



Theory of Knowledge Networking

Session

Eastern Henrico Recreation Center

April 11, 2019

Session Agenda:

8:30-- 9:00	Breakfast
9:00-- 10:00	How to Write Knowledge Questions & Tips for the Presentation
10:00 -- 10:10	Break
10:10 – 11:25	Tips for Writing a Successful Essay
11:25 – 11:35	Break
11:35 – 12:00	Introduction to the Upcoming Curriculum
12:00 -- 12:30	Questions/Networking
12:30 -- 1:30	Lunch

Session Minutes/Discussion Notes:

Session 1: Knowledge Questions and Tips for the Presentation

- TOK focus is KNOWLEDGE, not real-world problems
- Primary Objective: ANSWER knowledge questions (students only have to write knowledge question for the Presentation, not the essay)
- Easy Way to Write Knowledge Questions –
 - Stage 1: Begin with questions that begin with “How do we know...?” (these are basic knowledge questions) and follow with a claim. **Ex: How do we know the earth is round?**
 - Stage 2: Answer that question. **Ex: We can see pics of it; it’s mathematically proven, etc.**
 - Stage 3: Identify the concept(s) that underlies that answer. (see list of concepts in session resources) **Ex: mathematical computations**
 - Stage 4: Write a new question using one of the concepts. This will be your Knowledge Question **Ex: What’s the role of mathematical calculation in establishing knowledge claims in the natural sciences?**

- These are better knowledge questions because they are applicable in broader, general situations.
- Observations and questions from trying the 4-step process: The multistep process gets you to a much stronger question; Is there usually a moment of realization for these students that as humans we naturally do this as we work through everyday problems?; Students need to be able to apply the question to other situations; Students often lean toward negation questions – is that ok? Students at this age are so used to seeing things as absolutes and this can be the first class to show them a spectrum of possibilities. Though there’s a tendency for students to suddenly believe that we simply can’t KNOW anything, we need to help them leave the course with an understanding that there are many ways we do know things even if it’s without absolute certainty.
- The Presentation: Completing the form for moderation – teacher comments
 - The teachers have opportunity to interpret the results for the moderators, but copying and pasting points from the rubric are not very helpful to them.
 - Therefore, if the actual presentation was much better or much worse than the outline, address that overtly in your comments. “I know that the knowledge question in the outline is poor; however, on the day of the presentation, the question the student used was actually _____ and s/he also...” (When things match up, you can write, “this outline accurately reflects the presentation.”)
 - Include specific examples.
 - Questions about the presentation:
 - Should we write long narratives in the comments/what is sufficient? Don’t rewrite the script of their presentation, but describe it instead.
 - Are we building up credentials with IB when our marks are aligned with the marks determined by IB? No, and expect that you’ll get better with more experience. Plus, we tend to overmark our own students because they know where they began and how far they’ve come.
 - How much support do you offer the students in the formulation of the knowledge question and other elements of the presentation process? It will depend on the context of how much time you have them (100 hours or two full years). You could give them plenty of practice and feedback along the way of the course if you have time, or you can do it in one swoop, but don’t create things for them. Review and give it back for refinement, but let them craft it.
 - It needs to be a real life situation. So if there’s a song or a piece of art, there still needs to be a situation where there are two different perspectives. So a song or a piece of art is not, in and of itself, is not a situation. But two critics who disagree would be.
 - When is the new curriculum? Fall 2020

Session 2: Tips for Writing a Successful Essay

- The only knowledge question that the students have to answer is in the essay.

- Must offer counterclaims: A counterclaim to what? A knowledge claim & A counterclaim; An interpretation – A counterclaim; An answer to the question – A counterclaim (different perspective);
- They will get the answers to the question based on the real world situation the student chooses to explore.
- If a counterclaim is invalid, don't bring it up unless you're going to invalidate it.
- If a counterclaim is valid, and it undermines your original claim, then you need to change your position. (Question: Should they change it back from the beginning of the essay or should they show the process of how they had to change their position? Answers varied – a) could lack clarity if changes midway through essay; b) it shows the progression of learning; c) no right or wrong answer to this question but remember that examiners are reading hundreds of essays and need clarity (and lack of clarity can lead to 3-4, but if it's clear it can help their score)
- Begin with examples. Participants pair to work through facilitator's planning page for students (in resources) to create two examples.
- Organization of the Essay (a comparison and contrast)
- Block by block vs. point by point – both can work well. Organize based on the answer to the question that the particular example provides. The area of knowledge is not the determining factor. (see PowerPoint slides in resources for examples/visuals)
- Participant Question: Given length of essay and analytical expectations of the students' communication, would it be appropriate to encourage 3 examples in more depth than going for 4 that can't be covered as deeply? Strive for balance of analytical depth among all examples regardless of how many there are; let that be a determining factor for what/how many to include. Multiple paths can get to that point.
- Discourage a student from having all four examples that have the same answer. There should be at least two different answers to the questions and explanation/analysis of why they are different.
- Once you have all of your examples, then decide on the order in which you want to put them (and why – students should have a rationale)
- Observations and questions from the activity: Is a chronological order a good way to organize? Only if the answer is best served by that approach; other ways to do it?
- Transitions are CRITICAL – they establish the relationship between the ideas in adjacent paragraphs. Actively teach how to use transitions to enhance the clarity of examples and analysis.
- Answer Knowledge Questions: The prescribed title is a knowledge question or it implies a knowledge question. The essay must be an answer to that question. Students do not necessarily have to write any more knowledge questions. If you're worried about an examiner taking the criteria literally, provide a thorough explanation.
- What constitutes implications? Ask students, "So what? Why is this important?" Conclusion is a good place to address them. Some teachers recommend referencing implications in the thesis then addressing them at close of each example.

- Could implications be personal – why is it important to me, why is it impactful to me? Examiners have been encouraged to avoid anecdotal evidence, which personal approaches could be/become.

Session 3: The New Curriculum

- Curriculum is still in development; not finalized. Nothing is official until the guide is released.
- In Feb and March there will be subject-specific seminars. These will give first glimpse of the real changes and provides the first copies of the guide. This is only for teachers who currently teach TOK and will continue. New teachers would be overwhelmed because it will refer to what's being done now and what's to come.
- Textbooks: limited publishers (Hodder) working on them, but the old ones won't have the necessary info for the new curriculum.

Session 4: General questions and networking

- How many examiners are there? Not enough ☺
- Is there a site for the new curriculum? There's only a curriculum review report in Programme Resource Center (My IB)
- Participant-led discussions ensued at each table.