and to treat those concepts comparatively.



We are similarly familiar with the IB Mission, with its goals of developing "inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people", "rigorous assessment", and a capacity to see from other perspectives. The kind of thinking that we look for in the TOK essay -- questioning, exploring, open but analytically evaluative -- supports the mission of the whole IB.

IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

The IB Learner Profile (available in the Resources Folder on the homepage) identifies yet more closely the qualities that we hope, as IB teachers, to develop in our students. Our TOK course aims are entirely in harmony with this profile, and so are good TOK classroom methods. The TOK essay, within its small scope, emphasizes many of these central qualities - the spirit of inquiry, for example, the exploration across disciplines, the critical thinking, and the appreciation of multiple points of view.

Please continue to the next page **TOK Aims and Objectives**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

TOK Aims and Objectives

As we move from the broad aims of the IB, through its learner profile, toward TOK and the essay, we want always to keep in mind our place at the centre of the IB, the responsibility it brings, and the qualities we want to develop in students. The essay that we encourage our students to write should resonate with those qualities and demonstrate them in the particular form we give them in Theory of Knowledge.

The assessment of TOK has to be seen in context of the goals of the course. The **Aims** of TOK as articulated in the Guide are to:

- develop a fascination with the richness of knowledge as a human endeavour, and an understanding of the empowerment that follows from reflecting upon it
- develop an awareness of how knowledge is constructed, critically examined and evaluated and renewed, by communities and individuals
- encourage students to reflect on their experiences as learners, in everyday life and in the Diploma Programme, and to make connections between academic disciplines and between thoughts, feelings and actions
- encourage an interest in the diversity of ways of thinking and ways of living of individuals and communities, and an awareness of personal and ideological assumptions, including participants' own
- encourage consideration of the responsibilities originating from the relationship between knowledge, the community and the individual as citizen of the world.

The curiosity, appreciation, and openness - the awareness of assumptions and critical examination - the sense of the implications of knowledge, including responsibility - all of these characterize the habits of mind of Theory of Knowledge. It is a challenge to assess such awareness and attitudes at all. In our course assessment, the TOK class presentation and the TOK essay both take on this challenge in their different ways.

We can notice immediately the more practical emphasis in the Objectives, which pin down the Aims in measurable terms. We can recognize instantly both the presentation and the essay in the skills that students should demonstrate. The **Objectives** as articulated in the Guide are what students should be able to do, having followed the TOK course:

Having followed the TOK course, students should be able to:

1. analyse critically knowledge claims, their underlying assumptions and their implications
2. generate questions, explanations, conjectures, hypotheses, alternative ideas and possible solutions in response to knowledge issues concerning areas of knowledge, ways of knowing and students' own experience as learners
3. demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives on knowledge issues
4. draw links and make effective comparisons between different approaches to knowledge

issues that derive from areas of knowledge, ways of knowing, theoretical positions and cultural values

5. demonstrate an ability to give a personal, self-aware response to a knowledge issue
6. formulate and communicate ideas clearly with due regard for accuracy and academic honesty.

The expectations that we place on the TOK essay are high ones, quite demanding for students of IB age. When students write good papers, they have achieved something truly worthwhile in their education, something possibly reflective of their lively minds at their best. It's not surprising when students select their Theory of Knowledge essays to send to universities which, in their application process, ask students to submit samples of their work. It's not at all surprising when students hand their essays to their TOK teacher with relief and pride.

Please continue to the next section **Key Concepts in the TOK essay**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

Key Concepts in the TOK essay

Far too often, unfortunately, students seize up in face of an evaluative writing assignment, especially one with a specified length and a mark. Even the best of students can lose their liveliness of mind and capacity for insightful connection when in front of their eyes is a blank sheet of paper or a blank screen and inside their minds is a mess of anxieties, or possibly a strong desire to be doing something else. This problem is certainly not unique to TOK.

In TOK, we take the same role we do in the other subjects we teach: we make sure that students know what they are being asked to do and give them support through the process.

