THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE TURKISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM: THE DYNAMICS OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP

A MASTER'S THESIS

BY

GLYN HARRIS

THE PROGRAM OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

JUNE 2012

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE TURKISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM: THE DYNAMICS OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP

The Graduate School of Education

of

Bilkent University

by

Glyn Harris

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in

The Program of Curriculum and Instruction
Bilkent University
Ankara

June 2012

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THESIS TITLE: THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE TURKISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM: THE DYNAMICS OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP

Supervisee: Glyn Harris

June 2012

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Robin Ann Martin

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Julie Mathews-Aydınlı

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erdat Çataloğlu

Approval of the Graduate School of Education

Prof. Dr. M. K. Sands

ABSTRACT

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE TURKISH NATIONAL CURRICULUM: THE DYNAMICS OF A NEW RELATIONSHIP

Glyn Harris

M.A., Program of Curriculum and Instruction

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Robin Martin

June 2012

This is an exploratory research study focusing on the International Baccalaureate's Theory of Knowledge (TOK) programme in Turkish schools, all of whom deliver the Turkish National Curriculum. In the study 26 staff and students from four private schools in Ankara, Turkey, completed surveys and interviews. The results show that although the TOK course provides many opportunities to address issues with student and teacher autonomy, and to fulfil newly reformed aims of The National Ministry of Education (MEB), difficulties with MEB course load and lack of collaboration mean that TOK is perceived and implemented as a periphery course. The study also reveals issues of communication within the schools, particularly in respects to the MEB curriculum reforms, and developments concerning the IB programme in Turkey.

Key words: Theory of Knowledge, International Baccalaureate, Turkish Ministry of National Education

ÖZET

BİLGİ KURAMI VE TÜRK ULUSAL MÜFREDATI: YENİ BİR BAĞININ DİNAMİKLERİ

Glyn Harris

Yüksek Lisans, Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim
Tez Yöneticisi: Yardımcı Doçent Dr. Robin Martin

Haziran 2012

Bu çalışma, ulusal Türk okullarında Uluslararası Bakalorya Bilgi Kuramı'na odaklanan bir keşfedici araştırma çalışmasıdır. Çalışmada Türkiye Ankara'daki dört özel okuldan 26 çalışan ve öğrenciye anket uygulanmış ve mülakat yapılmıştır. Çalışma sonuçları Bilgi Kuramı dersinin öğretmen ve öğrenci özerkliği ile ilgili birçok konuya işaret etmesine ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın (MEB) henüz yeniden biçimlendirdiği amaçlarını karşılamaya yönelik fırsatlar sağlamasına rağmen, MEB ders yüküyle alakalı zorluklar ve işbirliği eksikliği, Bilgi Kuramı dersinin müfredat merkezinde değil sınırlarında kalan bir ders olarak algılandığı ve uygulandığı anlamına gelmektedir. Çalışma aynı zamanda okullar içinde özellikle MEB müfredat reformları ve Türkiye'de IB programı ile alakalı gelişmeler ile ilgili olarak okul içindeki iletişim konularını ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bilgi Kuramı, Uluslararası Bakalorya, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the thorough support and patience exhibited by my tutor Robin Martin. Without her guidance and time this would not have been possible.

I would also like to extend warm thanks to the host of teaching staff from the Bilkent Graduate School of Education who supported me throughout my graduate programme and were vital in the shaping of this research and the academic knowledge supporting it.

Thanks to Canan Harmancı for being understanding of my needs and allowing me the resources I needed to conduct this research.

Special thanks to the IB coordinators in all the schools who participated in my research. Without them this thesis would not exist, or would be a mere shadow of what it is now.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This study will focus on the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course and its complex relationship with the Turkish National Curriculum. It will look at what demands the TOK course makes on an institution, a teacher and a classroom full of learners, and explore how these expectations are borne out in the delivery of this course. The study will then look at how the TOK course interacts with the national curriculum, and the school communities' perceptions of this, in order to see if, and how these two pedagogical systems are altering one another and those who experience them.

Background

The International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate (IB) is an international education course which has its roots in Geneva, Switzerland. It was formed in 1968 in order to "provide an internationally acceptable university admissions qualification suitable for the growing mobile population of young people whose parents were part of the world of diplomacy, international and multi-national organizations" (Hayden 2001, p. 99). Closely linked with UNESCO's educational aims, the IB has spread around the world and has been adopted by many schools now predominantly catering for populations of privately educated students. The IB has come to signify a model of international education that is valued alongside national curricula in host countries,

having received praise from many educational institutions, researchers and policy makers.

The first IB school in Turkey was authorised in 1994 and there are now 28 IB world schools registered in the country, 25 of which are high schools offering the IB Diploma programme, and 19 of which are schools delivering the IB as an additional option to students (IBO, 2011). All schools in Turkey currently delivering the IB Diploma are also privately funded and so tend to have a greater level of funding and access to resources than state schools.

At the centre of the IB curriculum lies the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course which the IB organisation claim "is ideally placed to foster internationalism" (2008, p. 4). The TOK course is taught over a two year period to students between 16 and 18 and must be delivered for at least 100 hours over this 2 year period. There are no exams which students must take to pass the course, however there are two formative assessments which comprise the total grade awarded. These assessments consist of an essay of between 1200-1600 words, chosen from a list of prescribed titles published yearly, and a presentation exploring the knowledge issues present in a real life scenario, such as a news story, a televised debate or a recent discovery in the sciences.

The course has three key aims, to teach critical thought and inquiry, to encourage diversity of thought and perspective, and to allow students to consider their responsibilities as learners, members of a community, culture and society. The TOK takes a constructivist and flexible approach to learning and the syllabus itself provides a lot of opportunity for teacher autonomy, as it consists of a series of

guiding questions interspersed with supplementary quotes from various famous thinkers of the past and present. Although the syllabus guide is structured in a sequential manner, the IBO clearly state that "the categories are not intended to indicate a teaching sequence. There are many different ways to approach TOK" (IBO, 2008, p. 3). The TOK guide gives additional clarification of its aims by stating that by the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Analyse critically knowledge claims, their underlying assumptions and their implications
2. Generate questions, explanations, conjectures, hypotheses, alternative ideas and possible solutions in response to knowledge issues concerning areas of knowledge, ways of knowing and students' own experience as learners
3. Demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives on knowledge issues
4. Draw links and make effective comparisons between different approaches to knowledge issues that derive from areas of knowledge, ways of knowing, theoretical positions and cultural values
5. Demonstrate an ability to give a personal, self-aware response to a knowledge issue
6. Formulate and communicate ideas clearly with due regard for accuracy and academic honesty (IBO, 2008, p. 5)

The Turkish National Curriculum

In contrast to the style and expectations of the TOK course, the Turkish education system has, in the past, been rather teacher-centred and often confused pedagogically as "systematic state intervention in the curricula has spurred politically motivated groups (religious nationalists, neoliberal secularists, and the military) to lobby their differences through the highly centralised educational system" (Kaplan, 2006, p.6). The outcome of this has been the production of a fairly prescriptive national

curriculum, bound by some constricting elements of policy and a drive toward passive learning.

All public universities in Turkey require that students complete an entrance exam (the YGS), consisting of multiple choice questions. The results of these exams are extremely important, as they allocate the relatively few university places to those students who perform the best. Due to the high stakes of these exams, students will often spend grade 11 and 12 attending cramming schools after their normal school day, and even on weekends. This shifts the focus of their final two years in high school, and places a clear priority on rote, teacher-led learning.

However, this has been changing recently and has culminated in a major curricular reform initiative, announced in 2005 and currently in action. As Akşit (2007) summarises, apart from the ambitious aim of decentralising the education system, some main goals of the reform are:

- To arrange units by theme to help students build meaning and links between their learning
- To use more formative assessment in subject areas
- To move pedagogically from a teacher-centred to a student-centred model
- To enhance the emphasis on and quality of citizenship education (p.133-134)

But despite these objectives aimed at progressive reform, Akşit (2007) also identifies the lack of teacher involvement, supervision and support in forming and implementing the new curriculum. Teachers who have been trained with one pedagogy in mind, and then encouraged to uphold this philosophy in their teaching careers, are now being asked to make a turn around and adopt an entirely new approach. This then, has led to only a partial fulfilment of ministry goals, as there

exists much "potential discrepancy between the intended and the implemented curriculum" (p.136).

But this is where new Turkish ministry objectives and those of the IB are beginning to converge in both ambition and difficulty of achievement. Looking at the IB learner profile (IBO, 2009) it is clear that many of the new reforms within the national system align with what the IB organization want from teachers and students. And these expectations of both teachers and learners are never more prevalent than in the TOK classroom, where the curriculum is flexible, concerned with problem based learning, and required refined higher order thinking skills.

Problem

Literature on the nature of TOK's relationship with school culture is very limited, and even more so when related to Turkish schools. To illustrate the curriculum layout, and emphasise the balance of the whole programme the IBO publish a copy of their curriculum hexagon in the introduction to all IB subject guides, as well as creating posters of the diagram to be placed around schools (IBO, 2008, p. 11). As a core component of the IB Hexagon, the IBO clearly places a high value on the educational goals and achievements of TOK, however the extent to which these goals are achieved or their power to alter pedagogical perspectives are fairly unknown.

The IB is expanding predominantly in private schools, which teach national curricula in tandem with the IB programme. This means that there are potentially two very

different pedagogies working in the same community. As TOK embodies a key element of the IB's pedagogical stance, it must be investigated in terms of the way in which it operates in schools also delivering their own national curriculum and the interaction it has with the community and curriculum structure.

Purpose

To explore how TOK is implemented in Turkish schools, and in what way it has shaped perspectives of IB students, IB Teachers and IB administrators, and their perceptions of the relationship between TOK and the general school curriculum.

Research questions

The research questions are:

- How is TOK implemented in Turkish schools?
- In what ways has the TOK course shaped the educational perspectives of IB Teachers, IB Administrative staff and IB students?
- What is the relationship between TOK and the Turkish National Curriculum, as perceived by IB teachers, IB administrative staff and IB students?

Significance

The TOK programme is an integral part of the IB and is being delivered in more and more schools in Turkey and elsewhere. Teachers are sent on training courses about TOK and often whole schools attend seminars. These changes signify an emerging

shift in pedagogical ideas and methods, which should be investigated to ascertain the nature and progress of such a change.

In relation to Turkey, it is vital to understand the perceptions of teachers, administrators and students in terms of this change. To understand their views is to understand the nature of TOK's impact on the consciousness of schools and to be able to identify in what way national institutions should proceed with their treatment of this new epistemologically driven programme. As Akşit (2007, p. 136) aptly comments, "it is essential to examine perceptions of the end-users, considering various contextual factors. Otherwise, personal goals, values, concerns and beliefs would go unaddressed, a mistake which would have crucial bearings on the success of the whole endeavor".

This study will investigate the nature of the relationship between TOK and school culture and curriculum as perceived by students, teachers and administrators who are directly involved with and experiencing both the IB and Turkish national curricula. It will focus on the potential power of the TOK course as an agent of change and produce findings about how and to what extent this power is being used. The outcomes of this research will benefit both the IB organisation and schools delivering the IB, as it will increase understanding of the impact TOK can have on schools also delivering national curricula, and will reflect on the various means by which this can happen and be interpreted by those experiencing it. Administrators, conference organisers and curriculum developers may find this information useful in achieving their own educational aims and in fostering legitimate change in national learning institutions.

Definition of key terms

The TOK, or Theory of Knowledge course, is a two year programme which is epistemological in nature, and is a requirement of the International Baccalaureate Diploma.

