**2018 Presentation Examiners Comments**

**General comments**

Once again there was a wide range in the quality of the TK/PPDs reviewed by examiners. As one examiner put it, “there was a huge range and level of suitability...from clear, concise, excellent, and thoroughly analysed to pointless and irrelevant”.

**Key Point**

**• A TOK presentation is centered on second order thinking. Many schools are to be commended for their achievements in this respect whilst others need to make improvements.**

**Comments regarding the completion of the TK/PPD**

Candidates who start with a concrete real-life situation (RLS) and have extracted a viable knowledge question (KQ) tend to do well and focus their presentation on knowledge acquisition or construction using TOK concepts. Those who start badly, rarely recover.

Where TK/PPDs were completed well, they displayed clear TOK argumentation. The ‘Candidate Section’ gives the candidates step-by-step guidance of what to do, but all too often examiners saw that candidates did not avail themselves of this guidance. Describing the real-life situation is the first step and many candidates chose real-life situations which were concrete and significant, and from which good knowledge questions could be extracted. Many other candidates, instead, chose real-life situations which were not real-life situations, but

May 2018 subject reports Theory of knowledge general statements or mentions about a topic. Quite a few were also hypothetical or purely anecdotal. Some schools show evidence that candidates do not understand what a real-life situation is.

The second step is the extraction of the knowledge question from the real-life situation. Again, many did very well but some problems persist. The general comment from examiners was that many candidates still struggle to extract decontextualized knowledge questions and their knowledge questions are poorly formulated. For instance, questions which are specific to a topic. These are not knowledge questions –they are not about knowledge, general and open. Some questions were very difficult to follow and contained too many elements –those questions were not answered in the candidate outlines. *Once again, examiners found far too many presentations based on ethics where the presentations were for instance about solving ethical dilemmas, not about knowledge. The real-life situation and the knowledge question are essential to the presentation, or as one examiner put it ‘the presentation is usually doomed without the real-life situation and knowledge question’.*

The final two steps in the ‘Candidate Section’ are the ‘Outline’ and the ‘Conclusions’. Guidance is given on the actual TK/PPD regarding what to include in these two parts. The range of topics in the RLSs was wide and some provided solid outlines with varied and interesting approaches. Sadly, a lot of the planning is not done carefully, and examiners found many outlines with no content, at best they said a little about the structure. The outline must summarize the presentation, so it must have TOK content.

Teachers must be made aware of the critical nature of the outline portion of the PPD. Far too many PPDs came in with high marks, but the outlines completed by the candidate(s) were insufficient to support those marks. Often the candidate section was simply a list of intended points with little or no explication of how the investigation would actually be undertaken. This was particularly true for marks in the 8-9 range, many of which had to be moderated down significantly.

The candidate sections are not always completed to a high standard. In many cases they seem to have been completed at the last minute as an administrative requirement for the presentation. Conclusions are particularly weak. At best they are drawn, but candidates rarely show the significance of these conclusions effectively.

Schools might consider making more use of the knowledge framework provided for the course, as this will challenge the tendency to approach the presentations with too much emphasis on ways of knowing or from an overly first order perspective. Grounding the analysis in the context of an area of knowledge is always helpful.

**Key Points**

**• Candidates must ensure that their knowledge questions are not specific to a topic and teachers must give them support in this respect.**

**• Teachers should check with their students that their knowledge questions are answered in their outlines.**

**• The knowledge framework should be used to help focus the presentation on TOK.**

**Recommendations for IB procedures, instructions and forms**

Examiners commented that the same issues persist. The first one being that the documents are not completed properly. Teachers must help their students understand how to complete the TK/PPD to best indicate their approach. If candidates do not provide the needed content, and teachers do not reflect this shortcoming in the mark awarded, they run a good chance of being moderated down.

Candidates must select their real-life situation and extract their knowledge question from it. It must be their choice of real-life situation and their extracted knowledge question. Teachers are reminded that the presentation is NOT the presentation of the essay and therefore, prescribed titles should not be used.

Schools are reminded that as stated in the subject guide: “Students are not permitted to offer presentations on the same specific subject matter more than once. This refers to either the same knowledge question, or the same real-life situation.”

A few hand-written PPDs were seen again. All TK/PPD must be typed. Schools are reminded that candidates may not exceed the 500-word limit in the ‘Candidate Section’ nor should they attempt to hide that they are doing so by using a very small font size.

**Key Points**

**• Teachers should advise their students when completing the TK/PPD**

**• All TK/PPDs should be typed.**

**• Candidates are not permitted to offer presentations on the same specific subject matter more than once. This refers to either the same knowledge question or the same real-life situation.**

**• The TOK presentation is NOT a presentation of the candidate’s essay/prescribed title.**

**• The Candidate Section may not exceed 500 words.**

**2019 Presentation Examiners Comments**

**Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates**

Topics which were socio-ethical or political often led to candidates being unable to move from the first order of thinking to a higher order thinking. This often happens with ethics, where examiners observe that candidates seem to think that a discussion about an ethical dilemma is a discussion about knowledge. Teachers need to help their students keep their focus on knowledge through the question that underpins the TOK presentation “Do(es) the presenter(s) succeed in showing how TOK concepts can have practical application?” (pg. 63 of the PDF version of the guide and on the Assessment Instrument).

Real-life situations were generally well chosen. Some real-life situation choices were not substantive and that made it difficult for the candidate to connect to TOK inquiry (e.g. the Kardashians or music hits). When real-life situations are suitable, candidates can develop good arguments and explore different perspectives that shape them or arise from them.

The quality of knowledge questions is improving but appropriate formulation remains a problem and often knowledge questions are too long and disjointed for effective analysis to follow. Furthermore, appropriate terminology needs to be used and teachers need to help their students ensure that they avoid factual content in the knowledge question. There must not be referencing of the real-life situation in the knowledge question as this almost certainly entails a first-order presentation.

Regarding the connections, although most were adequate some were not concise, and candidates should be reminded that the focus needs to be on establishing how their idea for their knowledge question arose out of the real-life situation and that TOK terminology must be included.

All the boxes are important of course, but the outline is the space for the laying out of the argument. Candidates who did well followed the instructions on the TK/PPD and gave a clear overview of the progression of the presentation. On the other hand, many candidates merely listed steps to show the structure they would follow. This format is not helpful as it has no content; what is required is providing details about specific arguments, further knowledge questions and perspectives that will drive the presentation forward.

Additionally, several outlines did not go beyond the descriptive. For example, the question “How do emotions influence our understanding of history?” led to a list of ways in which emotion influences our understanding of history. Candidates need to get through these descriptive elements and shift into how expert historians or the community of historians manage that influence in order to reach the higher levels of marks.

As regards to conclusions, there seems to be a better understanding of what conclusions are, though some are still not focused on what the presentation has revealed about the nature of knowledge. Conclusions should make reference to the initial real-life situation and provide some sort of closure to the knowledge question which arose from the initial real-life situation. Then they should indicate how they might be relevant to other real-life situations as instructed on the TK/PPD.

**Key Points**

**• Come up with them yourself and write them in your Purple Presentation Packet**