THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

In order to secure success for their candidates, schools are strongly recommended to ensure that this report is read in detail by all theory of knowledge (TOK) teachers, and the Diploma Programme Coordinators.

Overall grade boundaries

Boundaries for this session were set as below:

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0 - 4	5 - 10	11 - 16	17 - 22	23 - 30

Teachers are reminded that the essay score is doubled and added to the presentation score to give a maximum possible total of 30 marks.

Statistical Summary

	November 2016	November 2015	**% change**
English	**5087**	4824	**+5.45%**
French	**1**	0	**N/A**
Spanish	**4600**	2778	**+65.58%**
German	**0**	0	**N/A**
Chinese	**34**	38	**-10.52%**
Japanese	**9**	N/A	**N/A**
Total candidates	**9730**	7640	**+27.37%**

Section 1: The essay

Component grade boundaries

Essay grade boundaries for this session were set during the grade award meeting after extensive reading and discussion of scripts, as follows:

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0-1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-10

These boundaries remained unchanged from those applied in the May 2015, November 2015 and May 2016 sessions.

Examiners

Thanks are extended to 48 examiners who assessed theory of knowledge (TOK) essays this session. The comments in a document such as this tend to focus on weaknesses of assessed work, but there are many rewards associated with the opportunity to appraise TOK work from around the world. Teachers who wish to become examiners can visit http://www.ibo.org/informationfor/examiners/ for more information (note that teachers must have two years' experience of teaching TOK before examining). It is often the case that teachers find examining helpful both in terms of their own understanding of the course and for the insight afforded with respect to the strengths and weaknesses of their own candidates.

General comments

The most prominent feature of the results taken as a whole for this session is some decline in quality from the corresponding results in November 2015. However, the overall picture masks once again a severe dichotomy between performance in the English and Spanish language domains.

Sadly it must also be noted once again that there are grave concerns about the quality of essays submitted in Spanish, and an overwhelming proportion of the overall decline in performance must be attributed to the extremely large number of new Spanish-language schools registering candidates this session. This fact makes it all the more important that this report (together with the subject guide, teacher support material and other associated documents) is read and understood by all TOK teachers.

It is worth reiterating that some candidates still seem to be unfamiliar with features that are new in the current subject guide, such as the map metaphor for knowledge and the knowledge framework, which might be helpful in analysing knowledge questions underlying the prescribed titles. Also candidates should make sure that discussion is presented with a certain level of abstraction using the key concepts of TOK in order that it may be generalised sufficiently to answer the prescribed titles.

As in May 2016, the focus in the first section of the report is on the following:

> **Some factors affecting the quality of essay work**
>
> 1) The implications of the lack of compulsory content in the course
>
> 2) Misunderstandings about the role of knowledge questions
>
> 3) Engagement with ways of knowing
>
> 4) The distinction between learning of knowledge and production of knowledge
>
> 5) The origins and choice of factual content in essays

Optionality in the course

In this edition of the TOK course, teachers and candidates are advised to study six areas of knowledge (see TOK subject guide, pages 8 and 28). In addition, there is a suggestion that four ways of knowing should be given particular attention (see TOK subject guide, pages 8 and 23). As the numbers of areas and ways presented in the subject guide exceeds these figures, there is freedom of choice as to which parts of the course can be studied. The subject guide provides for these choices in the interests of flexibility with regard to the local circumstances of schools and the interests and preferences of teachers and candidates. Fairness of assessment within this structure dictates that prescribed titles cannot specify parts of the course, and so one of the first hurdles encountered by candidates is to make decisions as to which of them should form the bulk of the essay content.

The TOK essay is comparative in nature, and indeed many recent prescribed titles indicate explicitly that two areas of knowledge should be included in a response. It is important to be able to draw contrasts between the areas that are selected, and evidence suggests that the capacity to do this is uppermost in candidates' minds when they make these decisions. This is as it should be, but a sophisticated analysis is also dependent upon finding points of similarity across the spectrum of knowledge, and this should be borne in mind as choices of areas are deliberated and made. The teacher's role in providing guidance to candidates should include some discussion on this matter as the decisions settled upon will have a strong bearing upon the eventual quality of the essay.

