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Theory of Knowledge

(First Assessment 2015)

Jenny Gillett

jenny.gillett@ibo.org

“The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think – rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with the thoughts of other men.”

– Dewey

“Teachers are not obliged to follow the suggested examples and ideas presented here; this guide offers a framework rather than prescribed content. Teachers should consider the examples and ideas provided and then construct their own unique TOK course.”

– TOK Subject Guide, Page 1

The Curriculum Review Process

Research

- Reports from senior examiners
- Reports from external consultants
- Survey data (alumni surveys, teacher surveys, etc.)
- Literature review
- Syllabus comparisons
- Feedback from universities

Development

- Meetings in The Hague attended by teachers, examiners and consultants from all three IB regions
- Feedback on progress / proposals through teacher surveys
- Feedback from internal review committees, Diploma Review Committee, etc.

Implementation

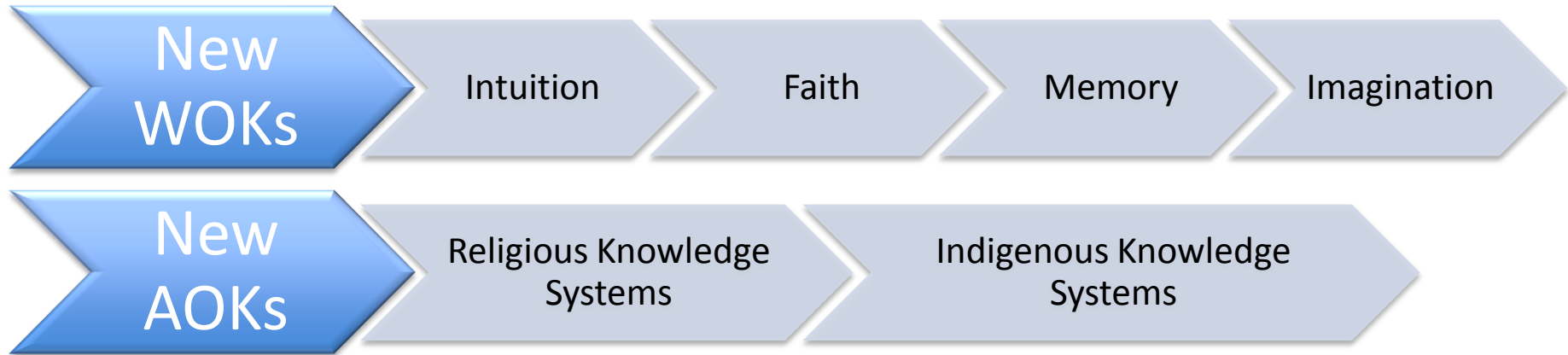
- Production of new guide and TSM
- Upskilling of workshop leaders
- Subject specific seminars
- Accreditation and recognition of new courses