In TOK as in other subjects, we can set students on the right path in large part by clarifying with them the expectations of the essay and its harmony with the daily class discussions. They are not being asked to do something new or strange, but to distil the habits of mind and discussion topics of the course into a paper that demonstrates their ease with the key concepts of TOK, surely familiar to them at the point when they tackle the essay.

It can be very useful to emphasize to students that what they are doing is not simply giving an answer to a question from a list but, more importantly, *showing off their skills*. They are *demonstrating TOK qualities on paper* in such a way that the external examiner will be moved to exclaim, "Ah, here is a true student of TOK!" and to respond with a happy flick of the inevitable red pen. The examiner Out There likes TOK students and really wants to reward them - if only they can provide the demonstration that will allow that reward.

And what then are the key concepts of TOK with which the student must overtly demonstrate familiarity? Within the course objectives and the marking criteria for the essay are three major concepts: knowledge issues, perspectives, and analysis.

Please continue to the next page **Knowledge Issues**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

Knowledge Issues

As experienced teachers, we recognize that knowledge issues are central to Theory of Knowledge. Our teaching is meant to develop them and the assessment makes their identification and effective treatment absolutely central.

But what exactly are they, these knowledge issues?

Those of us who have been teaching TOK for some time are expected to know already, expected not just by others but by ourselves as well. And surely we do! Yet any teacher who has been involved over a few years will recognize that TOK has evolved from Subject Guide to Subject Guide and that the terminology and emphasis may have shifted from our own entry point.

Confirming or renewing an understanding of this central concept is important in our professional development. If you are not entirely clear in your own mind, you have come to the right place, a workshop with others who, like you, are interested in refreshment. It is characteristic of the best of TOK to question our own assumptions and to recognize that basic definitions have plenty of implications for what is later based on them.

If, conversely, you are entirely clear on what knowledge issues are, perhaps you will have found a way of explaining them that will prove useful to others. Are there ways of introducing them to your students that you have found to lead effectively toward preparing the essay? You might read carefully the explanation outlined below and add to it in the general discussion forum.

Guide: Nature of the Subject

The marking criteria for the essay presuppose an understanding of knowledge issues, so let us turn elsewhere for an explanation. Let us turn, as we do, to the Guide.

There, in the opening "Nature of the subject", what is emphasized above all is the exploratory, reflective, questioning nature of Theory of Knowledge. Knowledge issues are affirmed to be central: "the subject matter of the course is defined in terms of knowledge issues".

Further understanding is given through the examples given in the third paragraph:

"[TOK's] core content is questions like these: What counts as knowledge? How does it grow? What are its limits? Who owns knowledge? What is the value of knowledge? What are the implications of having, or not having, knowledge?"

In the following paragraph, students are described as having, in TOK, the opportunity to stand back from gaining new knowledge to "consider knowledge issues":

"These include the questions already mentioned, viewed from the perspective of the student, but often begin from more basic ones, like: What do I claim to know [about X]? Am I justified in doing so [how?]? Such questions may initially seem abstract or

theoretical but TOK teachers bring them into closer focus by taking into account their students' interests, circumstances, and outlooks in planning the course."

Guide: Knowledge issues, knowers, and knowing

In this later section of the Guide, a few pages on, the term for the central concept of TOK is placed in context of the diversity of IB classrooms around the world, with a stress on the possibilities for TOK to be taught in a way that is responsive to the school and communities around it: "The use of this term 'knowledge issues' is an expressly wide one, the purpose of which is to allow students to undertake an exploration of a diversity of TOK questions that are relevant to them in their specific context."

It is within this section that we find knowledge issues summed up in a definition:

"Knowledge issues are questions that directly refer to our understanding of the world, ourselves and others, in connection with the acquisition, search for, production, shaping and acceptance of knowledge."

The augmented explanation that follows the definition is extremely important, as it stresses a balanced exploration of knowledge.

"Knowledge issues can reveal how knowledge can be a benefit, a gift, a pleasure and a basis for further thought and action; just as they can uncover the possible uncertainties, biases in approach, or limitations relating to knowledge, ways of knowing, and the methods of verification and justification appropriate in different areas of knowledge."