> **Key Points**
>
> - The generic nature of current prescribed titles means that great care must be invested in the choice of parts of the course to be examined
>
> - While it is advisable to select areas of knowledge that show distinct contrasts, comparisons that allow points of similarity are also crucial to the balance and sophistication of the response

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Misunderstandings about knowledge questions

It is clear that some candidates (and some of their teachers) have a poor understanding of what is required when attempting to respond to a prescribed essay title. The following is presented as an attempt to clarify the intentions of the TOK essay task with respect to knowledge questions.

The form of a prescribed title can vary to some extent:

It can be just a question:

> *To what extent do the concepts that we use shape the conclusions that we reach? (May 2016)*

It can be a question followed by a clarification indicating how to respond to it:

> *Is explanation a prerequisite for prediction? Explore this question in relation to two areas of knowledge. (November 2015)*

It can be a claim followed by a question or clarification indicating how to respond to it:

> *"The main reason knowledge is produced is to solve problems." To what extent do you agree with this statement? (November 2015)*
>
> *"Without application in the world, the value of knowledge is greatly diminished." Consider this claim with respect to two areas of knowledge. (May 2016)*

In all of these cases, **the task is to respond to the title exactly as it has been presented**. Under no circumstances should the candidate immediately present a knowledge question ("my knowledge question is...") such that it appears as if the title has been replaced by it. The essay task is not about "finding" a central knowledge question to which the rest of the essay is a response; that is rather a central requirement for the TOK presentation.

In order to construct a successful response to the title, it will be necessary to establish at least tentative or partial or provisional answers to a number of subsidiary questions as the essay unfolds. For example:

> *Is the availability of more data always helpful in the production of knowledge? Explore this question with reference to two areas of knowledge. (November 2016)*

Under what conditions might the availability of more data enhance knowledge production? Possibly when data previously available was sparse, or in areas where data plays an important role in the construction of knowledge…

In what areas does this seem to be the case? Maybe in the study of ancient history, or on the frontiers of modern science…

What counts as data? Perhaps restricted to the empirical domain, or expanded to include expert opinion in areas such as the arts or ethics…

Under what circumstances is more data unhelpful in the production of knowledge? Maybe when it is redundant and adds nothing to what is already firmly established, or when attempting to form a personal response to a work of art…

Is the production of knowledge possible in the absence of data? Maybe it could be argued that areas like ethics or mathematics are about reaching conclusions from axiomatic foundations rather than being built upon data…

When would knowledge production benefit from ignoring data that is nevertheless available? Possibly when the data has not been verified to the expected standards of the discipline…

To what extent has the increasing availability of data altered methods and opportunities for producing knowledge? Lots of arguments possible here about the rising phenomenon of "big data"…

Has data always been valued in knowledge production? Some cultures in the past have looked down upon an empirical approach to knowledge acquisition…

[The above is for illustrative purposes only and is not offered as a model approach to this title.]

Ideally, such questions and the discussions that they inspire can be organized into a logical sequence such that they form the backbone of the essay – each contributing to the overall answer *to the prescribed title*. The content of each paragraph might constitute a response to one of these questions. Hence such knowledge questions can act as markers in the development of the argument and pave the way from title to conclusion. As described here, the identification or formulation of these questions can play a crucial role in the exploration and planning phases of the essay task, and when the final essay is constructed it may not be necessary or desirable to the flow of the arguments for the questions to be stated explicitly. A sequence of paragraphs each prefaced by "my next knowledge question is…" does not read well and is likely to appear disjointed.

So in summary, knowledge questions are NOT "alternatives" to the title, and they are best thought of as aids to the exploring and planning processes such that they become woven into the analysis but not necessarily stated explicitly in the final essay.

It is possible that the numerous knowledge questions presented in subject reports over the past few years have contributed to the misunderstanding that candidates should "find" their own knowledge question right at the start (even though the reports themselves never suggest that this is what the candidate should do), or indeed fill their essays with knowledge questions and then mostly ignore them thereafter. The prominent inclusion in recent subject reports of specific knowledge questions related to each prescribed title has been with the intention of promoting an understanding of what they look like. Perhaps what was missing was an explanation of the way in which they can be made to relate to one another so as to underpin an entire analysis – this is what the exposition above is designed to address.