The IBDP, or International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, is a two year international programme of study which is delivered to students in their final two years of high school. Schools must be certified by the IB organisation before they can deliver this programme.

MYP is the Middle Years Programme of education which is also designed and monitored by the IBO and is seen as a precursor to the IBDP, although it is not necessary for students to have completed the MYP in order to be enrolled in the IBDP.

The MEB is the Turkish Ministry of Education. They are a centralised governmental organisation, which make all major decisions concerning education policy and curriculum within Turkey.

The YGS is the high-stakes university exam which all students in Turkey must take if they wish to enter a Turkish university upon graduation from secondary education. The scores on this two-part test have a strong bearing on what universities and faculties students are admitted to.

In this study schools or Turkish schools are considered to be those who must follow the regulations of the Turkish Ministry of Education, and whose main curriculum delivered to all students is the Turkish National Curriculum.

Students in this context will be those taking the IB Diploma Course, but who are also following the national programme of study in parallel.

The specific term administrative staff in this study is limited in reference to the school IB coordinator and the school principals and vice principals who oversee students taking the IB Diploma Programme. This means that in larger integrated schools, with elementary and middle school components, only the principals in charge of high school education will be considered.

When referring to staff, this study refers to IB teachers of all subjects within the participant schools, IB coordinators and principals / vice principals of the schools.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter a variety of literature concerning TOK and international education and their place within national education systems is discussed. The chapter is organised by headings which group relevant readings by general area of focus. It moves from an academic discussion of what international education is, and how it impacts on a school culture, towards reviewing a set of studies based within schools which explore the perspectives of teachers and students in regards to international and national programmes of study.

The Theory of Knowledge guide

Through examining the TOK handbook provided by the IB organisation it is clear that the course takes a constructivist approach to learning, as it clearly states in the opening pages that "at the centre of the course is the student as **knower**" (bold in original) (IBO, 2008, p. 3). The syllabus also allows for a lot of teacher autonomy, as it "is organized in four broad categories: knowledge issues, knowers and knowing; ways of knowing; areas of knowledge; and linking questions" but "the categories are not intended to indicate a teaching sequence" (IBO, 2008, p.3). The TOK guide attempts to provide a clear introduction as to the epistemological nature of the course, and focuses on the importance of exploring "knowledge issues". Knowledge issues are defined by the IBO as "questions that directly refer to our understanding of the world, ourselves and others, in connection with the acquisition, search for, production, shaping and acceptance of knowledge" (IBO, 2008, p.9), and most of

the ensuing syllabus structure in the guide is framed as a series of questions which encourage analysis of various knowledge issues. Again however, the guide is clear that not all of this content should or could be covered in the allotted 100 hours of total teaching time, and that teachers of the course must use their own judgment and the interest of the students to guide the content they choose to cover in detail.

The TOK guide also provides all the necessary assessment information, including sample assessments with examiner notes. These assessments consist of an essay of between 1200-1600 words, chosen from a list of prescribed titles published yearly, and a presentation exploring the knowledge issues present in a real life situation. The aim of the first assessment is to explore abstract concepts through a rational and academic argument, whilst the presentation is an attempt to have students apply these abstract concepts and questions to the concrete realities of our world. Although the TOK guide does provide a lot of information and support, training is often needed to clarify elements of international mindedness, course structure and methodology for teachers new to the IB Diploma programme.

International education and internationalism

The first issue which arises with the impact of TOK in schools delivering national curricula is its strong pull toward what is termed "International education", and the theoretical frameworks and pedagogies which come with it. Hughes (2009) focuses on the theoretical aspect through a post-colonial lens and makes several interesting arguments. Initially he explores the constructed idea of a nation and the artificial and often exclusionary way in which nationalities are identified ethnically. He posits that national identities are often formed around homogeneous concepts that are

"above" everything else and do not leave room for the cultural milieu that is modern society. This concept in itself is problematic for national education systems, but when coupled with the semantics of IB rhetoric, Hughes identifies issues of neo-colonialism. Quoting the former IB Director General Roger Peel, Hughes sees that the IB and TOK look for students to relate to their own national self first and only then connect other cultural practices to this notion. However, by relating to their own national homogeny they create an idea of the "other", a foreign or exotic entity to whom these different customs and traditions belong. Hughes believes that this fails to create cultural understanding and focuses on a more valued national culture in relation to those outside of it.

This focus on a superior culture is further explored by Hughes as he references McKenzie (2004) in suggesting the origins of TOK and IB curricula in western schools of thought, and the fact that these origins create a tendency in the IB to colonize the pedagogical systems of host nations. He concludes that the only way for this to be rectified is to carefully plan a curriculum which involves a varied and critical exposure to multicultural concepts and productions such as novels, historical documents and philosophical texts. However, through this suggestion Hughes is attempting to make the TOK curriculum more prescriptive, with less freedom for teachers to reflect student experiences and interests. Beyond this, he is also insinuating a need for international programmes to move further away from national myths and identifiers and push toward a highly multicultural environment, something which has significant effects when implemented within schools that are

only teaching the IB as an option for students, and meanwhile teaching national curricula laden with signifiers and communicators of national identity.

Yet Hughes is not alone in his concerns and Simandiraki (2006) attempts to create a framework which allows educators to identify their approaches to international teaching, in specific relation to the treatment of cultural heritage. He posits that cultural heritage can be either tangible or intangible components of cultures which have been established by humans over time. This can range from a physical artifact such as a scroll or manuscript to something like a traditional greeting or dance.

Simandiraki, unlike Hughes, is not concerned with the structure of international curriculum, but more with the methodology, and he explores this through his focus on cultural heritage. He notes that such heritage can become cultural symbols which support national identities in a positive manner, but that these symbols can also be subverted when manipulated by a power elite, or when nations remain fossilised in their cultural understanding and fight "externally, to avert 'corruptions' from the periphery" (Simandiraki 2006, P. 44). This is a pertinent issue in schools delivering national curricula whilst also teaching TOK, a course which looks to question and criticises cultural heritage that may be sensitive in relation to the national identity.

Simandiraki, in an attempt to categorise and understand how cultural heritage is treated by educators in various contexts, creates a reference table based on his own previous research in the field. The table identifies four realms which cultural heritage moves through, from the "Factual" to the "Appropriate". In the final stage of this movement the heritage is fossilised and becomes tokenistic in its treatment, or part of a superficial international perspective. Simandiraki looks to the third stage of

"Interpretive" as the ideal for international educators as it looks to understand and explain rather than just describe or accept. He sees a balance between the second and fourth stages as the ideal for any classroom. In this capacity, cultural heritage is engaged with in a constructive way that seeks a complex and analytical interpretation of both national and international communities. This allows cultural heritage to remain in a more academic sphere rather than that of stereotype and stagnation.

The research, although theoretical in nature, makes an attempt to help educators place themselves on this continuum of academic uses of cultural heritage. It looks to raise debate about how deeply cultural heritage is examined in the TOK classrooms, and how far tokenistic treatments are instigated as a result of poor understanding or alternative agendas within schools systems delivering national curricula . Simandiraki concedes that more research is needed into the practical arena, in terms of what cultural heritage is being taught in international education programmes and exactly how it is being delivered, in order to understand the extent to which cultural heritage is utilised as an internationalising force.

Wylie (2008) takes the next evolutionary step in his research on how curriculum is internationalised. Wyle looks at the whole school community and the various message systems used to convey knowledge in any single school, and frames the practical actions of schools within theoretical perspectives. He realises that international education programmes, specifically the IB, are being adopted increasingly by schools and institutions teaching national curricula, but also identifies a lack of consensus over what international education is. Schools which predominantly follow a national programme are offering the IB as an opportunity for

students to grow, and become more rounded global citizens than national curricula allow for, however, these schools often overlook the wider picture of the school communities' mechanics and message systems when implementing an international education curriculum. This means that there can be serious tensions between the ideological and the pragmatic in relation to international theories of education. Wylie points out the simple example that in many schools offering the IB, foreign teachers are paid considerably more than the local ones and that "This can have an extremely negative impact on pupils' perceptions of the local culture" (Jackson 2005, p. 196).

Wylie references his own previous work in the construction of an "International Education Matrix", a clear taxonomy which brings practice and theory together in order that educators and administrators may identify where their institutions lie, and where they may wish to progress. Wylie looks at elements such as assessment, ICT and overall pedagogy and matches them with post-colonial theory, much like Hughes (2009), but also adds four more theoretical dimensions which look also at global economy and global civil society.

In his taxonomy Wylie attempts to contextualise the enactment of international education in national contexts and the way in which IB philosophies have an impact on the whole school, or conversely, how they may be confined only to the classrooms. The matrix itself is clearly theoretical in nature however, and despite wanting to reconcile practice and ideology it is mainly an instrument for discussion and to aid development rather than a failsafe categorisation tool. Yet this is a useful and significant step taken by Wylie in the direction of understanding the impact of

international programmes and courses on the entire school. In many ways the TOK is reliant on mutual interaction with the school structures and message systems, and can force administrators to make accommodating changes, however, it is important to understand how far these changes can be reconciled with theory.

Nationalising the IB

Sen (2001) takes a more contentious view than Wylie on the same topic. In his speech to IB coordinators in Turkey he suggests that rather than internationalising existing national curricula through programmes such as the IB, schools, specifically in Turkey, should attempt to reverse this notion, and nationalise the international curricula they currently use. Sen notes that this process has begun in part, referencing "the social studies school-based syllabus in Turkey, which had been designed to incorporate the national requirements in the social studies and, uniquely for the Diploma Programme, will be taught and assessed in Turkish" (Sen, 2001, p.5). In this example, Sen highlights two key points that support his argument for a nationalising of the IB. Firstly, that the language of assessment can be changed to the native tongue, to allow for a higher level of cognitive processing and rationalisation; something which is vital for the success of a strong TOK programme. And secondly, that nationalising international curricula can make the subjects offered more accessible to all students, and culturally and socially practical in terms of the national opportunities gained by completing the programme. In the context of Turkey, Sen states that the IB Diploma does not benefit many students in the advancement of their academic or professional careers. Only students intending on going to university abroad truly benefit from the course in this manner. By

nationalising the programme however, and allowing it to enter into closer discourse with national requirements and standards, the curriculum and outcome could be more broadly accepted by higher education institutions within Turkey, and become an achievement of wider national value.

It is this sense of compromise and willingness to adapt between international and national pedagogies and standards that Sen implies has the most power for instigating significant change. Through an intercourse of ideas and experiences between the two systems he believes "It would be a step towards acquiring cultural self-confidence through a commitment to diversity and pluralism from a culturally rooted position" (Sen, 2001, p.9). Here Sen is looking more positively at the post colonial implications of international education, in the hope that national systems can re-appropriate a stronger sense of identity, whilst providing a broad enough international element in their curricula to maintain a competitive advantage in the globalized world of academia. Again, this direction of thought emphasises the ability of different pedagogies to mix and transform for the better, and within schools which run the IB and national curricula simultaneously the extent, and nature of this mixing needs to be explored. With the centrality of the TOK course in relation to the IB entire, and the clear focus on constructivist approaches and formative assessment, it seems a key lens through which to view this potential for change, when placed within a teacher-centred, summative teaching environment.

The centrality of TOK to the IB philosophies, and to the transformative and beneficial power of international education are explored further by Mackenzie (2000). Mackenzie, like Wylie also concerns himself with the debate in defining

what internationalism and international education actually are, however he also refutes claims such as those made by Hughes (2009) as to the colonial aspects of the TOK, and argues that it is the process of muddying the debate which has caused such misconceptions.

