
Unit 8 Chapter 8 The Ways of Knowing

Unit Overview:

The aim of this chapter is to examine the four different ways of knowing thoroughly and to make effective links and comparisons between these four ways of knowing and all six areas of knowledge. This is done specifically to prepare the students for writing the essay since making these links and comparisons is a skill needed to score high marks. Each of the four ways of knowing is examined both specifically in this chapter and there is focus upon how each way affects knowledge and knowledge claims. There is also an examination of how each of the ways affects knowledge and knowing in the other ways of knowing. The odd numbered lessons in this chapter focus upon how each way of knowing affects knowledge and knowing in the different areas of knowledge. By doing so, an interconnected web of understanding is created about how the ways and areas all work together to create our knowledge of the world. There are also several personal examples written in the I-form in this chapter. Although this may seem a bit out of place in academic material, the reason this is included is to give the students examples of how personal examples might appear and be used in their own essay. Make sure the students notice these so they can reference them later when they write their own papers.

Lesson 8:1a Introduction to Ways of Knowing

Objective(s):

- To introduce the students to the ways of knowing.
- To illustrate how our knowledge is made up of a combination of ways of knowing.

Homework:

- Preparatory reading of next section as deemed necessary.

Vocabulary:

- Reason
- Emotion
- Perception
- Language

Lecture Support:

This is a lecture based lesson.

The body of this lesson is found in the corresponding section of the teacher version of the student activity book. *Lesson 8:1a Introduction to Ways of Knowing*. The students have the same material in their version of the activity book. It would be a good idea for the students to have the material accessible during the lecture for this lesson.

Lesson 8:1 Reason and Ways of Knowing

Objective(s):

- To show both negative and positive aspects of reason as a way of knowing.
- To explore how reason affects our knowledge.
- To illustrate how reason combines with other ways of knowing to help create our understanding of the world around us.

Homework:

- Preparatory reading of next section as deemed necessary.

Vocabulary:

- Objectivity
- Rationality
- Deductive and Conclusive
- Pragmatic
- Subjective nature of reasoning
- limited access
- Snobbish-Elitist

Lecture Support:

This is a lecture based lesson.

The body of this lesson is found in the corresponding section of the teacher version of the student activity book. *Lesson 8:1 Reason and Ways of Knowing*. The students have the same material in their version of the activity book. It would be a good idea for the students to have the material accessible during the lecture for this lesson.

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

Be sure to use the images in the lesson which can be found on the CD in either the PowerPoint presentation or on the CD copy of the book itself.

Lesson 8:2 Reason and Areas of Knowledge

Objective(s):

- To examine how reason can work within the different areas of knowledge to create knowledge claims.
- To illustrate linking between ways of knowing and areas of knowledge.

Homework:

- Preparatory reading of next section as deemed necessary.
- Assignment of student activity questions if preferred.

Lecture Support:

This is a lecture based lesson with a concluding student activity.

The body of this lesson is found in the corresponding section of the teacher version of the student activity book. *Lesson 8: 2 Reason and Areas of Knowledge*. The students have the same material in their version of the activity book. It would be a good idea for the students to have the material accessible during the lecture for this lesson.

Lesson 8:3 Emotion and Ways of Knowing

Objective(s):

- To show both negative and positive aspects of emotion as a way of knowing.
- To explore how emotion affects our knowledge.
- To illustrate how emotion combines with other ways of knowing to help create our understanding of the world around us.

Homework:

- Preparatory reading of next section as deemed necessary.

Vocabulary:

- Emotion is a subjective experience
- Emotion and community knowledge
- Communication of emotion

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- Emotion and subjectivity
- Irrationality

Lecture Support:

This is a lecture based lesson

The body of this lesson is found in the corresponding section of the teacher version of the student activity book. *Lesson 8:3 Emotion and Ways of Knowing*. The students have the same material in their version of the activity book with the exception of the suggested answers to the questions. It would be a good idea for the students to have the material accessible during the lecture for this lesson.

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

Emphasize to the students that the concepts being discussed in these lessons are exactly the same types of elements which they need in their essays to gain high marks. They must include elements which show an understanding of how the areas, ways, and knowledge interconnect.