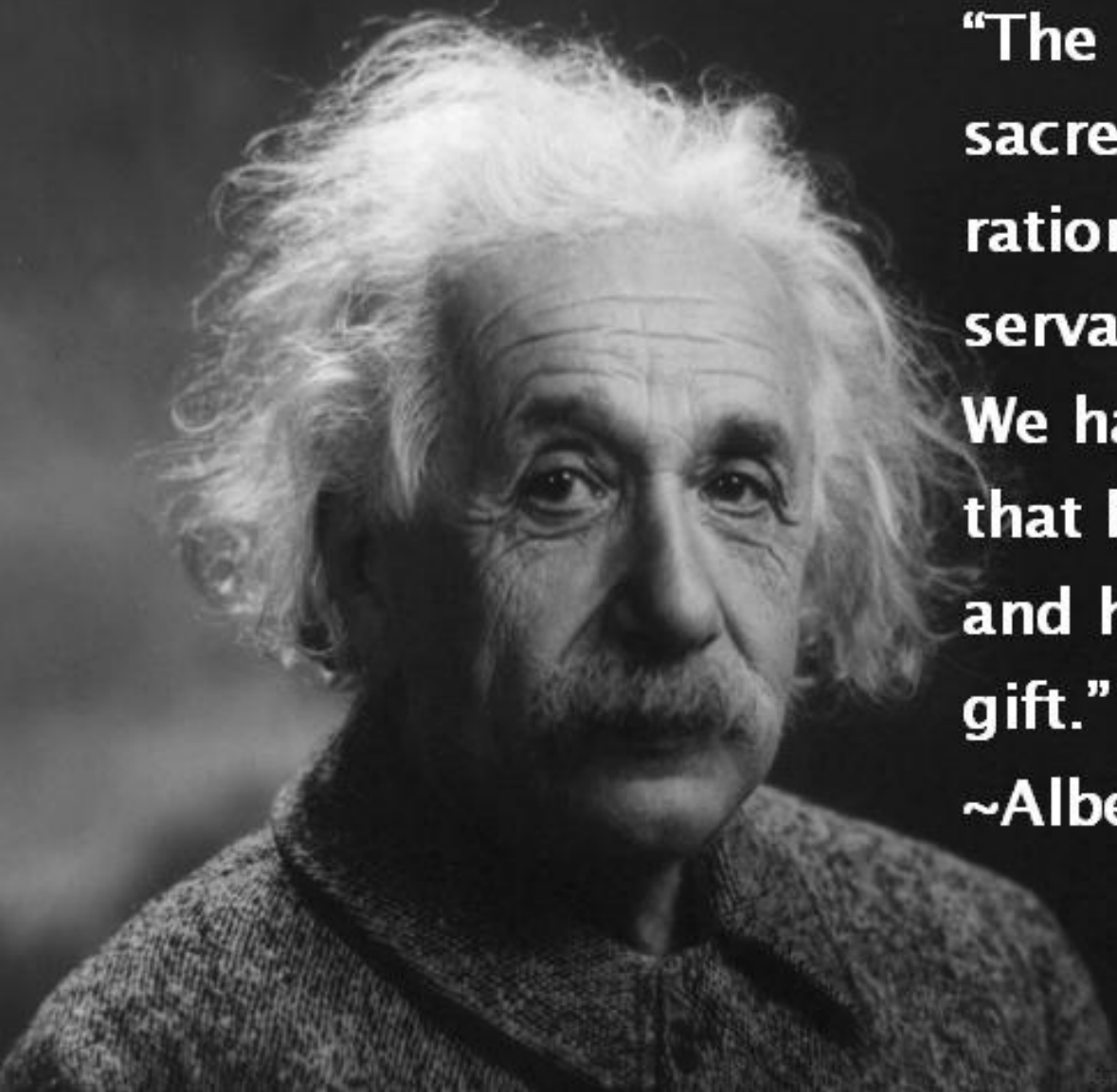
6 key features of the new course:

- optional new WOKs and AOKs
- emphasis on WOKs in context
- knowledge questions
- personal and shared knowledge
- the knowledge framework
- global impression marking

1. More choice/ flexibility ...

4 new ways of knowing and 2 new areas of knowledge have been added, giving teachers greater choice and flexibility when designing their TOK course.





“The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant.