Critical approaches to culture and society

Mackenzie warns that to view internationalism as accepting all cultures and practices equally is highly problematic, as critical perspectives such as those fostered in the TOK are rallied against and prevented from becoming ingrained in student habits. He raises concerns about the high levels of cultural relativism that many opponents of the IB expect TOK to align itself with. In his view, there are clearly some value judgements which need to be made, but that the students should be allowed to do this through their own experience of the TOK course. Mackenzie cites Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1991) in his exploration of what creates truly international knowledge, a set of skills and perspectives which are universal and place students in good stead for future success. He sees that students must gain academic and cognitive habits through problem solving and experiencing of a curriculum which fosters a detached, intuitive and lasting approach to analysis.

It is these habits which Mackenzie argues are developed quite clearly through the TOK course. He sees the TOK as a programme which allows students to see themselves in a broader context of community, culture and global society. He notes the vague, questioning nature of the TOK syllabus and applauds it as a means of ensuring teachers deliver the course as an experience rather than a passive delivery

of information. Through constant exposure to the TOK guiding questions, and an ongoing process of self reflection, students are brought into the habit of criticising their position in the world around them and the assumptions which go with this recognition. This habit allows students to eventually employ the process of critical inquiry as a matter of instinct, replacing any tendencies to passively accept information. Mackenzie sees this as a paragon of internationalism, as it is a set of expert skills personally tailored by students' experiences and only in minor ways tempered by the intrusion of western philosophy.

Mackenzie then, recognises the great influence of TOK on student thinking, and the unique alteration of pedagogy it requires from national institutions. If the TOK is implemented with legitimate effort and understanding, it has the ability to cause epistemological shifts within school systems, internationalising curriculums in one way or another. The extent to which this internationalising process is achieved requires further analysis however, and Mackenzie also notes the need for developing classroom and school community practices which make the effects of TOK "not only habits of the mind, but also habits of the heart!" (Mackenzie 2000, p.50)

Darwish (2009) also follows this final train of thought in exploring education as a political act, and the role of TOK in achieving practical social outcomes. In his paper, Darwish uses the theories of John Dewey and Paulo Friere, supported by their antecedents Plato and Aristotle, to propose that education, in essence, is a political and democratic act that has the power to free people from their social bonds. Much like a democratic government, Darwish sees the TOK as a programme which should encourage and facilitate the full participation of all students, so that they may have

the opportunity to direct their lives and the political choices of their community. However, he argues that the TOK encourages the kind of inquiry that allows students to question the status quo of their societies, but does not take the next logical step of encouraging practical action and change.

Darwish highlights that this notion of "praxis", the act of breaking free and emancipating oneself and one's community, is one which is neglected by the TOK course, which remains in theoretical realms. He sees this as more concerning when contextualised with the fact that IB students are often from wealthy backgrounds and are receiving a private education. These students, a component of the power elite in their community, are likely to have access to resources and opportunities which could make noticeable change in their surroundings, and so TOK must work harder to induce action from them.

Dunne and Edwards (2010) reiterate this sentiment in their examination of international schools as sites of social change. Much like Darwish, they recognise the privileged status of most students enrolled on international programmes, and analyse how far the IB and TOK have made any measurable social impact on these learners.

The study, conducted in the Philippines, focuses on two English speaking international schools, and on students of specifically Philippine nationality who attend these schools. Conducted as an in-depth case study with interviews of staff and students, the research aims to gain a fuller picture of the social change that the IB may effect in host-nationals. Informed by critical social theory, Dunne and Edwards recognise five areas in which social change may be brought about in

international education: language, the academic programme, teachers, extracurricular activities and service learning programmes.

Under the area of "academic programme" Dunne and Edwards (2010) found that international schools took a stance of cultural relativism, refusing to teach any specific cultural values. This was a stark contrast with the government-run national schools, who explicitly taught cultural values as a part of their curriculum. They also found that students who had been taking the TOK course were clearly aware of different cultures, social issues and the underlying reasons for these, but did not relate themselves or their own actions to these problems or the chain of cause and effect. This showed a lack, in this context at least, of depth in the TOK course and a diminishing effect on student habits and thought patterns. TOK made students aware, but failed to have them make critical value judgements or to raise their motivation to actually effect change.

Under other categories such as "language" and "teacher identity" Dunne and Edwards (2010) also found tensions between international ideologies and practical realities which link closely with the concerns of Wylie (2008). This resulted in a population of host nationals who were aware of the social problems in their local community but who were cynical and in no way encouraged by the school through curriculum, extracurricular activities or embedded message systems to participate in active social change. Dunne and Edwards conclude that the opportunities schools have are wasted, as programmes like the TOK fail to have enough influence on students and on the school community. They suggest that the students themselves are somewhat aware and not unwilling, but that the curriculum and delivery must

change somehow to contribute to effecting lasting change in the wider social setting. The TOK course needs to develop in ways which adapt to the national landscapes it is expanding into, so that it may make a noticable difference in communities where international education is available.

However, in their research Baker and Kanan (2005) are not as convinced of the power of international education. In their study they look at the cultural awareness of students from both international and state schools, cultural awareness being a key facet of international education, as claimed by UNESCO. Within this area they find three sub-categories of knowledge/attitude types: awareness of other cultures, cultural tolerance and universal affiliation. Through careful research the team developed a 22 item survey instrument to test students' levels of awareness and perspectives in each of these three areas, and delivered this over a two week period.

The results suggested that students attending international schools did score higher in general, however not by a significant amount. This leads to a question of how beneficial or impacting international education really is, based on these measurement constructs, for short term awareness. However, the research done here seems fairly weak to even make general claims such as this. The survey items are unclear in origins and many of the likert-type scales are four-point rather than five, making the instrument's validity questionable. Even Baker and Kanan go on to admit that results could be influenced by a milieu of extraneous variables such as exposure to international media or a common culture of international travel, which are difficult to factor out in any context. The research itself is flawed, yet it still raises some interesting questions about the assumption that international education is more

beneficial and empowering in terms of the social and international awareness it provides, over less flexible national curricula. These certainly need to be explored in more detail.

The International Baccalaureate and national paradigms

However, Visser (2010) asserts that the benefits of international education in a national setting are far more than mere assumptions but clear socio-economic realities. Visser explores the issues of successfully implementing the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) in Dutch national schools as the IB expands increasingly in this market. He recognises the difficulties of schools that are already stuck in their own national paradigms, when trying to incorporate a whole new pedagogy and curriculum in supplement to their traditional one.

Despite noting the problems, Visser is also a clear proponent of the IB's MYP, suggesting that the programme offers apparent economic and academic advantages over their school peers and also espouses a philosophy which in more internationally applicable. As such, he is also implying the need to shape school structures around these international programmes in order to provide equally beneficial opportunities to the entire school community.

Through collection of past research surveys, historical research and a range of interviews with relevant staff Visser identifies assessment as being the biggest and most difficult to implement change in the particular context of Dutch national schools, and as a result recommends that much training is provided to teachers in this area. In addition he suggests that parents and students need to be trained in the IB's

MYP values, objectives, assessments and terminologies. He feels, and seemingly justifiably so, that for the international programmes to have any impact on the overall quality of education the entire school community must understand the possibilities, help construct the strategies and generally be supportive of the changes ahead.

This process is something which Onür (2011) claims is happening already within Turkey, at the Koç school in Istanbul (the first high school in Turkey to begin delivering the IBDP). In fact, she further claims that rather than shaping existing structures around international programmes, they should be converged to create a "confluence" of two programmes which give rise to a new "holistic" programme that provides the national and international elements required for a balanced and globally competitive education.

Onür charts the process of curriculum convergence in Koç school, as over time students who were not enrolled on the IBDP wished to take courses from within the IB curriculum, such as economics and business and management. This led the school to investigate the feasibility of integrating MEB curriculum with IB curriculum, in order to deliver a course that better suited student needs.

In some cases, such as the national history curriculum there were observed to be many overlaps with the comparable IB course, and departments were tasked with designing a new curriculum which merged the two courses. It is further highlighted that many teachers recognized that the overall aims of MEB seemed increasingly compatible with those of the IB.

Onür states that these new courses not only provided the content needed by students who would be entering a competitive and ever-changing higher education environment, but that they also saved time by reducing the total number of courses students were taking. However, a considerable amount of time was still required in the planning stages, and frequent meetings and reevaluations were required to achieve the stated goals of the process.

Beyond this, it is claimed that Koç school has engaged in a thorough system of teacher training, attempting to ensure that all teachers are trained in their relevant IB subjects and in the general IB philosophies and methodological approaches. Through her study and observation of teachers' teaching styles, Onür concludes that this process, along with the curriculum overhaul, has resulted in consistent teaching approaches regardless of whether the national curriculum or IB curriculum is being delivered. In other words, she suggests that IB methodologies have been successfully integrated into the school community.

However, this observation is not shared by students whom Onür interviews for her study, who state that different methodologies are used by teachers delivering the MEB and IB curricula. Onür interprets this as bias on the part of students, but this seems a suspect evaluation which fits into her optimistic evaluation of the entire schools' current programme. This may also highlight a conflict between the perceptions of teachers and those of students when it comes to the extent and success of the curriculum convergence.

Despite this, Onür's research does seem to offer a model for national interaction with international programmes of study. In this model, both are valued for the influence

they have on the identity formation of students, the diverse means of thinking they encourage and the economic and social opportunites they provide. She also highlights the need for teacher training, and collaboration within departments in order for such a model to work.

However, this model does not seem to be currently implemented in other institutions, as revealed by Halicioğlu (2008) who explores the ability of schools in Turkey to successfully deliver the IB curriculum. In her research she surveys 154 staff and administrators involved in delivering the IB in a national context around Turkey. The questions asked focus around the issues of delivering an internationally centred curriculum in often mono-lingual and mono-cultural communities; with Halicioğlu's main interests lying in what is not working and what can be done to assist teachers and administrators.

Halicioğlu notes the areas of conflict and tension between the national education system and that of the IB, most notably the entire epistemological approach and the huge gulf in agendas when assessing students. Yet despite her anticipating problems with student performance due to huge shifts in style and content, teacher responses on this issue were mixed.

On the other hand, Halicioğlu finds that over half of the participants felt they had little support from the administration and had not received prior training. Also, more than half desired more time for peer observation and collaboration within the IB. Another highly significant result was that seventy five percent of respondents felt that IB students in their schools needed to learn more about other cultures.

Overall, Halicioğlu reveals a huge problem in the implementation of the IB in Turkish schools. Teachers were not prepared, were not supported and as a direct corollary and were not taking opportunities to improve the programme of their own initiative. The study could have been wider in its scope to include students; however the teacher comments are valuable in helping to construct a picture of how the IB is interacting with school communities. Teachers were clearly concerned with ideas of international mindedness and cultural awareness, key facets of the IB and TOK course, and wanted more professional development to enable them to make a more noticable impact in the school and on students. Conversely, Halicioğlu's research also displays the tension between schools' recognition of sound educational ideals and their ability, competence or even willingness to truly implement them with any tangible and lasting effect. Halicioğlu leaves us with far more research to be conducted into the impact of TOK (as a symbol of international education) on schools which focus on national curricula, and the reasons behind this.