"Problems" or "Issues"

Those of us who have some memory of TOK in the past will recall that the former term for the central concept was "problems of knowledge" - a term that meant to convey "problems" in a positive way as those sometimes-thorny issues that challenge methods of investigation and coax further thought. These "problems" give life to knowledge and encourage its generation or regeneration in different ways.

However, far too many teachers around the world interpreted "problems" to mean only "weaknesses" and tipped their courses toward a rather negative version of TOK. Many courses ripped apart every area of knowledge in turn to expose its uncertainties, without a counterbalancing appreciation of the stimulation to do problem-solving or a counterbalancing awareness of the inappropriateness of evaluating all areas predominantly in terms of supposedly objective certainty. In such a course, only mathematics was left standing, in shreds, with history nearly dismissed as being knowledge at all -- so many, many flaws did students learn to list! As for the arts - well! Nothing in sight, it seemed, but apparently culpable subjectivity! The shift to "knowledge issues" rather than "problems of knowledge" has been an attempt to shed a misunderstanding that led to treating knowledge narrowly and almost destructively.

Many of us teaching other subjects such as literature, anthropology, economics, history, film, art and design, dance - and even the natural sciences -- can feel glad to see an active attempt to discourage the tendency in some TOK classrooms to shoot arrows in our direction but never give us roses.

Demonstrating awareness of knowledge issues

In planning and teaching our course, we as teachers focus on knowledge issues. By the time student reach the TOK essay, they should truly find that the assessment emerges from the course they've done. We'll return in the next modules to making students notice the connection.

What should they demonstrate for the examiner? Marking criterion A gives the two questions that underlie an examiner's judgment:

- *Does the essay demonstrate understanding of knowledge issue that are relevant to the prescribed title?*
- *Does the essay demonstrate an awareness of the connections between knowledge issues, areas of knowledge and ways of knowing?*

Please continue to the next page **Perspectives and the Knower**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

Perspectives and the Knower

The second key concept in TOK is perspectives - perspectives, that is, on knowledge issues. It is worthwhile here to go into this concept in some detail, even though its basic characteristics are fairly straightforward, because Theory of Knowledge makes a connection between "perspectives" and the "knower" which may stand as the most challenging aspect of our teaching. That connection may also be the change in TOK assessment least well understood, according to many examiners.

We saw the idea sounded in the IB Mission that "other people, with their differences, can also be right." We might note, in passing, that those other people, regardless of whether they have differences or not, can also be wrong.

The IB learner profile comes closer to what we look for in TOK, blurring a simple right/wrong dichotomy in its explanation of being "open-minded":

"[Students] understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience."

Different ways of thinking, in this description, are investigated with interest, but also evaluated. Openness does not require uncritical acceptance.

In TOK, all of our aims of the course involve awareness of perspectives in some fashion, but two of them stand out. These aims, quite familiar to us, are to:

- develop an awareness of how knowledge is constructed, critically examined and evaluated and renewed, *by communities and individuals*

- encourage an interest in the *diversity* of ways of thinking and ways of living of individuals and communities, and an *awareness of personal and ideological assumptions, including participants' own*



Knower's perspective

The final words quoted above are of crucial importance: "including participants' own". Students are knowers who are not simply looking out at other people and noting what they think; the essay is not a book report, a paper on the history of ideas, or a research paper.

A third aim of TOK stresses personal reflection and the connections that students are forming from their own learning. The course aims to

- encourage students to *reflect on their experiences as learners*, in everyday life and in the Diploma Programme, and to *make connections* between academic disciplines and between thoughts, feelings and actions

How, then, are students to handle other perspectives in developing their own? They should *not* simply reproduce what they have learned in TOK class or elsewhere about what different communities think - whether a community is a group of scientists or historians, followers of a religion, members of a culture, or any other group that might hold a belief or a point of view. They should consciously and deliberately, as part of the planning of the essay, *handle* those perspectives - understand them and digest them, draw on them and acknowledge them when they are relevant, but respond to the chosen IB title from a perspective of their own.