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

> **Key Points**
>
> - While there is a great deal of choice available to the candidate in terms of alternative titles and parts of the TOK course that can legitimately be explored within the one title that is chosen, the exact wording of the title must be respected and examined very carefully.
>
> - Writing "my knowledge question is..." near the start of the essay is usually a recipe for disaster as it means that, in effect, the title has been displaced.
>
> - Knowledge questions should be thought of as way-stations on the journey to an answer to the prescribed title – useful in explicit form while exploring the title and planning a response to it, but not necessarily stated explicitly in the final text.
>
> - Possible knowledge questions have been excluded from this report, but they can be found in the corresponding set of examiner preparation notes for this session.

The role of ways of knowing

At the last course revision, the number of ways of knowing included in the subject guide was increased from four to eight. The rationale for this change was not to boost the relative contribution of ways of knowing to the course but rather to emphasize that the set of attributes available to the quest for knowledge is more complex and interactive than was previously suggested by the more restricted suite of four (see TOK subject guide, pages 8 and 27). In the spirit of this change, teachers and candidates are strongly encouraged to be very circumspect about treating ways of knowing in isolation. Unfortunately, it seems that many schools still take precisely this approach to TOK, with an extended tour of ways of knowing before addressing other aspects of the course. A consequence is that a selection of ways of knowing is often "laid on the table" at the start of essays in a way that does not prefigure sound analysis. Examiners often find themselves reading something like:

"In this essay I will be focusing upon the human sciences and history as areas of knowledge, and my ways of knowing will be intuition and memory."

While most titles do require a clear statement of areas of knowledge to be addressed, there is no corresponding expectation for ways of knowing (except perhaps for the minority of titles which take ways of knowing as the main focus). A definitive identification of them at the start of the essay is often unnecessarily limiting for the subsequent analysis.

As a consequence of the seemingly widespread practice of affording ways of knowing a privileged position in course structure, there is a strong tendency for candidates to treat ways of knowing as the primary elements of TOK analysis. It might be the case that the way the course is presented in the subject guide, with each WOK necessarily introduced in turn in order to describe its fundamental properties clearly, has encouraged this structure. This has led to a number of serious issues. Firstly, candidates tend to invoke WOKs as "answers" rather than starting points for analysis, as if naming them were enough. The precise nature of emotion or imagination, for example, is often not considered worthy of attention. Many candidates write about how ways of knowing are "used" as if they were ingredients that ought to be "baked" together in order to generate various forms of knowledge. This is simplistic at best, and highly misleading. A deep understanding of the role of ways of knowing leads to the insight that just

International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

because a particular way of knowing is used to justify a claim does not guarantee that it is knowledge. It is how ways of knowing are used that supports knowledge claims.

Secondly, the effort to make ways of knowing fit with what is understood about various areas of knowledge produces some spurious connections and rather artificial constructs – we learn, for example, from many essays that history is somehow an outgrowth of memory, thus neatly sidestepping the actual role of the historian. Ways of knowing tend to be forced into the analysis in places where they do not and cannot enlighten. Sometimes they are mentioned seemingly just for the sake of making sure they are "name-checked" in the essay even though they provide no insight at all:

"Through sense perception I observed the motion of the planet…"

"With the help of reason I reached my conclusion…"

"Using language I read the historical account…"

The most recent subject guide gave pride of place to a set of knowledge frameworks that were designed to provide appropriate tools for TOK analysis (see TOK subject guide, page 28 onwards). While ways of knowing are frequently mentioned within these frameworks (particularly in connection with methodologies), the promotion of the frameworks was a response to some of the problems described above that stem from the limitations in the competence of ways of knowing to achieve successful TOK analysis on their own. Teachers are strongly encouraged to consider shaping their treatment of various parts of the course through the use of the framework tools. While the subject guide states that the knowledge framework is not compulsory, neither are the ways of knowing required to form the foundation for addressing many of the prescribed titles.

Key Points

- The subject guide makes it clear that ways of knowing almost always operate together, and this should be reflected in the approach taken to them in essays.

