

MODES DE LA CONNAISSANCE | FORMAS DE CONOCIMIENTO | WAYS OF KNOWING

# IB AFRICA, EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2014

ROME • 16–19 OCTOBER



International Baccalaureate®  
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# Theory of Knowledge (first assessment 2015)



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## This session:

- What guidance and support materials are available for teachers?
- Global impression marking. How does it work? Why was it introduced for TOK?
- The role and status of WOKs in the new TOK course
- What are some of the common problems we see in TOK essays and presentations? How do the features of the new TOK course try to address these problems?



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# Increased guidance and support materials for teachers

- TOK subject guide (for first assessment 2015)
- TOK teacher support material (TSM)
- Specimen prescribed titles with accompanying examiner notes
- Examiner preparation notes from previous titles
- Subject reports
- Screencast videos
- Workshops, including a new category 3 workshop specifically focused on improving TOK essays



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# Global Impression Marking

- Instead of being assessed using 4 distinct criteria the essay and presentation will be assessed using a global impression approach
- This approach was developed in conjunction with ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research)
- This approach was trialled on TOK essays as part of the curriculum review



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# Global Impression Marking

The global impression judgment of the TOK essay is underpinned by a single question:

*Does the student present an appropriate and cogent analysis of knowledge questions in discussing the title?*

This question shapes the reading and assessing of TOK essays. A mark out of 10 is then awarded using the assessment instrument.



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## TOK essay assessment instrument

Does the student present an appropriate and cogent analysis of knowledge questions in discussing the title?						
Aspect	Level 5 Excellent 9-10	Level 4 Very good 7-8	Level 3 Satisfactory 5-6	Level 2 Basic 3-4	Level 1 Elementary 1-2	Irrelevant 0
Understanding knowledge questions	There is a <i>sustained focus on knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title and are well chosen— <b>developed</b> with <i>investigation of different perspectives</i> and <i>linked effectively to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</i> .	There is a <i>focus on knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title— <b>developed</b> with <i>acknowledgment of different perspectives</i> and <i>linked to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</i> .	There is a <i>focus on some knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title—with <i>some development</i> and <b>linking to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</b> .	<i>Some knowledge questions</i> that are connected to the prescribed title are considered, but the essay is largely <i>descriptive</i> , with <i>superficial or limited links to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</i> .	The essay has only very limited relevance to the prescribed title—relevant points are <i>descriptive</i> .	The essay does not reach a standard described by levels 1-5 or is not a response to one of the prescribed titles on the list for the current session.
Quality of analysis of knowledge questions	<b>Arguments</b> are <i>clear</i> , supported by <b>real-life examples</b> and are <i>effectively evaluated</i> ; <b>counterclaims</b> are extensively <i>explored</i> ; <b>implications</b> are <i>drawn</i> .	Arguments are <i>clear</i> , supported by <b>real-life examples</b> and are <i>evaluated</i> ; some <b>counterclaims</b> are identified and <i>explored</i> .	<i>Some arguments</i> are <i>clear</i> and supported by <b>examples</b> ; some <b>counterclaims</b> are <i>identified</i> .	Arguments are offered but are <i>unclear</i> and/or <i>not supported by effective examples</i> .	<b>Assertions</b> are offered but are <i>not supported</i> .	
<b>Some possible characteristics</b>						
	Cogent Accomplished Discerning Individual Lucid Insightful Compelling	Pertinent Relevant Thoughtful Analytical Organized Credible Coherent	Typical Acceptable Mainstream Adequate Competent	Underdeveloped Basic Superficial Derivative Rudimentary Limited	Ineffective Descriptive Incoherent Formless	



# The role and status of Ways of Knowing in the new course

Emphasis on WOKs in context:

*“TOK teachers are encouraged to explore WOKs, not in isolation, but from the perspective of their contribution to understanding different areas of knowledge.”*

*WOKs “interact in various ways in the construction of knowledge and the formation of knowledge claims ... the individual ways of knowing are woven together into more elaborate structures in order to generate knowledge in the areas of knowledge.”*





**What are some common problems we see in TOK essays and presentations?**

**How do the features of the new TOK course try to address these problems?**



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# Problem: Interesting essays/ presentations which are just “not TOK”

Example: TOK presentation on ethics, discussing whether euthanasia should be legalised

## Solution 1: KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

Knowledge questions are at the heart of the new TOK course. They are central to both assessment tasks.

## Solution 2: PPD form



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# Example

Subject question:

- What is a twin study in psychology and why might it be used?

Knowledge question:

- To what extent are experiments in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings?