That perspective of their own has to come from reflection and self-awareness as knowers, conscious of the influences upon their own thinking and beliefs and of the connection between the title under discussion and their own experiences. A female student writing in Ghana should not write an essay that sounds the same as one written as a male student writing in Italy. A student studying Higher Level sciences and mathematics and involved in mountain trekking should not write an essay that sounds just like the one written by a student studying Higher Level Language A and History and involved in dance. Whether the student is urban or rural,

passionate about the current technological communication toys, knowledgeable about what is going on in the media, conscious of being part of a cultural community unlike the surrounding norm, or committed to a sport or a musical instrument - all of these personal variations may find their way into their essays as students connect titles with their own experiences of learning and knowing. Both the overall argument of the essay and the examples selected to support the arguments should reflect the voice of the particular student.

Any TOK teacher whose students write essays that sound all alike has failed to nurture this essential characteristic of TOK, the personal stamp that every student should put on the paper. As TOK teachers, we should not be teaching *what* to think but *how* to think.

Cultural bias?

The independent thinking that examiners look for in the essay may appear at first to give TOK a cultural bias that advantages students from some cultures over students from others. The expectation of "independent thinking" may be feared to lean toward more individualistic cultures and away from more collective ones, and toward learning traditions that highly value personal opinions and away from those that highly value respectful learning from a teacher.

However, the independent thinking of TOK does not involve disregard or disrespect for what teachers have said. It is, rather, engaged thinking that respects knowledge and takes a keen interest in how it has been created, created differently in different areas and contexts, and re-created over time. It involves an active appreciation of the characteristics of knowledge, including its uncertainties and biases, and methods to embrace or overcome them; seeing knowledge as imperfect and variable should encourage not disrespect for knowledge or teachers but keen recognition of the humanity in its creation.

Nor does TOK independent thinking involve personal opinion that is sloppily formed and voiced. While the student's personal synthesis of ideas is paramount, any judgment has to be well considered and well supported. Examiners do not reward students for passing judgments in ignorance with the defence that "it's my opinion".

Nor is TOK independent thinking of the kind demanded of much older students in senior university courses, when originality becomes important in research. Rather, it is self-aware thinking, as students understand better how they have come to possess their knowledge, with the assumptions and values associated with their own worldviews in context of others. Becoming self-aware is no easy undertaking (nor, perhaps, ever achieved in a lifetime) but in TOK we can hope to contribute to students' own recognitions.

Earlier on, we commented that developing the "knower's perspective" in our students may be the most challenging aspect of our teaching. We are attempting to develop personal engagement, flexibility of thinking, intellectual self-awareness, capacity to understand and evaluate perspectives, skill in forming and presenting arguments, and considerable maturity.

The essay is a challenge for the student. The teaching is a challenge for us.

Demonstrating the knower's perspective

In developing the knower's perspective within a TOK essay, what should the student *demonstrate* for an examiner? Marking criterion B is introduced by the three questions that

underlie an examiner's judgment:

- *To what extent have the knowledge issues relevant to the prescribed title been connected to the student's own experience as a learner?*
- *Does the student show an awareness of his or her own perspective as a knower in relation to other perspectives, such as those that may arise, for example, from academic and philosophical traditions, culture or position in society (gender, age, and so on)?*
- *Do the examples chosen show an individual approach consciously taken by the student, rather than mere repetition of standard commonplace cases or the impersonal recounting of sources?*

Please continue to the next page **Analysis**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

Analysis

As we turn now to the third of the three key concepts that we have picked out for emphasis here, you may feel pleased to see a much shorter page before your eyes. Does the comparatively cursory treatment suggest a lesser degree of importance?

Certainly not!

However, analysis presents us with no unusual terminology that needs explanation and no shifts in emphasis from TOK Guide to TOK Guide in curriculum review.

We are all familiar with the necessity in the essay for a coherent overall argument that puts forth a point of view and supports it, with some sense that the student recognizes the implications of the chosen TOK title and writes with a purpose.

We are all familiar, similarly, with the demand for "justification" - the provision of good reasons for accepting, to one degree or another, a knowledge claim, argument, or conclusion. We expect students not simply to report or describe relevant perspectives, but to examine their assumptions, methods of support, and implications as they integrate the relevant ones into their own response. We expect them to treat their own perspectives in this same inquiring way.