But Haser and Star (2009) make it clear that many of the problems with curriculum and teacher training are not simply confined to the sphere of international education, and that issues with conflicting pedagogy are experienced by teachers of the national curriculum in Turkey also. In their study they looked at the nature of teachers' pedagogical beliefs upon graduating from a teacher education programme, and then one year later, after experiencing the Turkish national curriculum. The sample of twelve were all found to have either had their beliefs re-oriented towards a teacher-centred philosophy, or re-affirmed, by their practical experience in schools and the issues of delivering the National Curriculum. Some factors influencing this were the

pace and workload demanded of the curriculum, and the student response to teaching methods and specific topics. The student reactions reflect comments made by Sen (2001) to the effect that the Turkish national system fosters students who are accustomed to, and comfortable with, a teacher-centred approach. This leads to a great difficulty when trying to use a more constructivist approach, as it requires the transformation of deeply entrenched learning practices and perceptions of knowing.

This process seems to happen in reverse for teachers in Turkey, who begin with ideals of student-centred learning environments, but are conditioned over the years into delivering passive curricula due to the pedagogical expectations of their institutions and students. Haser and Star note that "While participants mostly stated teacher-centred beliefs and associated practices, they also expressed student-centred beliefs about teaching and learning mathematics inconsistent with their practices" (Haser & Star, 2009, p. 245). This finding presents two clear problems. Firstly, the fact that teachers espouse values does not mean they are practically evident in their classrooms, this is an issue when conducting survey research and so items must be cross correlated in an attempt to ascertain true evaluations of teachers' perceptions verses the realities. Secondly, it highlights the tension and confusion inherent in elements of the Turkish national system, whereby teachers try to reconcile demands for a prescribed pedagogy with their personal beliefs, which are often found to be in a state of disagreement or disillusionment.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

Introduction

In this chapter the methodology which underpinned and was used to execute this study is discussed. I attempt to explore the practical, ethical and philosophical reasons behind the choices made when carrying out this research, and also aim to address possible validity issues through the explanation and justification of my overall design.

Research design

The research design for this study was mixed methods, and more specifically exploratory in nature. This research was more focused on qualitative data than quantitative. As TOK is a complex course which is meant to be *experienced* by both students and staff, rather than simply *taught*, purely quantitative research methods are inappropriate to investigate how this course may be changing perceptions and experiences within Turkish schools. Through qualitative research I was afforded the freedom to collect clear accounts from those individuals in the school who are in some of the best positions to relate a sense of the potential effects occurring. And by fostering a relationship of mutual respect with all participants and some familiarity with the IB coordinators who acted as my doorway to the schools, I feel I was able to gain data that was more honest and representative than might have been gained through other research methods.

As I collected the data I sought to build a picture of the current situation through a post-positivist lens. In this sense then, the research looked to gain an approximation

of the position TOK holds in schools, as perceived by staff and students, through weaving the products of several methods (survey, interview and observation) to triangulate and create a rich picture of how TOK is operating within the Turkish education system. Ultimately I was aiming to create a research document where "understandings are blending together, overlapping, forming a composite, a new creation" and where the data "shape and define one another, and an emotional, gestalt effect is produced" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p.6).

I also recognize, as Spindler and Spindler summarized, that "Instrumentation and quantification are simply procedures employed to extend and reinforce certain kinds of data, interpretations and test hypotheses across samples" (1992, p.69). Therefore the quantitative element of the design provided raw data, the analysis of which helped to reveal patterns for closer examination and to validate any findings, enriching the qualitative aspects of the study. The perspectives and rich qualitative data I collected were of clear importance, however, the quantitative data allowed me to produce basic statistical figures which accompanied my findings, clarified patterns within the select sample and strengthened the validity of any conclusions/interpretations.

Due to the emphasis on qualitative data the research was exploratory and so did not open with a hypothesis. The organic nature of this study meant that methods and ideas adapted as the research progressed, in order to provide a flexible and effective framework which could yield results that were less informed by my own biases.

Context

The context of this study was based around four private schools teaching the IBDP and TOK in Turkey. These schools ranged in terms of when they began teaching the IBDP, from 1999 to 2008.

Participants

In this study I used a convenience sample of four schools in Ankara, Turkey, who are currently teaching the IBDP. These schools are all private institutions, as are almost all schools which teach the IB in Turkey. Although convenient in terms of the access I could gain to participants, and the feasibility of travelling between the schools, they were positioned in three very different geographical locations around the city. They also had diverse populations with differing profiles. For example, in school A many students held dual passports and many of the teaching staff were not Turkish nationals. In School C all students were of Turkish nationality as were all the teaching staff. School B was considerably larger than all of the other three schools with a larger student cohort in each grade and some foreign staff delivering the IB courses and school D was a much smaller school with a smaller population than the others, but some foreign teachers on the staff. These factors suggest that the data collected from these diverse institutions may more likely reflect the way schools experience the TOK curriculum in Turkey, although limited to private schools. Where common issues were identified, they had been expressed by a diverse range of participants from four diverse institutions delivering the TOK course, as well as the MEB curriculum. And so these similarities are likely to be linked to elements of

a shared experience within the Turkish national system, rather than something localized to a city.

My initial sample was intended to be five schools; however one school did not want to participate in the study. Also, one of the schools included, school D, is the school at which I work. It is undeniable that in this case there was a higher risk of bias in terms of both myself as observer and the participants. Participants from my own institution may have wished to appease me by providing results they believed I wanted, in the hope they were helping my study, rather than expressing their own opinions. It is also possible that both students and staff may have been wary of my intentions, and with whom in the school I might share the data or how I may react personally to their responses, which again may have altered what they chose to communicate. In recognition of these potential problems of researcher bias I asked a more disinterested colleague, one who is not currently a TOK or IB teacher, to administer my instruments and have tried expressing any possible validity issues I am aware of when communicating findings from this school.

In terms of my own biases I am, at the time of this study, a TOK and IB English teacher at school D, and have been for two years. As such, I have formed my own set of perceptions regarding the TOK course and the MEB curriculum, and have clear personal answers to all of the items on the surveys which were administered to participants. Throughout this study however, I have attempted to remain as objective as possible, and avoid projecting my own views or assumptions onto the responses given by participants. I have consistently attempted to make analyses based only on

the data collected, and have put several structures in place to help ensure this, which will be discussed in later sections.

All schools who participated have remained anonymous in my results and conclusion. And although there are a limited number of schools in Ankara who teach the IB and therefore it is not impossible to identify those in the study, minimal detail about the schools in terms of location, population, history and academic performance have been provided in order to protect their anonymity as far as possible.

Within each school I focused on the high school principal, the IB coordinator, the TOK teacher, and also two IB teachers and two IB students (seven participants per school) selected systematically to avoid any bias on the part of myself or those assisting me within the schools. Among the two IB teachers selected, at least one had to be of Turkish nationality, to also avoid the sample including too many foreigners and thus becoming unrepresentative of the way each school population perceived the TOK course.

In two schools, I was unable to receive surveys by the principals because they declined to complete them. This again seemed due to a general mistrust of what the results would be and as a corollary of the perception of me as an outsider researcher. As Dwyer and Buckle state: "the insider role status frequently allows researchers more rapid and more complete acceptance by their participants" (2009, p.58) and this is something I was lacking. This perception of my outsider status was a problem which became more and more apparent throughout the research, from beginning to end, and which required some adaptation on my part. As a result I tried to take a

more dialectical approach to my position, in that I tried to shift between positions of outsider and insider so as to gain trust, access to information and participants and open lines of communication. In all instances, the IB coordinators acted as my doorways to the school and therefore it was important that I established myself in some part as an insider with them. This was achieved through informal conversations before and after initial interviews, where we discussed our respective schools and the IB Diploma Programme, as well as clarifying repeatedly the aim of my research, which is to provide information to administrators such as themselves that may assist in implementing the TOK curriculum as effectively as possible. However, I did not wish to extend this method to other participants until after they had completed the study, due to the dangers that they may "make assumptions of similarity and therefore fail to explain their individual experience fully" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p.58) or that there might be higher levels of acquiescence due to a perception of similarity and friendliness. Therefore I came to occupy a space between the role of insider and outsider in order to maximize my access to the participants, and ensure my data was as trustworthy and reliable as possible.

Instrumentation

In the first stage of my research, I spoke informally with two IB coordinators one from my own school, and one from a school which was not part of the study. In these semi-structured conversations, I tried to ascertain the pertinent issues concerning TOK and its position embedded within a national curriculum. Through these conversations I was also able to put forth areas of interest I had identified from the literature, in terms of data and perspectives I felt might be valuable, to see how

relevant the coordinators, as experts, felt they might be. From this process I was able to shape my initial items for the instruments.

These instruments took the form of two surveys, one for IB students and one for IB coordinators, IB administrators and IB teachers (Appendix B). The surveys contained initial categorical questions to allow for a variety of comparison points during the analysis phase. These items focused on years of teacher experience, nationality (and grade level, for students). The surveys also contained a number of other items which were a mix of questions and statements, whose responses were given via five-point likert-type scales. These items followed three main areas of enquiry, directly linked to my research questions. The first set of items were concerned with how TOK is implemented in the school, the second set focused on how TOK is perceived by the participants, and the final section tried to assess how the participants perceived the interactions between TOK and The National Curriculum. The instrument was organized in this way to provide three layers of complexity. The initial questions were more descriptive and simple for participants to answer, building their confidence and making them feel more comfortable with the style and format of the instrument. As they progressed, the responses were designed to become more demanding and required more personal perspectives.

Many of the items were also followed by a request for open-ended explanation and clarification by the participants. These opportunities were the most important, as the scales cannot accurately measure perceptions alone. These open sections sought to find more clarification and a communication of personal perceptions that was invaluable in interpreting the quantitative data, and identifying deeper patterns of

perception in the school communities. The open-ended element also gave the participants an opportunity to expand on their ideas and consider them in more detail. This was not only important from a data collection aspect but also in terms of ethical considerations "since respecting autonomy is tantamount to treating individuals as ends in themselves" and not "solely as a means" (Howe & Moses, 1999, p.22). To a similar end, the surveys also finished with an open page, available for participants to express any other perspectives of significance to the study, and perhaps identify areas which were not accounted for anywhere else in the instrument.

After the surveys were made, I set about the process of piloting them. They were piloted on a group of two teachers and two students from the school who were not participants in the study, and were also reviewed by the two IB coordinators with whom I had previously talked. These coordinators were able to improve the content validity, being experts in the area. The teachers and students were able to comment on the clarity and accessibility of the items used and pointed out some issues which may have affected the consistency, and therefore reliability of my measures. The pilot participants were purposely chosen as IB teachers and IB students, because they had more relevant prior knowledge with which to approach the questions and make pertinent criticisms.

The open-ended sections were found to be clear, however many of them relied on developing answers given to the quantitative items. Therefore, one of the most important changes made was in the wording of some of the attitudinal scales. For example, the question "How would you rate the similarities between the educational

goals of the Turkish Ministry of Education and those of the TOK course?" was initially followed by the scale:

- Very significant
- Significant
- Neutral
- Insignificant
- Very insignificant

It was perceived that the terms on this scale, mixed with the phrase in the question "similarities between" made it ambiguous what each point on the scale actually meant. This could have clearly created many inconsistencies within participant responses and so the scale, upon unanimous approval by the pilot volunteers, was altered to:

- Very similar
- Similar
- Neutral
- Dissimilar
- Very dissimilar

I also had a discussion with all of the pilot participants, in which I expressed that I was looking for data which would help me build a picture of how TOK was being implemented in schools, and how staff and students perceived the course on its own, and within the context of the MEB curriculum. Further, I stressed that the research was exploratory, and so I was not seeking to test any specific hypothesis. I did this

so as to confirm whether or not they felt the surveys and items within them matched with my intentions. This was extremely important for the validity of this study, as "validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are" (Joppe, 2000, p.1).