Image taken from <http://www.matr.vcu.edu/research/why-study-twins.html>



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# Problem: Students struggling to make effective connections

Indicators:

Essays which present WOKs as isolated and decontextualised

Candidates struggling to make connections/ comparisons between AOKs

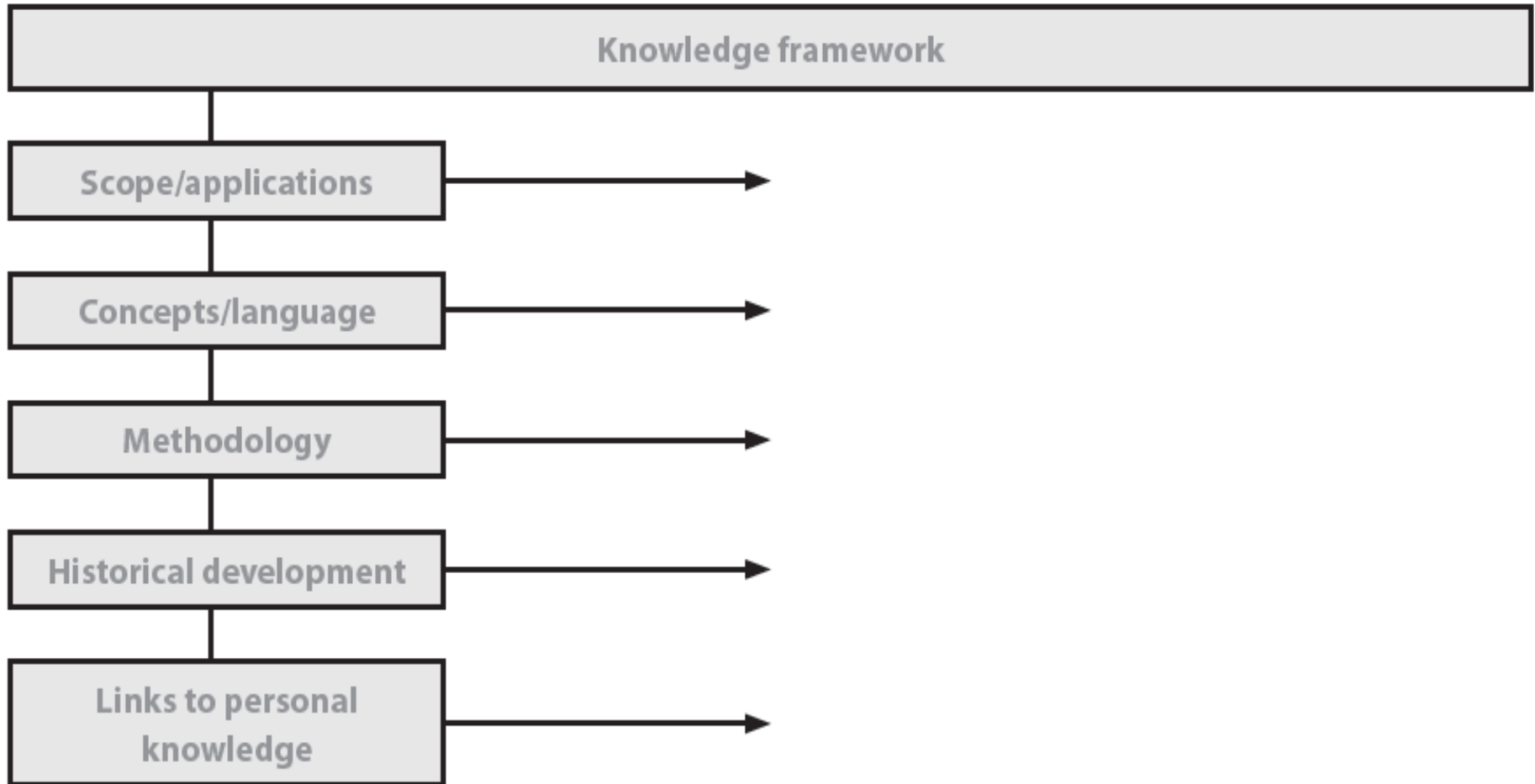
Solutions:

**EMPHASIS ON WOKs**  
**IN CONTEXT**

**THE KNOWLEDGE**  
**FRAMEWORK**



# The Knowledge Framework





# Problem: Overly simplistic or overly philosophical discussions of knowledge

- Essays which state that knowledge is the same as justified true belief and then ignore how this would impact on the rest of their discussion
- Essays where a narrow definition such as justified true belief closes down the discussion rather than provides a useful platform for discussion of knowledge issues
- Essays which get bogged down in technical philosophical discussions of the nature of knowledge, or which focus on outlining other people's ideas

Solution:

## KNOWLEDGE AS A MAP

(Emphasis in the new guide on the metaphor of knowledge as a map, rather than on knowledge as justified true belief)



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# Problem: missed opportunities for students to use examples from their own experience

- Candidates defaulting to “textbook” examples, rather than taking the opportunity to use examples that are more meaningful to them
- Candidates missing out on the opportunity to draw on examples from their own heritage or their own experience in their other subjects

## Solution:

Encouragement in the subject reports etc. to encourage students to use examples from their own lives and studies

Embedding of TOK across the curriculum



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# Problem: Too little (or too much) support from teachers with the process of writing the essay

Potential serious consequences: essays submitted on the wrong title are awarded 0 marks; essays which are suspected of plagiarism are investigated by the academic honesty sub-committee

## Solution

- “3 step process” outlined in the subject guide
- Essay planning and progress form





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# Questions?