We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

~Albert Einstein~

Religious Knowledge Systems

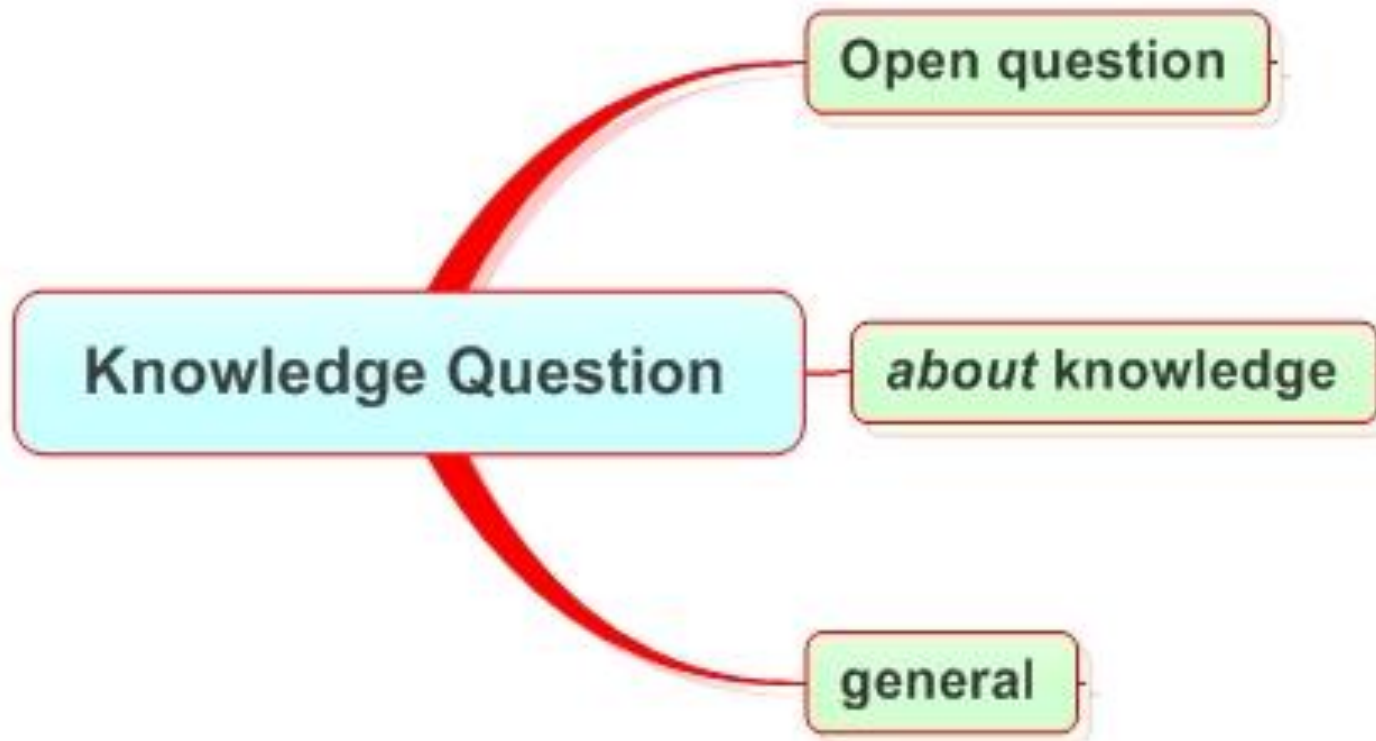
“For many people their religion has a major impact on how they understand the world, permeating their thinking and influencing their understanding of other AOKs ... for many, religion provides a backdrop to all the other knowledge they have.”

(TOK subject guide)

2. Emphasis on WOKs in context...

- **What is the nature of the way of knowing?**
- **How does this way of knowing work in conjunction with other ways of knowing?**
- **How does this way of knowing function in the context of each of the areas of knowledge?**

3. Knowledge Questions



Example 1

Subject question:

- What is a twin study in psychology and why might it be used?



Image taken from <http://www.matr.vcu.edu/research/why-study-twins.html>

Knowledge question:

- To what extent are experiments in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings?

Example 2

Subject question:

- Compare and contrast the economic theories of Lewis and Galtung.