- The great majority of current prescribed titles invite candidates to select and indicate the areas of knowledge to be explored in the essay, but, as a rule, no similar imperative applies to ways of knowing in these titles.

- Offering an explicit selection of ways of knowing at the start of the essay tends to undermine the claim above that they work together.

The candidate and the subject professional as knowers

As (a) TOK is a course about knowledge and knowing, and (b) knowledge is a human construct, it is important to be clear about the relation between the two in TOK work. Discussion of how knowledge is produced by expert practitioners in subject disciplines is a central aim of the TOK course, but there must also be room for exploring the ways in which other groups and individuals, such as the TOK student, come to know.

A phrase such as "the production of knowledge" (November 2016 titles #2 and #4) gives a cue that there should be an emphasis on the former, whereas "the acquisition of knowledge" (November 2016 title #1) allows for more latitude. One reason why the distinction between

shared knowledge and personal knowledge was introduced was to draw attention to the need for balance in this respect.

Key Points

- Candidates are advised to look carefully at the wording of prescribed titles in order to ascertain what kind of engagement with knowledge is being elicited

---

Aspects of essay content

As with previous sessions, a wide variety of examples was on offer in essays, but a preponderance of a particular group of them drew some concerns among examiners. Some examples appear with great regularity but, with some additional thought, could have been substituted by others that would function at least equally effectively, and perhaps have offered additional insights. Many examples have much potential when they have been mastered by candidates and applied in situations where they support or illustrate the exact claims being made about knowledge. Unfortunately, this is often not the case.

Some examples stem directly from candidate experience in other Diploma Programme (DP) components, and as such are to be welcomed as evidence for a primary aim of TOK in action. However, there may be other such points of contact across the DP that could also be exploited. Candidates often included their own experiences with extended essays and internally assessed tasks, and this is to be encouraged as long as they are described in enough detail to illustrate the claims at large.

Examiners are aware that the ideal of the TOK essay as the culmination of the student's personal adventure to date in knowledge is perhaps unrealistic for many candidates on grounds of the limits of personal experience or motivation, but it must be pointed out that the constraints imposed by these factors can be exacerbated by the temptation to rely on external sources designed specifically to "help" with the task. As there is a finite quantity of such material available, shared patterns of essay structure and content across schools often become evident to examiners. If a candidate's first move is to search the internet for material that responds directly to a prescribed title, there is no way back from the "contamination" of thought that has occurred, and the short-circuiting of the process of internalization often leads to correspondingly poor work. Teachers are strongly urged to lead their candidates to formulate a personal and independent response to a title before allowing the wider world into the task that lies before them.

Key Points

- Candidates are strongly advised to resist the temptation to search for responses to prescribed titles on "help" sites or elsewhere as, once accessed, they contaminate the candidate's thinking and cannot be "unthought".

- Some examples are inherently ineffective because they are simplistic and cannot support the quality of analysis that is required in TOK.

- Some examples are employed ineffectively because they do not support the point being made or because they are described without due care for accuracy.

- Some examples have their origins in other DP courses, and these should be generally encouraged.

- Fresh examples are more likely to be effective, but even relatively common ones can work well if they are used with respect for their nature.

Feedback on specific titles

1. "The acquisition of knowledge is more a matter of recognition than of judgement." Evaluate this claim with reference to two areas of knowledge.

This was a relatively unpopular title. Many candidates struggled to characterize recognition and judgement in ways that helped them apply the concepts to various areas of knowledge. Weaker candidates tried a simple mapping onto sense perception and reason respectively, but this maneuver only succeeded in distorting the title. One source of concern was the tendency of some candidates to think of recognition and judgement as ways of evaluating knowledge itself rather than processes that can be employed in order to reach a state of knowledge – e.g. judging pre-existing knowledge rather than applying the process of judging to some raw material in order to produce knowledge from it.

2. Is the availability of more data always helpful in the production of knowledge? Explore this question with reference to two areas of knowledge.

