

## 5. Connections across the Diploma Programme

### TOK and the DP core

“I think TOK is an essential aspect of the International Baccalaureate experience. As a diploma recipient, I feel that it truly reflects several of the qualities that I think make IB such a potent programme: an emphasis on multiculturalism, the promotion of independent thought, the willingness to question and analyse ideas and promoting education that goes beyond just teaching for a test.”

— (Former DP student)

TOK is one of the three elements that make up the core of the Diploma Programme. These core elements focus on the education of the whole person, and they share three common aims.

#### Aims of the DP core

The three elements of the DP core are intended to complement each other and to work together to achieve three common aims. These are:

- to foster international-mindedness and encourage students to become responsible and actively involved global citizens
- to develop students' self-awareness and sense of identity, and provide an opportunity for reflection on their development of the attributes of the IB learner profile
- to enrich and add value to students' overall learning experiences through the core supporting, and being supported by, their academic studies in the rest of the programme.

Much of the power of the DP core lies in its potential to engage students in stimulating experiences and thoughtful self-reflection. For example, it is hoped that through the TOK course students will develop a richer and more nuanced understanding of themselves as knowers and thinkers.

[Video: reflections on the DP core](#)

## TOK across the DP curriculum

It is intended that TOK should support, and be supported by, the rest of the programme.

Subject teachers do not need to “teach” the TOK course in their subject lessons. However, they play a crucial role in helping students to make connections to TOK across the curriculum and in helping to reinforce the development of the skills and dispositions that the TOK course seeks to develop in students. Much of the process of embedding TOK across the curriculum involves demystifying the course and empowering all teachers to engage in TOK conversations.

### Tips for effectively embedding TOK across the curriculum

1. Encouraging subject teachers to utilize the suggested links to TOK provided within many DP subject guides.
2. Encouraging subject teachers to explicitly use the language of the knowledge framework—scope, perspectives, methods and tools and ethics—in their lessons to help students see connections to TOK.
3. Inviting subject teachers to be audience members for TOK exhibitions.
4. Inviting subject teachers to take part in “ask the expert” sessions or to co-teach a TOK lesson on their area of specialism.
5. Encouraging students to keep TOK notebooks or journals where they note down examples from their other subjects to take back to their TOK lessons—encouraged by other teachers.
6. Having teachers of all subjects help reinforce skills needed for the TOK course; for example, encouraging students to highlight assumptions being made in arguments and to identify the implications of arguments.
7. Sharing TOK course outlines or unit plans with subject teachers so that they can identify opportunities where they can link topics or themes in their subjects to units being explored in TOK.
8. Organizing in-school professional development experiences on TOK for subject teachers, or encouraging teachers to undertake dedicated IB professional development on TOK for subject teachers.

9. Exploring connections between the completion of subject internal assessment (IA) tasks and TOK. For example, the history IA task explicitly requires students to reflect on what their historical investigation highlighted to them about the methods used by, and challenges facing, the historian.
- 10 Making examples of TOK essays available in teacher areas to encourage discussions.
- 11 Encouraging subject teachers to suggest and liaise with subject experts and members of the local community who could take part in TOK lessons or events.
- 12 Planning scheduling alignments, for example, coordinating discussion of natural sciences as an area of knowledge with the timing of the Group 4 project.
- 13 Generating enthusiasm for and raising the profile of TOK within the school through events such as a month-long “TOKtober” event in October.
- 14 Flipping the focus by asking subject teachers what one key thing they would like you as a TOK teacher to incorporate in your course, such as they wish their students were more aware of issues relating to statistics.
- 15 Providing, or encouraging subject teachers to create, TOK posters for their classrooms.