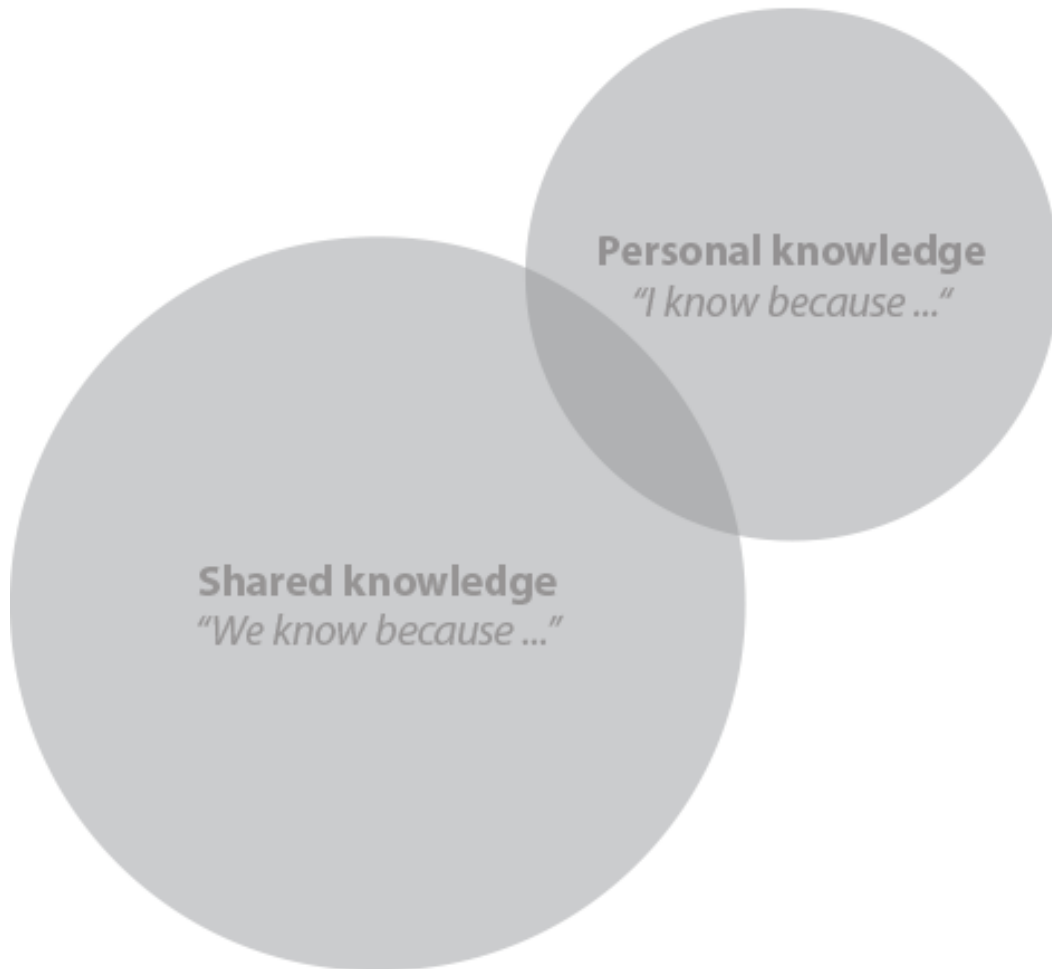


Image taken from <http://s43789.gridserver.com/webcast/>

Knowledge question:

- On what basis might we decide between the judgments of experts if they disagree?