This was a hugely popular title. While candidates had little difficulty in presenting examples of situations in which more data would be beneficial to knowledge production, far fewer essays concerned themselves with the possible differences between using more data and merely having more of it available. Sometimes the concept of data was left very open without discussion or qualifying explanation, leaving the impression that raw all material for knowledge construction is data. Other candidates shifted from data to information and did not always explain the relationship and whether the two terms were synonymous. Better essays found opportunities to explore scenarios in which additional data was either redundant or interfered with clarity, and discussed the advantages and concerns associated with the rise of "big data" and its effects on traditional methods of generating knowledge.

3. "Conflicting knowledge claims always involve a difference in perspective." Discuss with reference to two areas of knowledge.

Responses to this title demanded a very careful unpacking of what might be meant by perspective as this process was crucial for the development of a cogent essay. Unfortunately, many candidates did not fully succeed in this endeavor – some conflated perspective with perception; others claimed that it was a concoction of a variety of ways of knowing; others again were satisfied with equating it with a sort of amorphous "viewpoint" on matters. Given the centrality of the concept of perspective in the subject guide, teachers are recommended to devote more resources to discussing and understanding it. The second serious problem in many essays was a lack of care with regard to logical structure – the primary task for the candidate was to reason "backwards" from conflicting claims to uncover the perspectives that generated them; not to explore whether different perspectives can generate conflicting claims. The power of the word "always" was sometimes overlooked.

4. "Error is as valuable as accuracy in the production of knowledge." To what extent is this the case in two areas of knowledge?

This was another very popular title. In many essays, error was equated exclusively with "mistake", which immediately narrowed the scope for discussion. Furthermore, many candidates who chose the natural sciences as one of their areas made no distinction between accuracy and precision. Both of these failings can be attributed to an unquestioning approach to the use of dictionaries. Stronger essays explored the concept of error on a broader front; often with awareness that error is inevitable in certain areas and that these areas have developed methodologies that seek to quantify and minimize it. Some candidates rather carelessly employed cases of serendipity in which it was hard to identify the existence of error. There was a widespread recognition of the ubiquity of "trial and error" as a method for finding things out, but few candidates managed to link it explicitly with notions of falsification in science or approximation in mathematics.

5. "Metaphor makes no contribution to knowledge but is essential for understanding." Evaluate this statement with reference to two areas of knowledge.

This title was quite popular in English, but not very popular in Spanish. Essays varied widely in their treatment of metaphor. Some offered detailed accounts of sources and targets and the relations between them. However, a common weakness was to build the essay on a vague or inadequate understanding of metaphor that seemed to leave no daylight between metaphor and symbolism, or admitted models, equations and other entities into the overall concept. Some enthusiastic literature-inclined candidates took the title as an opportunity to dilate on this area (in which students are likely to be most familiar with metaphor). Better candidates recognized the imperative that a successful essay needed to develop a workable distinction between knowledge and understanding, despite the overlap between them, although in some essays the attempt to achieve this came to overshadow the work as a whole.

6. "Ways of knowing operate differently in personal and shared knowledge." Assess this claim.

This was an extremely unpopular title in English, but quite popular in Spanish. Candidates mostly struggled in developing coherent responses to it – in a number of ways. Many essays just named the ways of knowing that were most active in each of the two realms of knowledge, although some more considered responses looked at the possibility that these combinations of WOKs produced collectively distinct operating "machinery" in each case for the production of knowledge. In general, the title seemed to prompt awkward maneuvers on the part of the candidate, although some managed to inject other useful concepts into the mix that permitted the ways of knowing themselves to be examined with reference to them.

Section 2: The presentation

Component grade boundaries

The following boundaries were applied for this session.

Grade:	E	D	C	B	A
Mark range:	0 - 2	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 8	9 - 10

General

This is the fourth session for which the presentation component of TOK has been moderated through the TOK presentation planning document (TK/PPD). There has been a noticeable improvement in the effort taken to complete the documents and more attention has been paid to the requirements for each box. There is undoubtedly a correlation between those which are properly completed and the higher marks awarded by the teachers. More have also shown that they are aware that the document must also be clear to a third party -the examiner- not just to themselves and their teachers. Nevertheless, there are still some candidates who show little effort in completing the planning document properly despite knowing that these documents will be used for moderation purposes. Also of concern are TK/PPDs which display very weak (or even no) understanding of the requirements of the nature of the TOK presentation. Of greatest concern are the teacher comments which praise and give high marks to presentations for which there is no evidence that such commendation is deserved or that the presentation is indeed a TOK presentation. Just as with the essays, it was sad to note that most of these concerns refer to presentations in Spanish. Note must be taken of the importance for teachers to prepare themselves adequately in order to be able to guide their students for the presentation component.