After both surveys had been piloted and finalized, they were both translated into Turkish. This was done to ensure full conceptual understanding of the items/questions amongst all of my intended participants. I expected most of the surveys to be completed in English, as this is the language by which the majority of IB courses are delivered and experienced within Turkey. On the other hand, I wanted participants to feel comfortable to express themselves in whatever language they preferred, and did not want to appear to de-value or neglect an important part of any participant's identity. Again, this helped create a sense of respect and autonomy.

The translation was completed by a Turkish national, who is fluent in English. The translator was also an educator involved in the Primary Years Programme (PYP) which is a component of the IB for younger learners. This was a great advantage because they were already familiar with many of the terms I was using in English.

The translated surveys were then given to the original pilot participants (all bilingual in Turkish and English) for them to compare with the English originals. This was a crucial step to ensure that the translations had the same semantic meaning, and therefore would not jeopardize the validity of the data they provided.

Along with the surveys, semi-structured interviews were also designed (Appendix A) to be delivered to the IB coordinators in the participant schools (four in total), with

three of the interviews being recorded and one being noted in writing in as much detail as possible (school C did not allow me to record the interview). This process was intended to help give me in-depth perspectives from the administrators who were most intimately involved in coordinating the TOK course within schools, and who were responsible for its perceived success or failure. The interview was also designed to cover some of the survey elements in more detail, to provide a deeper sense of context and help interpret instruments completed by participants in each school. The questions for the interview were formed based on my previous informal conversations with two IB coordinators, and the literature I had reviewed surrounding the research area.

To help ensure a correct and accurate completion of the questionnaires I explained / discussed the items very clearly with the IB coordinators to prevent any uncertainties. However, the survey was deemed to be clear and straightforward (as it also was by piloting participants at the earlier stage) and no instruction page for participants was needed. I also discussed with IB coordinators in-depth about the study, and instrument procedures, before the instruments were administered. Procedures were:

- Participants must be reminded of their complete anonymity in the study
- Participants must be reminded that all data they provide will be treated confidentially
- Participants should complete their surveys without consulting others and in isolation and then return them
- No names should be written on the survey papers

- Papers should be delivered anonymously to the IB coordinators upon completion

These procedures were used to try and guarantee that participants felt comfortable expressing themselves, expressed their own true opinion (at least at that specific moment in time) and also communicated their responses as fully as possible.

Method of data collection

Before data collection could begin, my instruments needed to be approved by the Turkish Ministry of Education and permission granted to enter the schools specified in my proposal. After this was received, copies of my instruments and a cover letter briefly describing my research were sent to all of these schools. Understanding that schools may be reticent to allow a researcher into their institutions, and aware of the centralized control the Ministry has over all schools in the county, I waited until participant schools had received this official documentation before contacting them by mail and phone to clarify my aims, request their participation and arrange dates for visitation.

The next step of data collection involved meeting with the IB coordinators for each school and conducting the semi-structured interview with them (Appendix A). These interviews were all conducted in the months of November and December, once the ministry approval had been received. All of the pre-chosen questions for the interview were used for each participant; however the rest of the process was organic in nature, as further questions varied depending on what the coordinators actually said. This afforded the opportunity to gather a rich collection of detailed

perspectives before the surveys were distributed, so as to provide a potential lens for interpretation of results. The interviews were recorded (except for school C) and transcribed for this purpose, so that after collecting data, the interview could be re played and re analyzed, and any pertinent comments applied to my findings.

These interviews also served to establish myself as a semi-insider researcher, and assure the IB coordinators of my knowledge on the subject and my clear ethical considerations in the research design, where "justice and equality were sought … in the status and voice of research participants" (Howe & Moses, 1999, p.37). I also sought to highlight the benefits of the research and the strict confidentiality which would be enforced.

After the interviews I explained my systematic sampling methods to the coordinators and the participants were chosen accordingly. For students I used the oldest and youngest students in the IB diploma programme at the time of implementing this study, meaning that in each school one student was in grade 11 and one in grade 12 (the final year of high school, and of the diploma programme). This method was chosen for its objectivity, and also provided perspectives from students who were at the beginning the course and those who were at the end, which was more representative of the general student experience. For IB teachers, I selected the first and last teachers when all names were presented in alphabetical order by surname. If one of these teachers was not Turkish, the process was to be repeated but instead, the second and penultimate names on the list chosen. If necessary, I intended to repeat this process until I had a least one Turkish teacher out of the two participants selected. As it was, this was not necessary.

In the schools, I was able to meet with some of the teacher participants and explain the survey items, as well as the procedures. These procedures being:

- Participants must be reminded of their complete anonymity in the study
- Participants must be reminded that all data they provide will be treated confidentially
- Participants should complete their surveys without consulting others and in isolation and then return them
- No names should be written on the survey papers
- Papers should be delivered anonymously to the IB coordinators upon completion

However, due to scheduling I was generally unable to meet the students. In this case, I had to rely on the TOK teachers and IB coordinators to assist in the procedures and in clearly communicating these to the students. This was a major concern for me in terms of how reliable the results would be, especially when I desired honest and detailed personal perspectives. However, I had built a sound level of trust and academic respect with the IB coordinators and trusted them in this matter. It also seems clear from the data collected, that participants did not show high levels of acquiescence in most cases, meaning that responses did not appear to be overly positive or uniform, in an attempt to provide me with the answers participants may have believed I desired. Instead, the qualitative responses were often openly critical and related to personal experience.

The surveys were completed and returned within the month of December by schools A and D and C. School B returned them in late January as they also had to seek

permission from the school director in order for me to distribute my instruments. The process of seeking permission took longer than anticipated, and required frequent follow-up on my part, until it was finally granted. However, this time lag was acceptable within my overall aims. I wished to have all data collected before the semester break for schools during early February, because after this break school became very stressful for both twelth Grade students, who had many IB assessments to complete, and an upcoming University entrance exam (YGS), and also for teachers who were assisting many students with assessments, including TOK essays and presentations. If data were to be collected during this period, the environmental strains would be sure to present a more skewed sense of reality than otherwise.

When IB coordinators had all surveys they contacted me via e-mail and I visited the school to collect them within a week. They were given in a sealed envelope, and if any were knowingly missing, such as those of the school Principals in schools C and B (who did not want to participate and were skeptical of the study), the coordinators explained the reasons for this.

After data analysis, some follow-up interviews with participants and coordinators were conducted to clarify ambiguous results or interesting statements.

School C

In all of my data collection methods however, school C was very different, and presented a challenge to the initial research design. After contacting the coordinator of this school I was informed that it was against school policy to have teachers or students complete questionnaires, but it was not against policy to ask them questions

in person. The reasons provided, were that many researchers applied to issue surveys in this school and that it had become too much of a burden on staff.

However, it was suggested that I visit and that I interview all of the participants I needed in person, but I was not permitted to record any of the interviews, including that with the IB coordinator.

Instead, I was provided with a room and after selecting participants through my systematic sampling method, they were sent to me individually over the course of a two hour period.

In this case then, I chose to deliver the questionnaire orally. Therefore all questions asked and scales offered to participants were exactly the same as those given to participants in other schools, the difference being that I would read the questions and then note down the participants' responses. Keenly aware that "interviewer error can weaken the stability of survey statistics, increase or decrease the magnitude of estimates and influence the relationships observed among variables" (Davis, Couper, Janz, Caldwell & Resnicow, 2009, p.16) I made sure to put some procedures in place to insure against this. These procedures were:

- All items were read in the order stated on the original instruments
- A singular tone was used for each participant until after the interview
- Stock phrases were used in greeting and in requesting further clarification when needed (Appendix C)

- Notes for the qualitative elements of participant answers were only taken using the exact words used, no interpretation or addition was made to comments

The final procedure concerning note taking, was also employed when conducting the semi-structured interview with the IB coordinator of school C.

It is worth noting now that despite the school's policy on research, all participants were extremely helpful and appeared open. The result of such a response was advantageous to the research, as clarification of ambiguous results / statements was collected immediately from all interviewees.

Method of data analysis

As this is exploratory research with a focus on personal perspectives, the main focus of analysis was given to the qualitative data. As a result, only basic statistical analysis was applied to the quantitative data collected. Quantitative responses were grouped and tables were constructed to show the percentage distributions of the various responses. These tables were then further organized using the categorical data collected, such as whether the teacher respondent was of Turkish nationality or not, or whether a student participant was in grade 11 or 12.

The purpose of this data was to indentify very general patterns in attitudes and also to provide an initial context for the qualitative responses, which followed the quantitative items in the survey, and looked to elaborate much further on the simple attitude statements.

In terms of qualitative data analysis, I chose to follow a grounded theory approach, the advantages of which are aptly expressed by Turner:

> The theories developed are likely to be complex rather than oversimplified ways of accounting for a complex world, and this quality is likely to enhance their appeal and utility. A further advantage of the approach is that it directs the researcher immediately to the creative core of the research process, and facilitates the direct application of both the intellect and the imagination to the demanding process of interpreting research data. (Turner, 1983, p.335)

This paradigm compliments the post positivist lens with which I chose to engage in this research to begin with. Through taking the grounded approach, I was able to move from the basics of the text I had collected and progress to the deeper and complex tapestry of interpretations and perceived realities which were contained within the data. I was then able to pull some potentially valuable issues and further areas for research from the re-coded information.

In following this method my basic steps of analysis involved first making detailed personal notes and interpretations on each qualitative response given in the questionnaires. After this, using my own notes and the original responses, I coded the data into simple topics based on what participants had said.

After this came the more difficult task of using my interpretations to construct more abstract codifiers which represented the implications of perspectives provided. In coding the responses I had to apply my own experiences, reading of the surrounding literature and previous reflections to extract the complex patterns of meaning expressed within the qualitative data. In this sense it was not possible to be completely objective or scientific, nor would it be desirable considering the intricacy of the situation being researched and the oversimplification a less personally

invested, positivist approach may yield. However, it was certainly important to reflect on the potential bias of my own interpretations and it was "important to devise ways of raising and using different interpretations, rather than submerging them" (Richards, 2005, p.72) so as to increase the reliability and applicability of any results or theories gained from the coded data. Therefore, I had both fellow researchers and also the participants in the original piloting of my survey instrument, check a random sample of two responses from each school (typed onto a blank sheet to protect anonymity) and communicate their interpretations of these based on two basic questions:

- What are the basic points being made?
- What are the implications of these points considering the question that was asked?

They also reviewed my coded lists and were asked to comment whether they thought any codes were inappropriate or inapplicable, and also whether they might add any themselves.

This whole process helped ensure that interpretations struck the balance of being as perceptive and consistent as possible.

After finalising the coding I was then able to represent the results in simple tables, again broken down using the categorical information, such as school or nationality. And expand on each coded data set with a closer analysis of the language used and specific comments of interest which I found illustrated or clarified an important point.

All this data analysis amalgamated allowed me then to enter the final stage of coming to conclusions and providing insights. And to finally corroborate the alignment of my interpretations, I asked the participants from my own school, including the IB coordinator but not the principal, to perform "participant checks" on the results chapter. They indicated in their feedback that the analyses made appeared to be applicable to what they had responded in their surveys/interview. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, and the busy schedule of participants in the other schools (by this time teachers and students were highly pre-occupied with internal and external assessments for both the IB and MEB curricula) the process was *only* undertaken by participants from my own school. However, this still accounted for six separate individuals who had provided in-depth responses previously, and who formed a quarter of my overall sample.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

The data in this chapter consist of three types. Firstly, quantitative data was analysed, from the survey items which used a Likert-type scale. Secondly, open-ended answers were analysed; these answers typically came after a set of quantitative items, and were aimed at clarifying and deepening responses. The final data came from informal follow-up interviews with participants and semi-structured interviews which were conducted with the IB Coordinators from each school.