4. Distinction between personal and shared knowledge ...



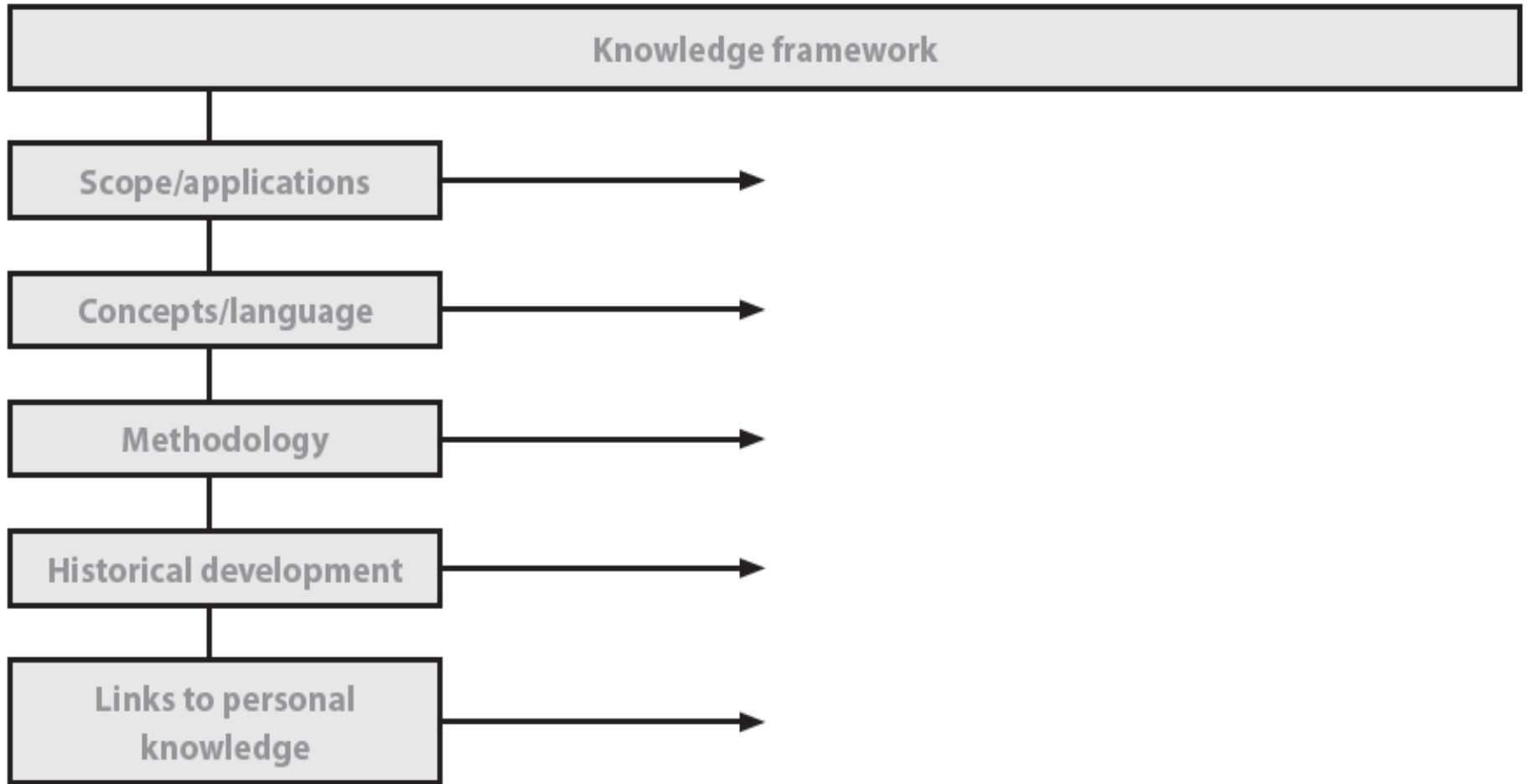
The distinction is intended to bring balance to the course