Lesson 8:4 Emotion and Areas of Knowledge

Objective(s):

- To examine how emotion can work within the different areas of knowledge to create knowledge claims.
- To illustrate linking between ways of knowing and areas of knowledge.

Homework:

- Preparatory reading of next section as deemed necessary.
- Assignment of student activity questions if preferred.

Lecture Support:

This is a lecture based lesson with a concluding student activity.

The body of this lesson is found in the corresponding section of the teacher version of the student activity book. *Lesson 8:4 Emotion and Areas of Knowledge*. The students have the same material in their version of the activity book with the exception of the suggested answers to the questions. It would be a good idea for the students to have the material accessible during the lecture for this lesson.

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

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Although it will work as homework, the student activity is designed to be done during class time when they have one another as resources. It also breaks up the uniformity of sitting and listening during this primarily lecture based section.

Another option with the activity is to have the students present what they have found to the class. Practice for the presentations is always helpful.

Lesson 8:5 Perception and Ways of Knowing

Objective(s):

- To examine phenomena, such as bias, which affect our perception and will consequently affect our knowledge.
- To illustrate how perception combines with other ways of knowing to help create our understanding of the world around us.

Homework:

- Preparatory reading of next section as deemed necessary.

Vocabulary:

- Social bias
- Biological Bias
- Threshold
- Illusions

Lecture Support:

This is a lecture based lesson.

The body of this lesson is found in the corresponding section of the teacher version of the student activity book. *Lesson 8:5 Perception and Ways of Knowing*. The students have the same material in their version of the activity book. It would be a good idea for the students to have the material accessible during the lecture for this lesson.

Since there are so many psychology students in the IB program, and also many psychology teachers that teach TOK as part of their jobs, one could mistakenly look at the way of knowing “perception,” and automatically interpret it to imply that perception should be taught as if TOK had suddenly become a cognitive psychology course for a short duration of time. It becomes tempting in these instances to delve into the physiology of human perception and discuss how the eyes and ears function, what threshold levels are, how

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attention works in combination with perception, and maybe even include some discussion of memory since memory is clearly important for our perception and subsequent knowledge of a situation. Illusions will often be on the list in these cases because first, they really are interesting and fun and students like them, and second they are good at illustrating that what we see or experience is not necessarily reflective of reality. Illusions are a problem of knowledge if there ever was one.

Although the above approach may be a tempting one, it may not really be the most effective way to teach and learn about perception. After all, TOK is not a cognitive psychology course and there is really no great need to get into depth about cognitive terms and the physiology of human perception. For students that have psychology, there is a risk that they will become bored with the repetition since they will have learned even more about perception in psychology. For students that have not been exposed to psychology in school, there is little hope of adequately explaining perception in cognitive terms within the available time in TOK. Perception in cognitive psychology is a *key concept* which is given a large amount of time because it is central to understanding the subject. Perception in TOK only needs to focus on the important knowledge issues raised by perception and how perception affects knowledge. To do this, there is no great need to get into depth about perception as it is understood and taught in cognitive psychology.

Furthermore, there are other aspects of perception important for TOK which are not necessarily of central importance for perception in cognitive psychology. The role of bias is one of these. Although bias can be tied into psychology, as can any phenomenon involving human behavior, bias is a hugely important factor when considering problems of knowledge with TOK perception. Also, the way perception interacts with the other ways of knowing is important for understanding all aspects of the TOK course. These aspects of perception will both be discussed in the lesson.

The suggestion being made here is not to avoid discussing perception from the perspective of cognitive psychology, but simply, to keep the discussion of these elements at a basic level. Focus only on the aspects which have direct, clear, and easily illustrated relationships to problems of knowledge and TOK specifically. More information is not needed.

Remember, TOK is a large course with many interconnecting and complex concepts. Perception is just one part of the whole. It does not need to be treated like a course in and of itself, but instead simply as a part of the TOK course; an important part indeed, but no more important than any other way of knowing or area of knowledge. Perception as a subject in itself does not need to be taught by the TOK teacher or learned by TOK students for the student to succeed. Instead, what is important is that the students understand some clear and distinct ways in which perception can affect our knowledge. Some of these ways can be illustrated through concepts found in cognitive psychology, some are not.