I chose to organise this chapter by focusing on the quantitative responses from each section first, to give a basic idea of different responses and the frequency with which they were given. After each section of two or three quantitative data sets, the corresponding open-ended answers are analysed. This allows the quantitative data to be qualified and expanded upon by analysing the coded responses participants gave in qualitative form. Although most of the data is initially represented in the form of charts and percentages, the purpose of the data analysis was not to find statistically significant results. The charts are used as a means of clearly representing patterns within the small sample who participated in the research.

When analysing the qualitative data from open-ended questions, I also include clarifying comments made by participants on the final page of the survey, which asked them if they had anything more to add in terms of their perspectives or experience. The responses from this section did not bring up any new points, but were used by participants to expand on earlier responses. I also weave in relevant data from follow-up interviews with participants and interviews with the IB

Coordinators. This data is not dealt with separately because it intentionally links with the qualitative questions asked, and in many cases involved me asking participants to clarify what they had indicated in their open-ended responses. Therefore, this third set of data is combined with the second, to develop a clearer understanding of participant responses.

It is also worth noting that in many cases assessment is mentioned with reference to the MEB curriculum as well as the TOK course. With this in mind, I would like to clarify once more, what these assessments entail. When completing any MEB course students must take exams in each of the two school semesters. For core subjects such as maths, Turkish or science, this usually means three exams in each semester. For other subjects such as religion or geography, this means two exams per semester. These exams all contribute to the student's yearly transcript and the average grade from their exams forms their overall score. Students are then ranked by their scores within the school. Being one of the top three students of your graduating class is looked upon highly by universities in Turkey and can help with acceptance into an institution. However, this must also be coupled with success in the national university entrance exam, otherwise known as the YGS.

For the TOK course there is no official exam nor an MEB equivalent measure of assessment. Students do not attempt any form of official assessment until the spring of their first year, when they are given a choice of prescribed essay topics, one of which they must choose and write a 1500 word essay on. This essay is externally marked by IB examiners. In the second year, students must also complete a TOK presentation which is assessed by the classroom teacher.

Both of the TOK assessments are completed over a longer time period, and are not due for submission until March of the second year of study.

Participant details

A total of 26 surveys were completed by participants at four different schools. In each school two students completed the survey, as did the main TOK teacher, two other IB teachers and the IB coordinator. The principals of schools A and D submitted their completed surveys also, however, the principals in schools B and C declined to participate.

Therefore, there were a total of eight students and eighteen staff who provided the data collected. All students were Turkish, in school A these students were holders of dual passports, however they chose to clearly identify themselves as Turkish on the surveys.

The distribution of participants who were of Turkish nationality, or who were foreign can be seen in Figure 1. Although this is not representative of each schools' working population, where there were many more Turkish staff, it is roughly representative of the IB programmes in schools A, B and D, where foreigners whose native language is English are hired in a larger proportion to deliver the IB. IB coordinators confirmed that this usually occurs because the medium of teaching the IB is English in most subjects and is needed at a very high level of competency in order to communicate difficult concepts. Also, foreigners are often hired with existing IB qualifications. It is worth noting that school D had only staff of Turkish nationality.

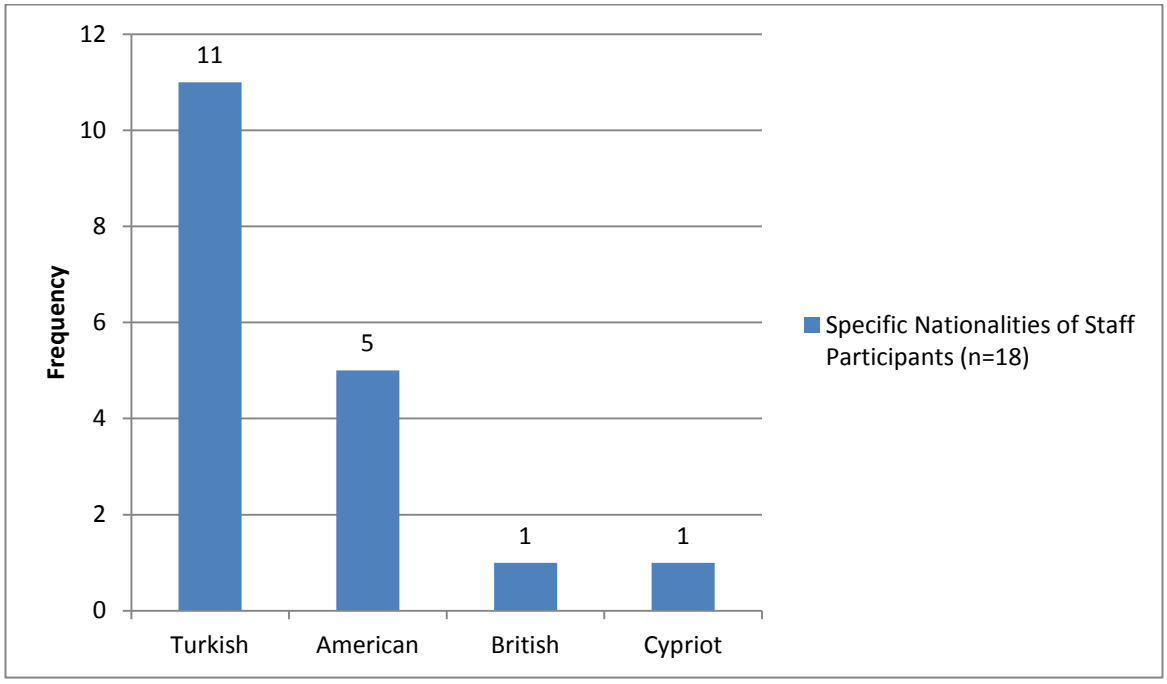

Figure 1. Percents of specific nationalities of staff participants

Item one on the survey for staff asked how many years the participant had worked at their current school. In Figure 2 it can be seen that the vast majority of participants had been in the school for at least two years, with almost three quarters having worked in their institutions for over three years. This suggests that in subsequent questions, participants were able to provide perspectives based on a thorough knowledge of their institutions and the curricula they delivered.

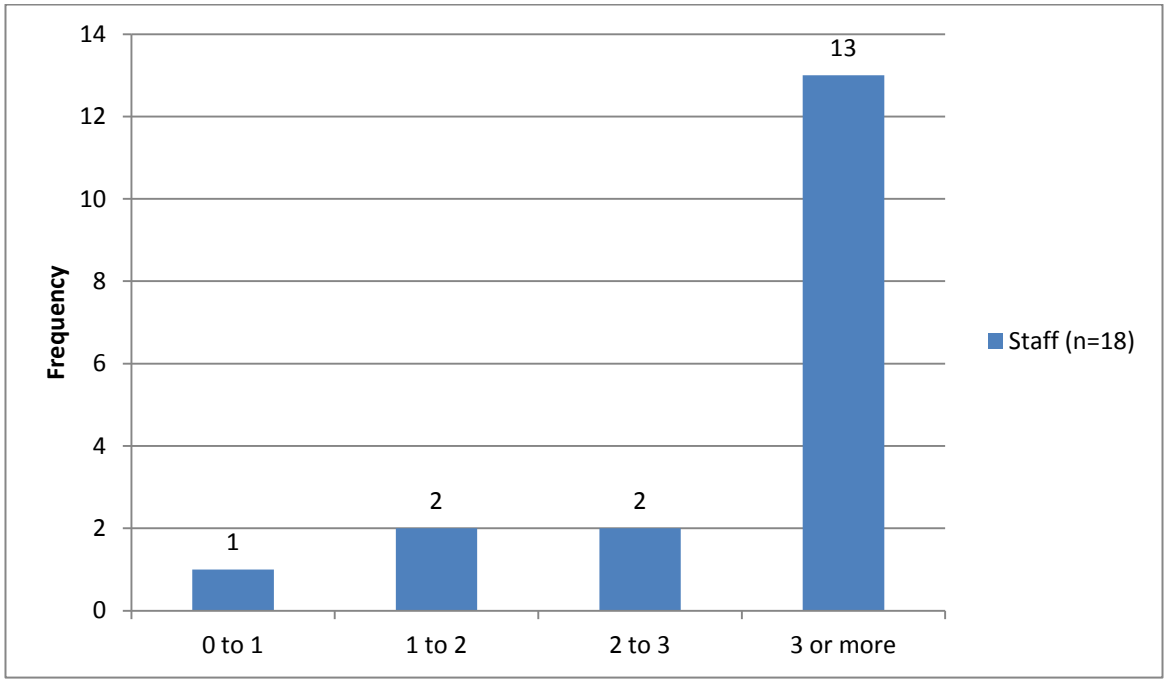

Figure 2. Years taught at current school

Items four and five asked participants if they taught TOK in their current school, and whether they had received any TOK training. All teachers who were teaching TOK said that they had received training. This training mainly took the form of TOK seminars in neighbouring schools, or in house, although three of the participants had attended an official training course provided by the IB, which had lasted several days and was attended by other TOK teachers from around Europe.

Although just under half of the staff participants stated that they taught TOK, some did so on a casual basis, filling in when necessary, and two staff ran TOK clubs in their schools which looked at TOK issues but which were open to any student from the school regardless of whether they were enrolled in the IB programme. After confirming this with IB coordinators, it emerged that only a quarter of participants were TOK teachers who were fully responsible for one or two TOK classes.

The aims of TOK

Item twelve for staff and item seven for students asked what participants thought the three key aims of the TOK course were.

All participants either mentioned the phrase "critical thinking" directly or mentioned questioning the validity of knowledge, which is a key aspect of critical thinking (see Figure 3). This is an overwhelming sense of agreement over at least one aspect of the course; that a vital component is to question assumptions and interrogate knowledge.

Equal amounts of twelve participants also indicated that TOK aims to help students gain a variety of perspectives, high level academic skills and encourages development of self reflection.

Academic skills were mostly mentioned by staff and not students. When asked to clarify the range of responses which fell into this category, staff made it clear that they saw TOK as an intentional vehicle to improve students' powers of academic argument and expression of abstract concepts. Staff indicated that this came not only through communicating complex ideas in class, but also through the two TOK assessments, which required students to engage in a longer process of research, drafting and structuring a coherent academic argument, based on course material.

