

Developing Students' Thinking through the IB Theory of Knowledge Course: Opportunities and Challenges

As part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, students complete a 100 hour Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course. This interactive workshop will share practical examples of how teachers around the world are utilising these TOK lessons to develop students' thinking skills and dispositions, as well as to deepen understandings and connections across disciplines. This will include examples of how teachers are using the course in order to improve students thinking in relation to complex and dynamic contemporary global challenges, and as a key way to develop "international mindedness" in students.

The Theory of Knowledge course is currently undergoing a process of curriculum review, designing an updated course for first teaching in 2020. The research that has been undertaken to underpin this review has provided interesting insights from teachers, students, alumni and examiners, and in this workshop examples from this feedback will be used in order to share insights into some of the tensions and challenges that teachers and students report facing when implementing these kinds of activities in the classroom. These insights will draw on feedback from a wide range of sources, including teacher and alumni questionnaires, focus groups, and feedback from teacher professional development workshops. The workshop will also share practical suggestions of strategies that teachers around the world use to try to overcome these challenges, as well as sharing ways in which the design of the course itself is being improved in order to try to help address some of these challenges.

The workshop will be delivered in an interactive way, with multiple opportunities for the audience to engage in discussion, share experiences and ask questions throughout the workshop. For example, the workshop will include opportunities for paired discussions, stimulus based activities, short video clips, and sharing of practical classroom examples from teachers around the world.