Key Points

- Teachers must ensure that they and their candidates understand the nature of the TOK presentation and the requirement to complete the TK/PPD fully and clearly.

- Teachers must study the TOK guide and other TOK materials carefully to ensure that they are clear about the TOK presentation task.

- Candidates and teachers must keep in mind that the TK/PPD will be used for moderation and must therefore ensure that what it states is clear to a third person.

Comments regarding the completion of the presentation planning document (TK/PPD)

The Candidate Section

- *Describe your real-life situation*

While fewer, there are still some candidates who describe more than one real-life situation (RLS). There should only be one RLS. The prompt is in the singular and the assessment instrument refers to a "*specified* **real-life situation".** The RLS must be that: real and a situation. The following examples serve to illustrate what *does not* constitute a RLS: "racism

is the belief that some races are superior to others" and "bullying in schools". They are topics, not situations. Invented, hypothetical situations are not real so they too do not constitute RLSs and they are conducive to vagueness and superficiality. For example "a girl who was religious but then got depressed and wondered if it was right to abandon her religion" or "some people try to commit suicide because of frustration" may possibly have originated from real cases but as they are presented they are not convincing as being real.

The three examples below from this session are of RLSs which have been well described by candidates. Note that the RLSs are substantive -that enabled well-formulated KQs to be extracted.

> Example 2
>
> RLS: When we learned about the theory of relativity and Einstein's other ideas in Year 10 physics, we assumed that it was created by the scientific method, some observation or sophisticated scientific instruments. We were surprised to learn that it was not the scientific method or observation that created the theories –rather it was thought experiments and imaginary situations that Einstein thought of in his free time. We were shocked that science could use this way of knowing to make such an important discovery.
>
> KQ: To what extent is imagination necessary in the production of knowledge?

> Example 2
>
> RLS: Our RLS is a computer software called 'The New Rembrandt' which analysed original paintings by Dutch painter Rembrandt and created a new piece of art based on this artist's style. It recognises different patterns and trends in the artist's paintings, such as different brushstrokes and 3D features of the canvas.
>
> KQ: What knowledge determines when something is a work of art?

> Example 3
>
> RLS: On 11 September 2001 four coordinated suicide attacks on the USA were carried out by Islamist terrorist group Al-Qaeda when 19 terrorists hijacked four passenger airlines. This resulted in the deaths of 2,996 civilians.
>
> KQ: To what extent does our cultural perspective determine our ethical judgments?

- **State** your central knowledge question (this must be expressed as a question)

There were fewer instances of candidates stating more than one knowledge question (KQ). Some KQs were just extensions of the RLS and those do not lend themselves to TOK analysis. The central KQ must be general, open and about the acquisition or production of knowledge.

- ***Explain** the connection between your real-life situation and your knowledge question*

Most candidates completed this part appropriately, although some gave their outline here and then repeated it in the outline section.

- ***Outline** how you intend to develop your presentation, with respect to perspectives, subsidiary knowledge questions, arguments, etc. Responses below can be presented in continuous prose or as bullet points.*

Many candidates are completing this section properly but there are some who do not follow the requirements to give an outline *'with respect to perspectives, subsidiary knowledge questions, arguments'.* In those cases candidates were describing the structure of their presentation instead of showing how they would be developing their presentation. Typical examples were "first I will present my RLS and my KQ, then I will consider two WOKs in relation to the natural sciences, from which my conclusion will follow" or "I will start by presenting myself, then my KQ and then I will consider my arguments and WOKs with my subsidiary KQ, and finally reach a conclusion". These approaches are devoid of content, meaningless for the examiner and cannot have helped the candidate plan the presentation.

On the other hand, candidates who did use the 'outline' as a plan did well indicating their line of argument step by step and showing that it is possible to do this coherently and convincingly in a concise manner. Such student planning linked the RLS to TOK vocabulary in the analysis they presented. The importance of using TOK vocabulary in this section of the document cannot be overemphasized.