It helps to avoid a completely egocentric “I the knower” approach

Distinction between personal and shared knowledge ...

- A TOK course which focuses almost exclusively on shared knowledge risks losing the important links between the areas of knowledge and the individual knower, and is likely to lack relevance for the student.
- A TOK course which focuses almost exclusively on personal knowledge will not move beyond the experiences of the student to how knowledge is constructed in the wider world, and risks ending up engaging in an exploration of knowledge which is more anecdotal than analytical.

5. The Knowledge Framework



Knowledge framework

Scope/applications

- What is this AOK about?
- What makes this area of knowledge important?
- What are the current open questions in this area – important questions that are currently unanswered?
- Are there any ethical considerations that limit the scope of inquiry? If so, what are they?

Concepts/language

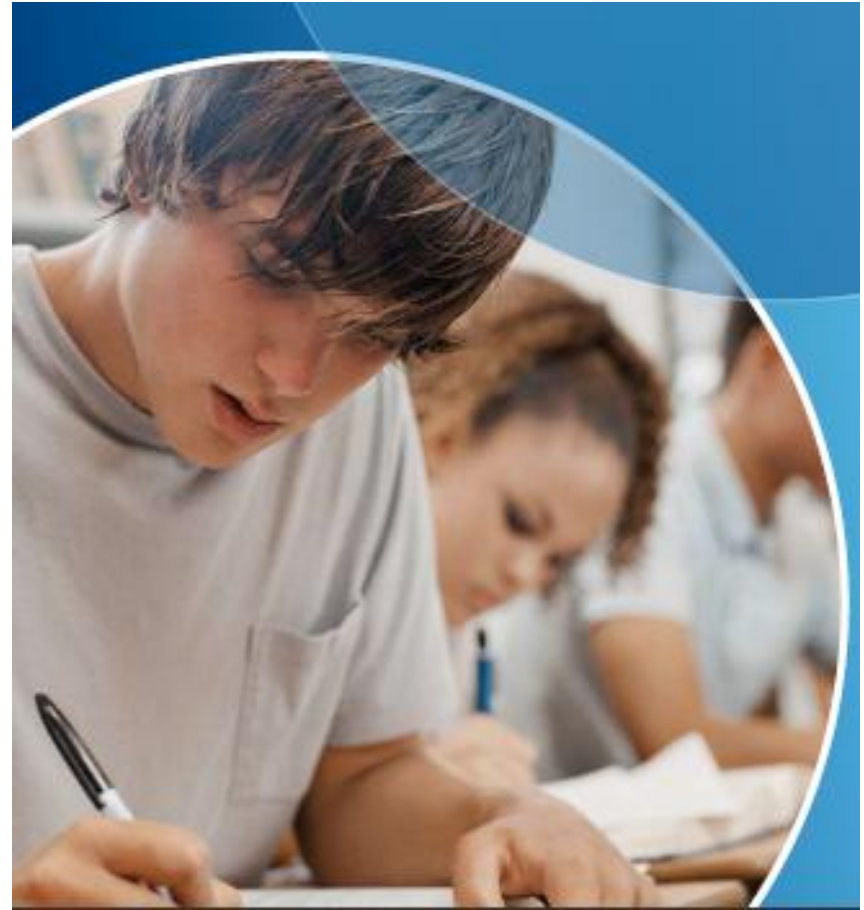
Methodology

Historical development

Links to personal
knowledge

6. Global Impression Marking

- Instead of being assessed using 4 distinct criteria the essay and presentation will be assessed using a global impression approach
- This approach was developed in conjunction with ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research)
- This approach was trialled on TOK essays as part of the curriculum review, and led to an encouraging increase in reliability



Global Impression Marking

The global impression judgment of the TOK essay is underpinned by a single question:

Does the student present an appropriate and cogent analysis of knowledge questions in discussing the title?

