

## IB Theory of Knowledge: Content-Related\*

TOK is concerned with the development of **key concepts** of the course:

- **Knowledge Issues**—questions or topics for exploration that rise to the surface when a spirit of inquiry is applied to the process of knowing itself;
- **Perspectives**—involving self-awareness versus an awareness of others. Students should gain a growing awareness of their own thinking while recognizing some of their own unstated beliefs or assumptions. Simultaneously students will encounter personal differences and similarities, recognizing that others may have absorbed different cultural, ideological, and personal assumptions. Open-mindedness and the capacity to recognize and consider other perspectives should allow that “other people, with their differences, can also be right”;
- **Critical Thinking**—it follows that knowledge issues and various perspectives demand reflection, examination and analysis. Students should learn to critique arguments, raising four further important concepts of the TOK course involved:

- ◆ **Knowledge claims:** these are assertions that something is the case. Students learn to distinguish factual claims, a claim of values within ethics or a claim of religious belief. Ambiguities, subjective shadings of language and social/cultural gaps between what is said and what is intended are examined;
- ◆ **Assumptions:** these are the unarticulated “givens”. Identifying the most relevant and significant assumptions (cultural, ideological, personal, geographical, economical) is likely to clarify what is meant or intended by a knowledge claim. Seeking buried assumptions is useful when dealing with differences between what different groups know and how they know it;
- ◆ **Justification:** these are the grounds for accepting a knowledge claim or the support associated with advancing it. These may take a number of different forms:
  - ✓ **Reasoning.** Deductive...? Inductive...?
  - ✓ **Evidence.** Persuasive and why...? Which WOK involved in gathering/evaluating it...?
  - ✓ **Memory.** Possible fallibilities...? Can it be corroborated...? Implications in AOKs...?
  - ✓ **Expert testimony.** Qualifications in relevant field...? Commercial/ideological interests providing funding...?
  - ✓ **Faith.** The rejection of the need for justification, or the justification itself...?
- ◆ **Implications:** these relate to consequences. Acceptance of claims carries many implications for our attitudes, our sense of responsibility, our actions.

### Ways of Knowing:

- Sense perception
- Language
- Reasoning
- Emotion
- Imagination
- Faith
- Intuition
- Memory

### Areas of Knowledge:

- *Ethics.*
- *History.*
- *The Arts.*
- *Mathematics.*
- *Natural Sciences.*
- *Human Sciences.*
- *Systems:*
  - Religious Knowledge*
  - Indigenous Knowledge*

\*based on “*Perspectives on a curious subject: What is IB theory of knowledge all about?*”

by Eileen Dombrowski, John Mackenzie, & Mike Clarke