- ***Show** how your conclusions have significance for your real-life situation **and to others***

Candidates showed that they were able to do the first part of the rubric well but often ignored the second (**"and to others"**) where they are asked to go beyond their real-life situation to show the significance of their conclusions to other real-life situations**.**

That is indeed the more difficult part and teachers are advised to ensure that their students pay attention to this as it is what distinguishes a top level presentation from other ones. Level 5 of the assessment instrument states, "the outcomes of the analysis are shown to be significant to the chosen real-life situation and to others." Note that from May 2017 the instruction on the TK/PPD is more specific and instead of "and to others" it says "and any related real-life situations".

The Teacher Section

- *Provide **comments** to support your assessment of the presentation*

Most teachers did as required and concentrated on supporting their assessment of the presentation. Some teachers, however, just copied parts of the assessment instrument for the level awarded. This is not at all helpful and neither is copy-pasting the same comment for different presentations. Generic comments do not tell the moderator much about the teacher's marking of a particular presentation.

Key Points

- Teachers need to ensure their candidates complete all parts of the TK/PPD and that they follow the rubric appropriately.

- The TK/PPD must clearly show planning of a theory of knowledge presentation.

- Presentations must be focussed on one central knowledge question extracted from one specified real-life situation.

Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms

Candidates must select their real-life situation (RLS) and extract their knowledge question (KQ) from it. It must be their choice of RLS and their KQ. Prescribed titles may not be used – they are not the students' own questions.

Teachers give a mark for the presentation, not for the individual candidate. For that reason, candidates in group presentations must all receive the same mark. Teachers also need to be very careful when entering and submitting electronic marks on IBIS so that these match the ones they awarded on the TK/PPDs. There were a surprising number of cases where there was a different mark. Entering the wrong marks may significantly impact the moderation of the entire cohort of candidates and potentially disadvantage them.

It is very important that teachers ensure that they do not send more than one TK/PPD for the same presentation. The samples from a school must refer to different presentations. Schools are reminded that the mark awarded is for the presentation so that in group presentations all members of the group must receive the same mark. Likewise the teacher comment must be the same for all TK/PPDs of the same presentation. When IBIS generates a sample for submission that includes two or more candidates from the same group, teachers must use the "Change" button to add a candidate with the same or similar mark that has completed a different presentation.

Very few hand-written TK/PPDs were seen. They are problematic because they are often difficult to read. As stated in the guide, TK/PPDs must be typed. The font size is already determined by the document format. Schools are reminded that candidates may not exceed the 500 word limit in the Candidate Section.

All schools must use the latest version of the TK/PPD. Names and candidate numbers must not be included. The documents must remain anonymous. Please note that the TK/PPD to be used as of May 2017 is now published as a link in the document titled *May 2017 - Forms and cover sheets*. This document is published under **Assessment** on the OCC TOK page. Teachers must **not use** the TK/PPD (November 2016 only) version.

Key Points

- All TK /PPDs in a sample must be for different presentations.

- Candidates in group presentations (two or three) must receive the same mark.

- TK/PPDs must be typed. They should not be handwritten.

- The candidate section may not exceed 500 words.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers must remind their students that they need to show TOK analysis in their TK/PPDs and that listing ways of knowing (WOKs) and/or areas of knowledge (AOKs) does not do that. They need to use TOK vocabulary and show evidence of second order TOK thinking. It is important that teachers guide their students so that they have a concrete RLS from which they extract a KQ which needs to be well formulated and, with this in mind, three teacher-student interactions are recommended in the TOK guide. For the first one, their initial meeting, the student(s) should bring their ideas for the RLS and the formulation of their knowledge question. That is when teachers should advise their students on the KQ. The TOK guide also advises that presentations should take place towards the end of the course, as otherwise students may not have had the chance to develop skills for the formulating of knowledge questions which are key to this task. The guide and the TSM should be studied carefully and used.

Key Points

- A successful presentation will use TOK vocabulary and second order questions.

- Teachers should advise their candidates on their choice of knowledge question.

- Teachers must refer to the guide and make use of other IB TOK materials which support the subject.