

General PE Feedback

It's just as important as the comments on your paper!

General thoughts from me after reading the essays

- Address the central argument of the title. The title is not simply “patterns in knowledge” but the idea that we tend to invent patterns even when none exist.
- The title implies a KQ. This should be the focus of the essay. Subsidiary KQs should clearly relate to the prescribed topic.
- Depth over breadth. Always. Explore and probe your examples don't just “throw them out there”
- Path v. Islands
- Definitions are your friends. But they are better in context and when used.

Problems with the handling of KQs

- While there is a great deal of choice available to the candidate in terms of alternative titles and parts of the TOK course that can legitimately be explored within the one title that is chosen, the exact wording of the title must be respected and examined very carefully
- If knowledge questions are stated explicitly, great care must be taken to ensure that they do not overshadow or come to replace the title itself
- Writing “my knowledge question is...” near the start of the essay is usually a recipe for disaster as it means that, in effect, the title has been displaced
- There is no need to state knowledge questions explicitly; they will shine through in a well-constructed essay focused on the prescribed title

Consumption v. Production of Knowledge

- Candidates are advised to look carefully at the wording of prescribed titles in order to ascertain what kind of engagement with knowledge is being elicited
- Wherever possible, clear distinctions should be made between the processes involved in the production of knowledge and those involved in the consumption of knowledge

Quality of examples

- Candidates are strongly advised to resist the temptation to search for responses to prescribed titles on “help” sites or elsewhere as, once accessed, they contaminate the candidate’s thinking and cannot be “unthought”
- Some examples are inherently ineffective because they are simplistic and cannot support the quality of analysis that is required in TOK
- Some examples are employed ineffectively because they do not support the point being made or because they are described without due care for accuracy
- Some examples have their origins in other DP courses, and these should be generally encouraged