Research as a Way of Knowing: The Extended Essay in ToK

Simone Lorenz-Weir and Darryl Toerien

Inspiring Education
IBAEM Regional Conference
The Hague, 27-30 October 2011
CONTEXT

• Oakham School
  – Large, independent, co-educational day and boarding school
  – Celebrating 10 years of IBDP
  – IBDP and A Level qualifications

• Smallbone Library
  – Superb facility
  – Realistically funded
  – Realistically staffed

• IB Department in general and Director in particular
  – Absolutely committed to best possible provision for IBDP students
The EE at Oakham School

• What we had
  – Supervisors
  – EE seminar for students in 3 ToK lessons
  – EE week
The EE at Oakham School

• The results
  – A mixed bag in terms of quality (very supervisor led and dependent)
  – An array of “interesting” cover sheets
  – A relatively open-ended internal deadline
The EE at Oakham School

• What we changed
  – Supervisor training – first by invitation, then compulsory
  – Introduced EE timetable and deadlines
  – ICT training, Oakham APA
  – Offer of “research interviews” in the Library
## EE Timetable and Deadlines 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>What to do next?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th Jan</td>
<td><strong>EE seminar</strong> in ToK lessons – introduction and the EE Oakham house style.</td>
<td>Read the general guidelines and EE survival guide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until 17th Jan</td>
<td>Think about your subject area and possible topic.</td>
<td>Fill in supervisor application form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th Jan</td>
<td>Hand in <strong>application form</strong> to your ToK teacher.</td>
<td>Start thinking about research, when you have been told who your supervisor is, make contact and arrange a meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th Jan (SLW)</td>
<td><strong>EE workshops</strong> in ICT Dept. – research, sources, organisation, plagiarism, bibliographies...</td>
<td>Continue with research, arrange <strong>Reference Interview with Library</strong>...if you haven’t done so yet, do more research/note taking over Easter holidays. Meet your supervisor to talk about your research question!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24th Jan (AAM)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31st Jan (AML)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7th Feb (ARB)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>By 14th March</td>
<td>Show <strong>evidence of research</strong> to your supervisor and <strong>hand in finalised research question (progress sheet)</strong> to SLW.</td>
<td>Do more research, note taking in Easter holidays and half term.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## EE Timetable and Deadlines 2011

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<tr>
<td>6th - 10th June</td>
<td><strong>EE week</strong> - everything you need to remember revisited!! Important, Monday, period 1, meet downstairs in the Library. <strong>Refresher on formal presentation of scholarly writing.</strong></td>
<td>Get started! Get over the empty page... don't forget to reference every idea which is not yours!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th June</td>
<td><strong>EE week</strong> - hand in first 2000 words to supervisor.</td>
<td>Keep going, the end is near!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th June</td>
<td><strong>First draft</strong> to supervisors by 8.00 am and electronically to SEA2 so it can be submitted to turnitin.com.</td>
<td>Arrange meeting with supervisor to discuss draft before end of term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Work on final version.</td>
<td>Check formal presentation with Library, if necessary. Finish final version!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Meet with your supervisor to discuss final version - make final alterations (including 64 EEs).</td>
<td>Get in touch with supervisor on the first day back to arrange meeting to look at final version AND arrange time for <strong>viva voce</strong>!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th - 30th September</td>
<td>All changes should be made. Final meeting with supervisor and <strong>viva voce</strong>.</td>
<td>Send final electronic version to SEA2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Oct</td>
<td><strong>ALL</strong> EEs to be handed in.</td>
<td>Hand 3 printed copies to SEA in the IB office.</td>
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**Note:** Please ensure you adhere to all deadlines and submission requirements.
Support for the EE within ToK

- Generous ToK timetable allocation
- ToK allocation allowed for EE provision
  - EE Seminar (2h00, SLW)
  - Then EE Seminar (2h00, SLW & DT)
  - Then EE Seminar (1h20, SLW & DT); ICT session (0h40, ICT)
  - Then EE Seminar (1h20, SLW & DT); ICT session (0h40, DT)
  - Now EE Seminar (1h20, SLW & DT); ICT session (1h20, DT)

- Question: ICT session within *context* of a ToK lesson?
Extended Essay: Nature

• “high-level research…"
• “…major piece of formally presented, structured writing”
“EE: Assessment Objectives

1. plan and pursue a research project with intellectual initiative and insight
2. formulate a precise research question
3. gather and interpret material from sources appropriate to the research question
4. structure a reasoned argument in response to the research question on the basis of the material gathered
EE: Assessment Objectives

5. present their extended essay in a format appropriate to the subject, acknowledging sources in one of the established academic ways

6. use the terminology and language appropriate to the subject with skill and understanding

7. apply analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject, with an understanding of the implications and the context of their research
Necessity, the Mother of Invention

• Students lack experience of conducting research at this level, specifically
  – The research process
  – Locating reliable information from a variety of sources, including books, subscription databases and the Internet
  – Documenting sources to an academically recognised standard
  – ICT skills necessary for the formal presentation of scholarly writing
The IBDP Library and Librarian

• An adequately resourced school library should provide access to a sufficient range of books that are relevant and current, as well as subscription databases and Websites.