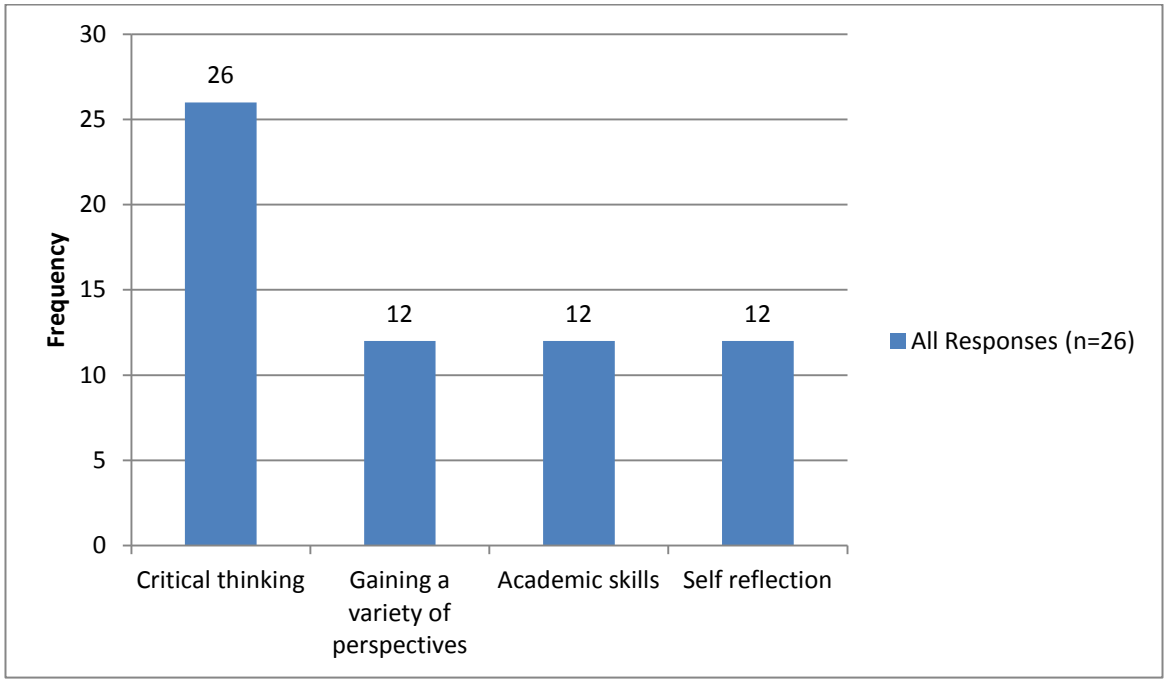

Figure 3. What are the 3 main aims of TOK? (Coded open-ended responses)

Interestingly, almost all students specifically used the term "Learning how to think" when stating the goals of the TOK course (see Figure 4), which suggests a sense that this is not a power they were in full possession of. When asked to clarify this, students indicated that the national system was more concerned with memorisation. Students saw this as automated learning and not active thinking.

Students indicated that TOK was more concerned with free and open discussion, with only a general structure. This idea of a general structure referred to the fact that there were no periodic exams as in their other subjects, and also that lessons were based more around discussion and questioning, which meant that there were no definitive answers and so no definitive targets for each lesson. They claimed that an overarching aim of the TOK programme was to encourage independent questioning

and thought. They also clearly indicated that the TOK course focused on many different viewpoints, and encouraged the exploration and analysis of these.

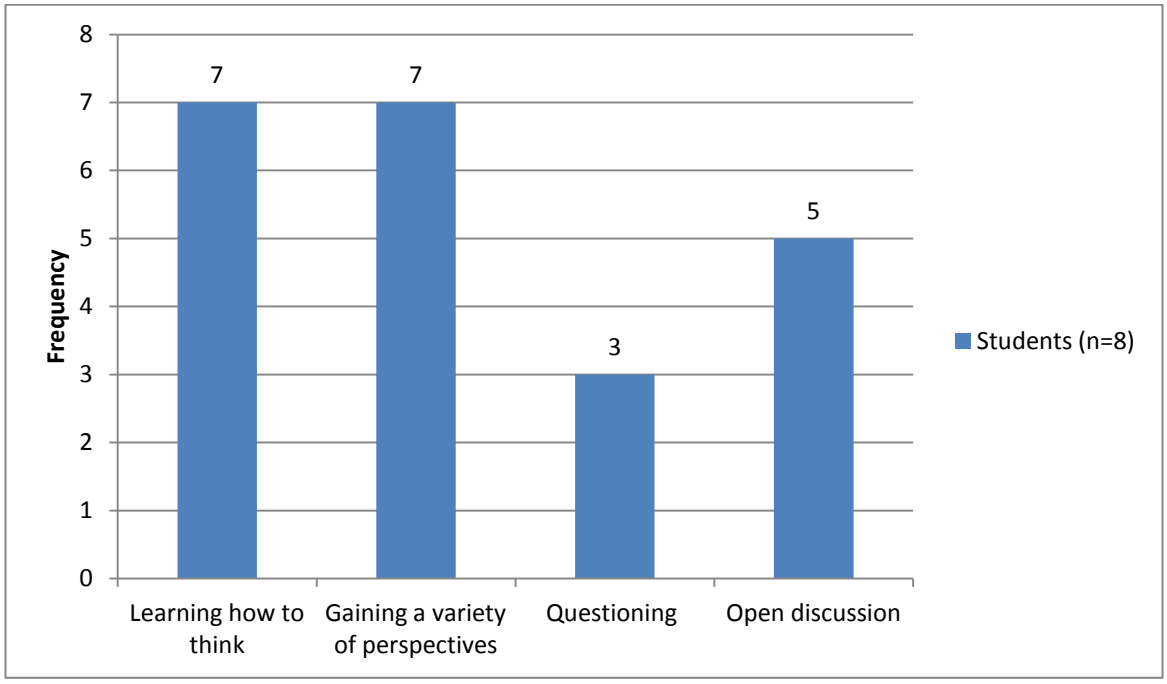

Figure 4. What are the 3 main aims of TOK? (Open-ended, student response only)

Importance and use of TOK

When asked how important TOK was as part of the IB Diploma Programme, the responses all fell within two fields: Important and Very Important; not a single participant answered otherwise.

All participants thought TOK was a valuable component of the IB, with 17 staff stating that TOK was "Very Important" whilst the majority of students claimed it was "Important" (see Figure 5).

However, this perception changed when participants were asked about the importance of TOK when placed in the context of the whole school curriculum, including both the IB and the National Ministry of Education programmes. This can be seen in the responses which followed.

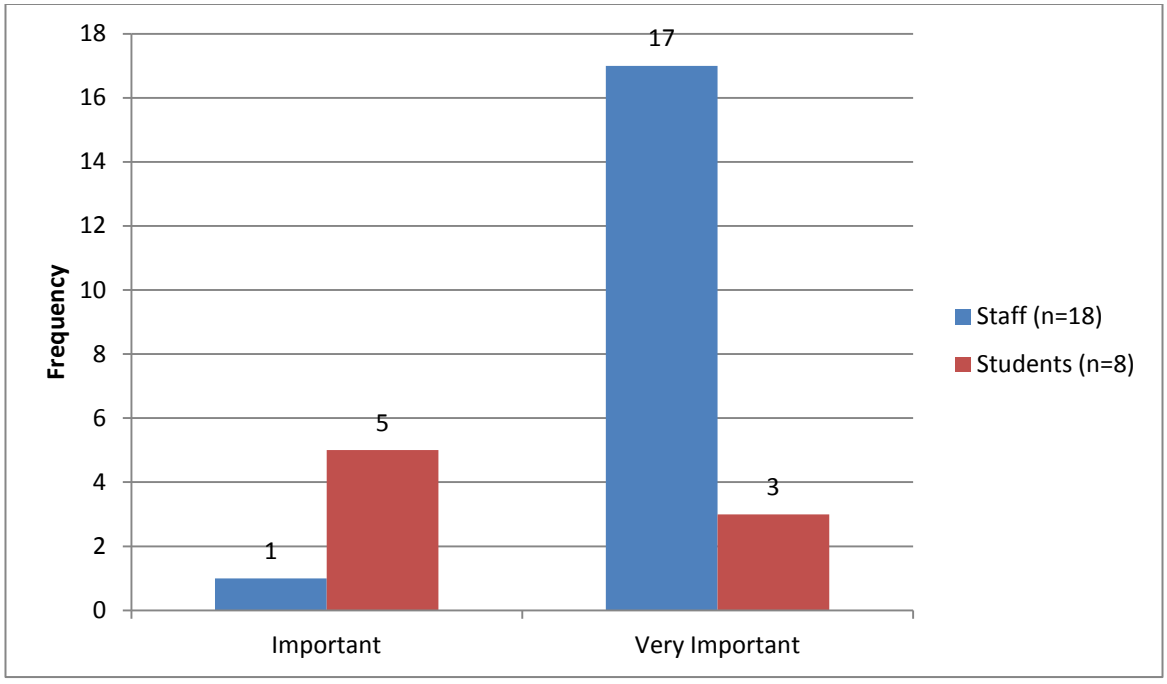

Figure 5. How important is TOK as part of the IB Diploma Programme?

When asked, staff still indicated TOK was important within the whole school context, and half even maintained that it was "Very Important" (see Figure 6). Interestingly, the same percentage of students indicated that TOK was still important.

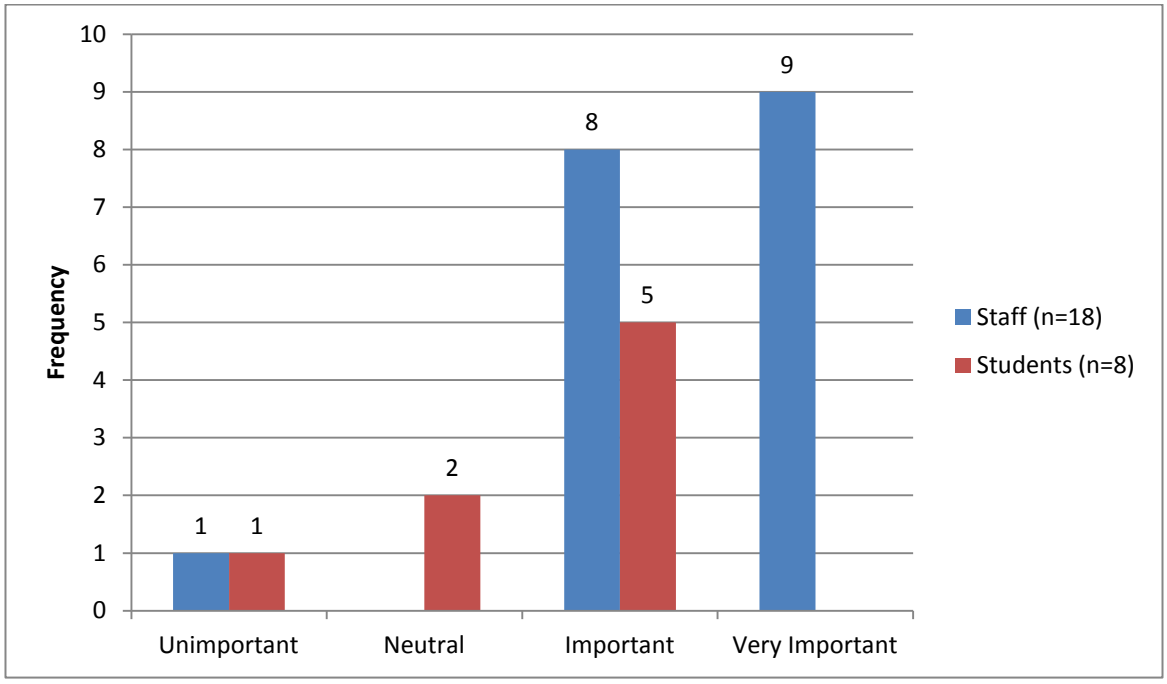

Figure 6. How important is TOK as part of the whole school curriculum?

After the quantitative responses concerning the importance of TOK, it was vital to clarify why respondents perceived TOK in this way, and how these perceptions altered when TOK was placed in the context of its own programme, and then the MEB programme. Therefore all participants were asked to qualify their previous responses through open-ended items. Through coding of these qualitative responses, it was clear that the majority of respondents focused on one or more of the three areas identified (see Figure 7).

Two-thirds of staff indicated that TOK presented a positive alternative to the MEB curriculum. Many were specific in mentioning the "structured" nature of the MEB programme, which was noted as highly focused on "exams and assessment" and "rote learning". Staff in this category also noted a tendency not to question knowledge, with one respondent stating that TOK broke "the teacher knows

everything mindset". In these cases, the staff indicated that TOK was a positive shift in thinking from what they perceived as the more traditionalist values of the MEB.