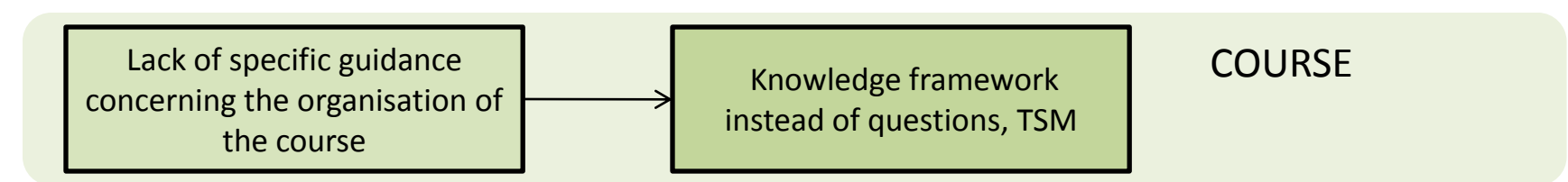
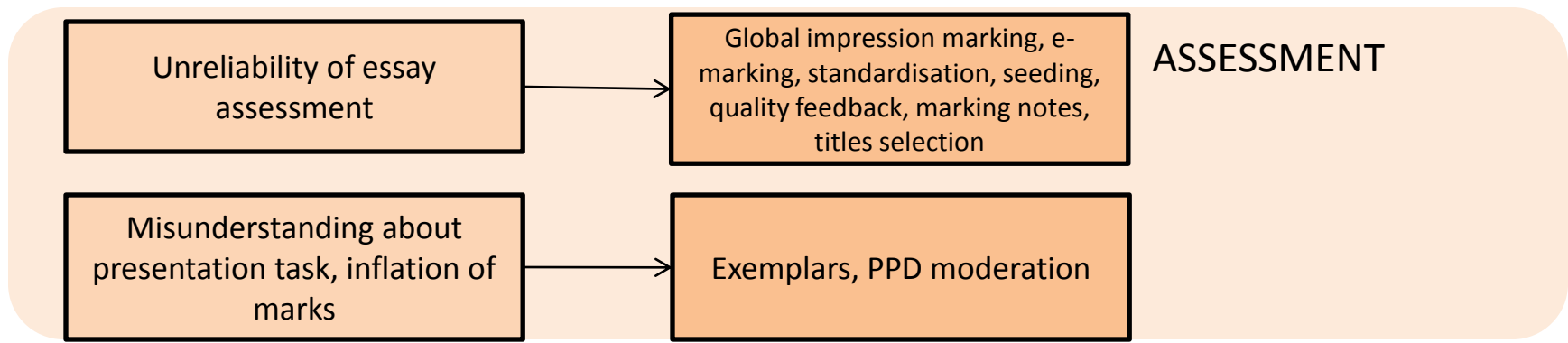
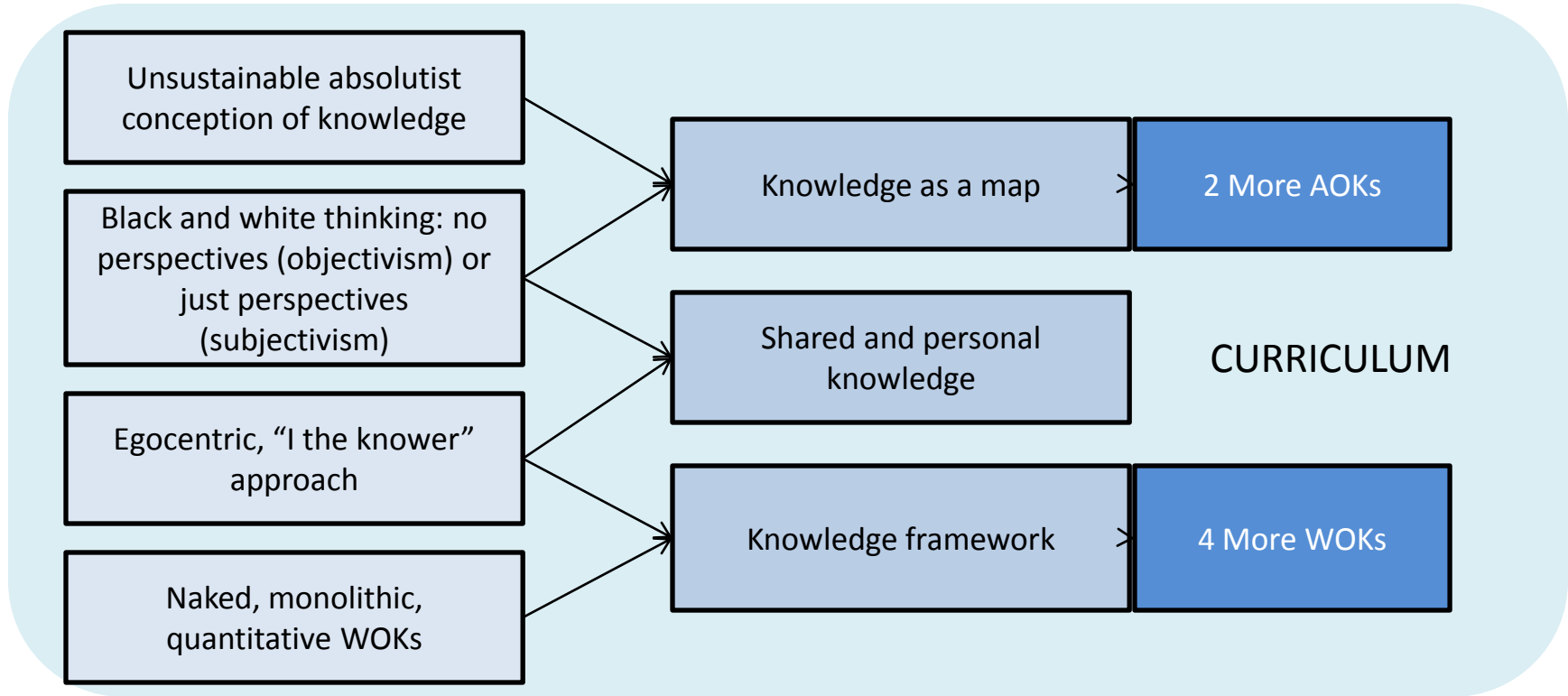
This question shapes the reading and assessing of TOK essays. A mark out of 10 is then awarded using the assessment instrument (which can be found on page 62 of the TOK guide).

Global Impression Marking

For the presentation the global impression judgment is underpinned by the following question:

Do(es) the presenter(s) succeed in showing how TOK concepts can have practical application?

This question shapes the assessing of the TOK presentation. A mark out of 10 is then awarded using the assessment instrument (which can be found on page 64 of the TOK guide).



Resources

Available now on the OCC:

- **TOK subject guide (for first assessment 2015)**
- **TOK teacher support material (TSM)**

Coming soon ...

- **Specimen prescribed titles**
- **Screencasts (videos of “talking heads” explaining the changes in the new course)**

Questions?

jenny.gillett@ibo.org