

Areas of knowledge

Knowledge framework

One effective way to examine the AOKs is through a knowledge framework. A knowledge framework is a way of unpacking the AOKs and provides a vocabulary for comparing AOKs.

For each AOK the following can be examined:

- scope, motivation and applications
- specific terminology and concepts
- methods used to produce knowledge
- key historical developments
- interaction with personal knowledge.

Within this knowledge framework, key features of each area are identified, as are specific terminology and concepts which shape that area of knowledge. The key historical developments that have influenced and shaped each area are identified, as well as the ways that each makes use of particular methodology. Finally, there is opportunity for reflection on the interaction between shared and personal knowledge in each area. Knowledge frameworks are a very effective device to compare and contrast areas of knowledge.

The idea is that each AOK can be thought of, broadly speaking, as a coherent whole—a vast system with a rich inner structure. TOK aims to explore this structure and to understand just what it is that gives each AOK its particular character. It is also concerned with what these AOKs have in common. A useful strategy is to build a TOK course around comparing and contrasting the various AOKs, to look for features they have in common but also to highlight their differences and pinpoint what gives each its own characteristic flavour.

Comparison of different AOKs is not purely a descriptive task. It is analytical in the sense that the student should link the practices of inquiry to the knowledge that comes out in the end. For example, the reliability of knowledge within an AOK will depend critically upon the methods used to produce it. Making links of this sort is what is meant by analysis in TOK.

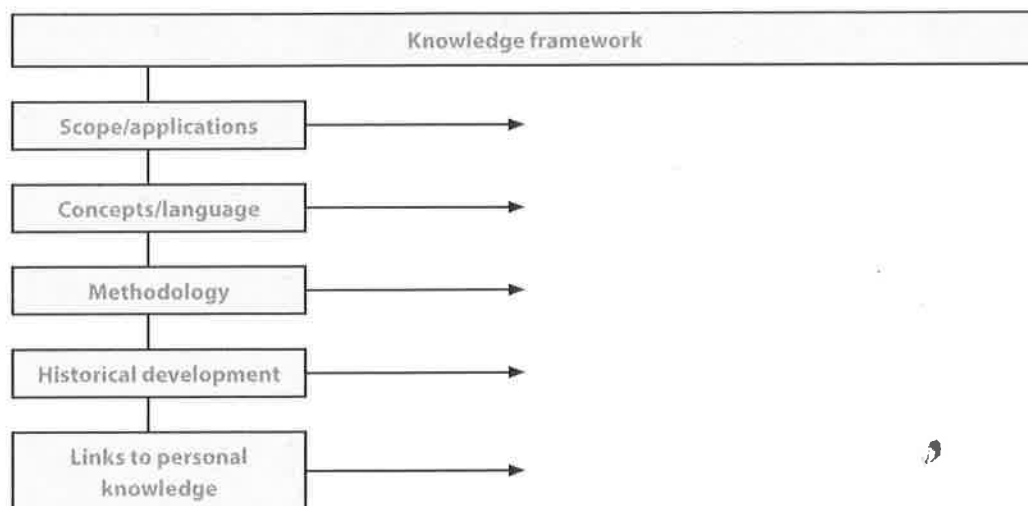


Figure 5