An excerpt from a veteran TOK teacher I found online, that I whole-heartedly agree with, about good questioning and KQs. The audience is TOK teachers, but I think you can get the point…

“What makes good questions fun, is that they contain some element of risk, some possibility of going wildly off track. That is why we can never ever let anyone start a question with “To what extent…?” If we want a good, simple first step to teaching knowledge questions, we should forbid anything that starts that way. First of all, it’s overused. Google “ibo ‘to what extent’” we get 7.2 million hits. Anyways, “To what extent” is not really a question, is it? It’s more an essay format asking us to report out on our depth of knowledge and our ability to analyse the value of different bits of information. It’s an answer disguised as a question. It’s a pseudo-question akin to Dan Meyer’s *[psuedo-context](http://blog.mrmeyer.com/?p=8002)* in math problems. So, for example off the top of my head, something like “To what extent do teachers and textbooks as bona fide authorities shape my understanding in History class” is not so fun as “Why do I believe anything I learn in school?” I mean, after a good question, we should feel a bit rattled. As an exercise, it wouldn’t hurt to try rewriting some “to what extent…” pseudo-questions as fun questions. Meyer talks about relevant questions being those that students want to answer. A good TOK questions has the same quality.

It helps, too, if day-to-day we cultivate a hermeneutic of suspicion in TOK so that we start to ask reflexively, “What’s going on here?” But that is tricky. I think we need to work up to a good question, like the way we draft an essay. It helps to do that with someone else, or several others, by the way. Incidentally, we know IB is big on its terminology but I’ve found it’s better to come up with a good question first, then swap in the TOK words such as Areas of Knowledge, Ways of Knowing and Personal and Shared knowledge and so on. Those terms are the least interesting aspect of TOK but the easiest thing to master so I see a tendency to want to structure classes around that conceptual framework, as the TOK textbooks do, and put off the challenging work of question-finding.

We don’t spend enough time with questions because really we’re already thinking of the answer. When I worked in Sweden, we came up with the expression bra start which literally means “good start” but can be understood as “Good start, so why are we in a rush to keep going. Let’s just stay here in the question a while longer.” If we want a stronger caution, Flaubert says, “Stupidity lies in wanting to draw conclusions.”  So maybe if we catch ourselves feeling like our question is pointing to an answer, it’s time to give it a rethink…”

Source: <https://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2013/12/08/response-teaching-knowledge-questions/>