• A professionally qualified school librarian is an information specialist who should be well versed in mediating access to the library’s store of knowledge, as well as the documentation of the sources of that knowledge.
Killing Two Birds with One Stone

- Basic ICT skills required for the formal presentation of scholarly writing; e.g.:
  - Page breaks
  - Styles, to automatically generate a ToC

- Working with other people’s ideas (academic honesty)
  - Citations and References in a Bibliography
Three, No Four, Actually

• Oakham APA: A house style for the formal presentation of scholarly writing
  – Make the formal requirements of the EE explicit
  – Provide concrete examples of those requirements
  – Show what an ‘EE’ formally presented according to Oakham APA would look like

• Convince EE Supervisors
The EE and ToK

• “Whichever subject is chosen, the extended essay shares with the theory of knowledge (TOK) course a concern with interpreting and evaluating evidence, and constructing reasoned arguments”

• A far deeper connection: research is a fundamental way of knowing
The EE in ToK?

- The traditional ToK diagram – research?
Celebrating 10 years of the IB at Oakham

The Librarian and ToK

• “The librarian must be concerned not only with that which is known, but also with the intellectual condition of the state of knowing” (Jesse Shera)

• A long history of assembling, classifying and mediating access to human knowledge
Epistemological Assumptions
1. Everything I need to know is available on the ‘Internet’, for free
2. Everything I need to know I can find with Google
3. (Un)surprisingly often, Google finds everything I need to know on Wikipedia
4. Wikipedia knows everything
Default Epistemological Strategy
1. Google
2. Wikipedia
Epistemological Crisis
1. Information is not knowledge
2. Not all information is created equal
3. Not all information is visible to Google
4. Google creates an illusion of competence
5. Google is not neutral
6. Wikipedia is fundamentally unstable
Pedagogical imperative
1. What counts as knowledge
2. Research, formal and informal, primary and secondary, is a fundamental way of knowing
3. Google (et al.) has an agenda
4. The real problem of Wikipedia
5. More certain ways of knowing
6. Poor is the pupil who does not surpass his master (Leonardo da Vinci)
A House Style for the Formal Presentation of the Extended Essay

The Diploma Programme: Extended Essay Guide (IBO, 2007, p. 4), hereafter referred to as the Guide, states clearly that the research process and its formal outcomes “are of primary importance in the extended essay”. Fundamental to the research process and its formal outcomes is the documentation of sources, which is also the foundation upon which academic honesty rests (IBO, 2009), so much so that the Guide states:

An extended essay must reflect intellectual honesty in research practices and provide the reader with the exact sources of quotations, ideas and points of view through accurate bibliographies and referencing, and failure to comply with this requirement will be viewed as plagiarism and will, therefore, be treated as a case of malpractice (p. 16).

The Guide expresses no preference when it comes to documentation style, provided that it is academically recognised and applied consistently. Given that academically recognised documentation styles generally form part of broader style guides for academic writing, and that the extended essay makes formal requirements beyond documentation style, it makes sense to include the relevant style guide in considerations of a particular documentation style.

After careful consideration, APA was chosen as the basis of a house style for
The Lesson: The EE and ToK

-----Original Message-----
From: Standard Bank [mailto:ibsupport@standardbank.co.za]
Sent: 02 September 2010 09:42 AM
To:
Subject: Electronic Funds Payment From...

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Hello,
James Du Plesis made an electronic funds transfer to your account. The details of this transaction are shown below.
Amount: R39 470.00
Description: PAYMENT
Reference #: TL55
To view the transaction, please https://www5.encrypt.standardbank.co.za
If you have any questions related to this message or the funds transfer, please contact James Du Plesis.
Please do not reply to this message as your message will not go anywhere.
Sincerely,
Standard Bank

http://minyanmaps.com/jeje/index.html
The Lesson: Google

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Information Obesity

Information obesity, like physical obesity, is essentially a consequence of overconsumption combined with poor diet and lack of exercise (Whitworth, 2009).

Two Common Sources of Information

Examples of which follow...

**A book as a source.**

According to Whitworth, “obesity is not simply the result of an overload [but] also... a decrease in quality” (2009, p. xi).

**A website as a source.**

In the same way as “physical obesity is not simply the result of too much food, so information obesity is caused by more than just ‘information overload’” (Whitworth, 2010).
The Lesson: ICT Skills

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Bibliography

http://130.88.43.233/elwww/informationobesity/summary.html
Improvements?

- Yes: overall core points average was raised from 1.3 to 1.8
- No: not consistent
Dear Mr Toerien,

I herewith wanted to thank you for your excellent Oakham APA EE format. It has helped me a great deal with my Extended Essay: In the past, I spent up to 2 hours just editing one piece of my essays/course works and was still not content with their layout, while when writing the EE I did not have to worry about anything regarding the format, as it was miraculously "already there", and thus could fully concentrate on the essay content. It was also much more convenient to work in an essay body that is properly laid out. The Oakham APA gave me security that my layout was correct, made it easier to work on Computer and saved me a lot of time. Therefore I would like to thank you again for this truly remarkable and unique Oakham APA format! By now, I have adapted the "Oakham House Style" for all of my course works and will use them for future ones, and, if I may, hope to use it for university as well.

Kind regards,
Martin Szöke
Significant research contribution

• *The impact of Library interventions to support the IB Extended Essay at Oakham School*, by Jennifer Toerien, MA PGCE
Concluding Remarks

• The IBDP, as an inquiry-based approach to education rooted in a constructivist approach to learning (Tilke, 2011), is ideally suited to an education for the 21st century

• The core components of ToK and the EE have a value that far exceeds their combined 3 points

• There is a profound epistemological connection between ToK and the EE

• Collaboration between the IB Department, the Library and ICT can result in highly effective interventions that directly benefit IBDP students in their EE

• More broadly, these benefits extend beyond the EE to the work of the entire school in preparing students for access to and success at university
Thank you.

- Simone slw@oakham.rutland.sch.uk
- Darryl dt@oakham.rutland.sch.uk