We are all familiar, too, with the demand for "counterclaims" - the balanced treatment of a title that explores its complexities and investigates alternative perspectives. We do want students to reach conclusions on the issues posed in the IB titles, but not simple-mindedly and not dogmatically.

"Insight" - that's the term used in the description of the highest level of student achievement. Well, we do our best as teachers to provide fertile ground, and hope for the best. Some of the finest qualities of TOK essays are ones that, ultimately, we cannot teach. It's up to students to take in what we give and do the thinking themselves.

Demonstrating quality of analysis of knowledge issues

What should the student *demonstrate* for an examiner? Marking criterion C is introduced by the four questions that underlie an examiner's judgment:

- What is the quality of the inquiry into knowledge issues?
- Are the main points in the essay justified? Are the arguments coherent and compelling?
- Have counterclaims been considered?
- Are the implications and underlying assumptions of the essay's argument identified?

Please continue to the next section **Warm Up Discussion**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

Warm-Up Discussion

What you've just read on the key concepts of Theory of Knowledge should be familiar to you. Our goals in going into detail have been to ensure that all of us are on common ground and to elicit questions and comments about anything so far that gives you pause. We need this common understanding before we can confidently zoom in next week for a close-up on the TOK essay. If we have trespassed on your patience in the process, please be indulgent.

It's now time for go into action yourself.

Identify Knowledge Issues



Discuss

Pick out one major knowledge issue from one of the articles below. Then formulate it into a question that

- centres on knowledge
- uses the terminology of TOK e.g. ways of knowing, areas of knowledge, truth, justification, or the linking concepts of the course:
- opens exploration rather than closing it with an answer already implied.

Take your ideas to the discussion forum entitled **Knowledge Issues** on the workshop homepage. As you post, please use the subject lines of messages to build "threads" of discussion. In other words, if you're contributing something on the article on Vikings, look first to see if someone else has already started that topic. If so, your ideas could well be combined with a reply to that person. If no one else has begun the thread, launch it

yourself with a subject line that identifies the central idea of your posting. Hop then to other threads and take part in the discussion wherever you please. You are always free to launch a new thread for a new aspect of a topic or for a related idea that you wish to raise yourself.

This is not a test. If your ideas are fuzzy...then give us some fuzzy ideas. Together, we are likely to generate a considerable variety of knowledge issue questions, perhaps modify and rephrase them, and raise further topics worth pursuing in the process.

The Articles:

1.

Eleven Tips on Getting More Efficiency Out of Women Employees

According to Snopes, this is an authentic article, published in the July 1943 issue of Mass Transportation magazine as a guide for male supervisors.

<http://www.snopes.com/language/document/hiringwomen.asp>

2.

"Spotlight on the cuddly side of Vikings"

by Maev Kennedy, The Guardian, March 13, 2009

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/mar/13/2>

3.

Macquarie Island

by David Adams, The Guardian Jan 13, 2009

"Pretty much everything went wrong from an ecological point of view" (audio clip)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/audio/2009/jan/13/macquarie-cats-conservation>

4.

"Confessions of a Sweatshop Inspector"

by T. A. Frank, Washington Monthly, April 2008

<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2008/0804.frank.html>

5.

"Which Kids Join Gangs? A Genetic Explanation"

by Kathleen Kingsbury. June 10, 2009, Time magazine

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1903703,00.html?xid=rss->

[healthTime%20CNN](#)

Please continue to the next section **Conclusion**. *Click on the right arrow at the top or bottom of the page to continue.*

Conclusion

Clearly, we have entered the workshop with the overview of Theory of Knowledge - its place in the IB and its aims - and have placed the essay in context of the course. In doing so, we hope to have refreshed your sense of our assessment goals and clarified any uncertainties created by shifts in emphasis over the past few years.

Next week, we will turn to practical matters of guiding students to write good essays and in the final week we will look closely at some student papers with an eye to our role as supportive teachers.

As we conclude this module, you may wish to know that these notes can be printed out fairly easily by following the directions on the next page and that the whole site, with its discussions, will remain accessible to you for many months after you have completed the workshop.

Thank you, all of you, for joining us here online in this nowhere space that welcomes us from all time zones and all parts of the world.

Copyright - Triple A Learning