Staff also saw TOK as a programme which helps students synthesise various elements of their school experience (nine responses). This coded category included two types of reference. Some respondents emphasised that TOK allows students to develop their learning skills in all subjects and to create meaningful links between them, whilst others went further and suggested that TOK allows students to "establish connections between their daily lives and philosophy". In this case, some teachers explicitly used the phrase "philosophy" and others did not, however when asked to clarify, they all focused on epistemology and a reflection on how one's own beliefs are formed.

Finally, over half of all staff clearly indicated that TOK was important in helping students consider the wider picture in many contexts, encouraging them to recognise and evaluate other perspectives. Phrases such as, "analysing several perspectives" and "exploring multiple opinions" were used in these responses to highlight what staff indicated was an vital aspect of the course. This response linked with perceptions of the MEB programme as focusing on closed-answer questions, where there is only one possible answer or approach.

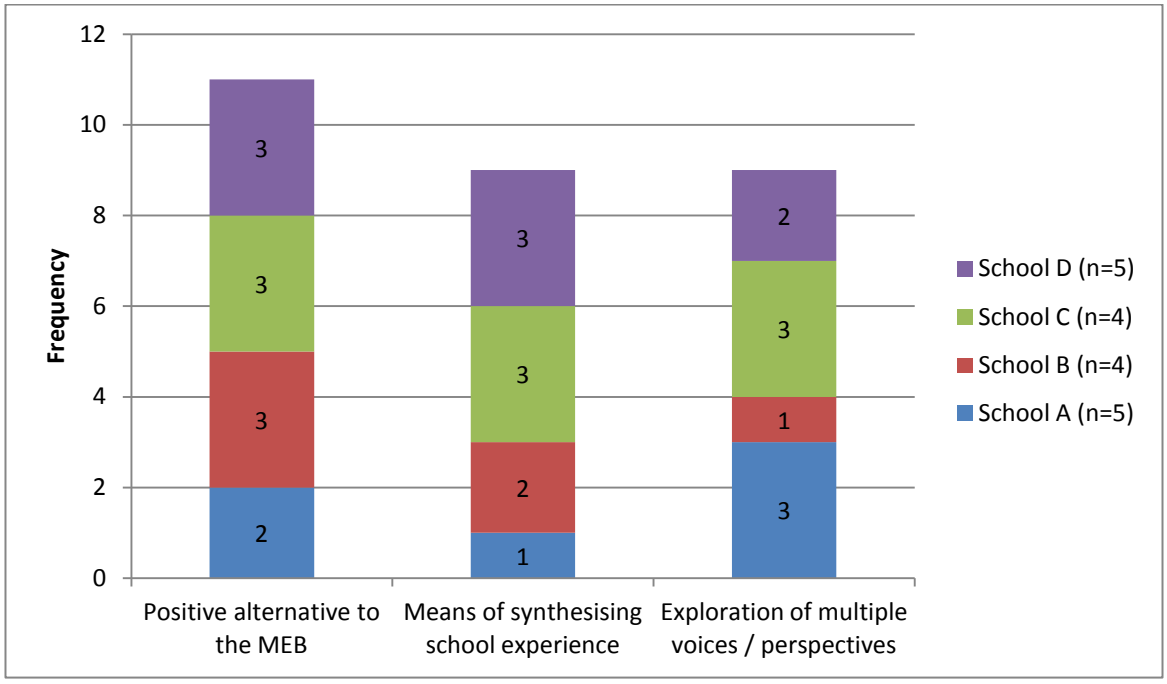

Figure 7. Staff perspectives on the importance of TOK within the IB and MEB systems (Coded open-ended responses)

When asked how useful all participants felt TOK was for students, responses reflected previously expressed perceptions that TOK was an important course. The majority of both students and staff expressed that TOK was either "Useful" or "Very useful" (see Figure 8).

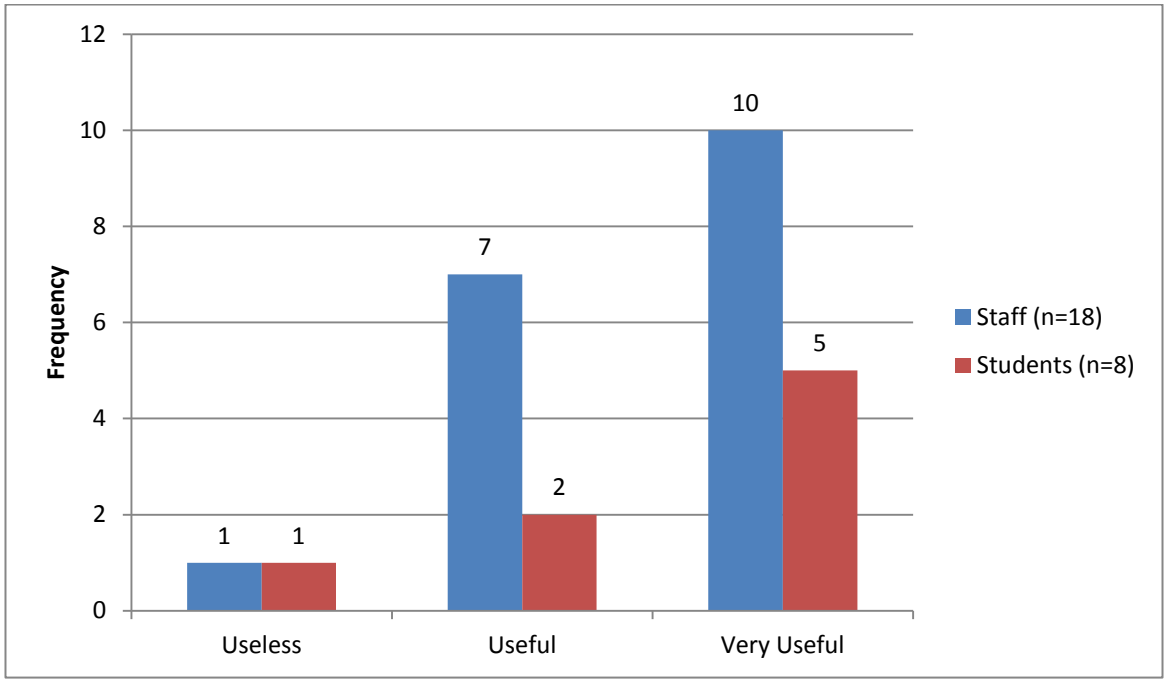

Figure 8. How useful is TOK for students?

When staff were asked to clarify their responses through an open-ended section, it became clear that the most consensus (two thirds) lay in the assertion that TOK helped create independent learners from students (see Figure 9). Staff indicated that TOK skills were those of "life long learners" and key words such as "extend" "establish" and "explore" were all used to imply the process of independent and ongoing meaning making students were engaged in though TOK. This response was also closely linked with staff feeling that the MEB system encouraged a more passive student profile.

Just under half of all staff indicated that this disconnect between the two systems caused a conflict which sometimes hampered the usefulness or positive effects TOK might have. This came in multiple forms, one of the main ones being time, in that the MEB curriculum was seen as highly intensive and demanding of students' time.

All four IB coordinators interviewed stated this as a significant challenge in implementing TOK in their schools. With the YGS, the required university entrance exam for all students, the focus of time, content and teaching methods were squarely on exam preparation, and TOK areas are not featured in any way on this exam. One teacher seemed to express the overall sentiment of respondents in this category by noting that the MEB represented the "central ethos" of the school and that TOK existed "in a 90 minute bubble".

The word "bubble" was used by one of the interviewees to highlight that TOK exists in isolation within the whole school curriculum, something which diminishes its impact on students. This wording reflects the overall feeling of many of these TOK teachers and all of the IB coordinators surveyed in this study, in the sense that the course tries to fill a "gap" in the school curriculum as a "stand alone subject" but is perceived to have little overall influence precisely due to the fact it is unsupported in other subjects or by a range of teachers. Staff in all four schools sampled stated that the philosophy of the course had not come to permeate the whole school culture as they claimed it should, and was only practiced or observed in a few limited contexts. As a means of explaining why TOK philosophy and approaches were not prevalent throughout the schools surveyed, one IB coordinator mentioned a lack of interest in TOK among many teachers who delivered the national curriculum and who were under pressure to have students succeed in their definitive high stakes exam (the YGS).

On the other hand, one third of staff also indicated that TOK provided key academic skills that students would need in university, after their exams, with most staff

stressing the way TOK fosters a more accurate and academic form of expression both orally and through an essay format.

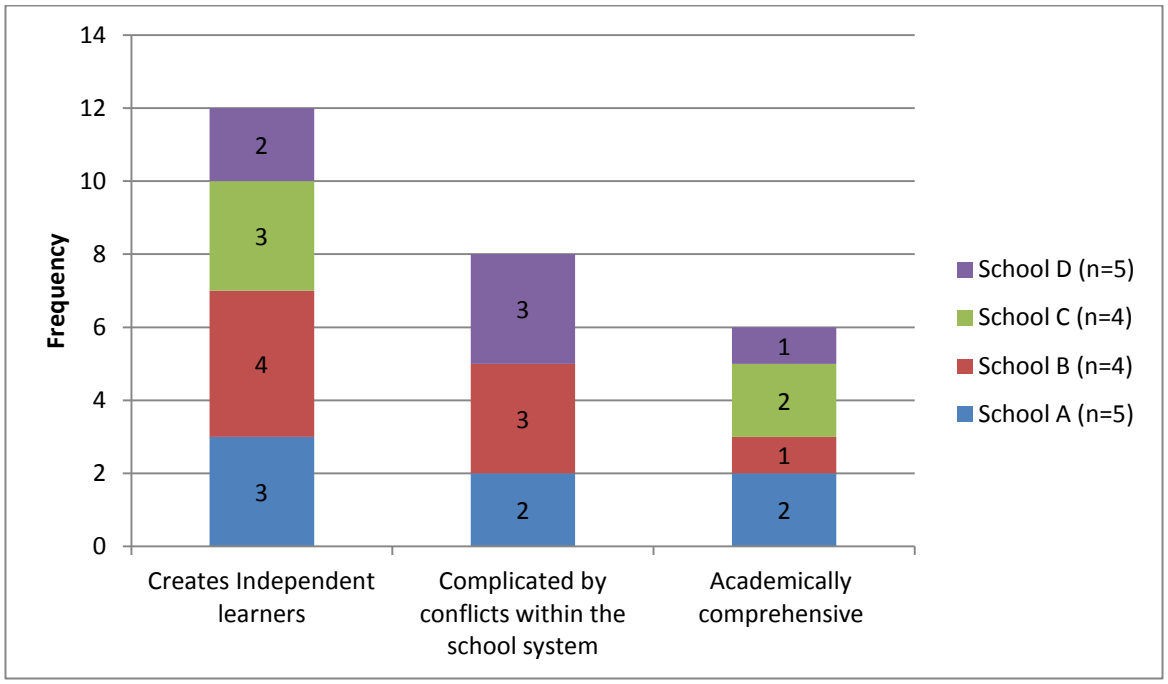

Figure 9. Staff perspectives on how useful TOK is for students (Coded open-ended responses)

These views were echoed in slightly different terms by the students in their responses, where two thirds of students clearly perceived TOK as a tool for enhancing their understanding of many subjects throughout school (see Figure 10). In these cases all of the students saw value in TOK and made various comments indicating that the course was "preparing" them "for the future" by "developing learning skills" and "building on all school subjects". Students were clear that in a whole school context, encompassing all of their courses and all of the demands on them within their schools, the TOK course provided them with a valuable skill set

that could be applied in many areas and would be advantageous when entering university life.

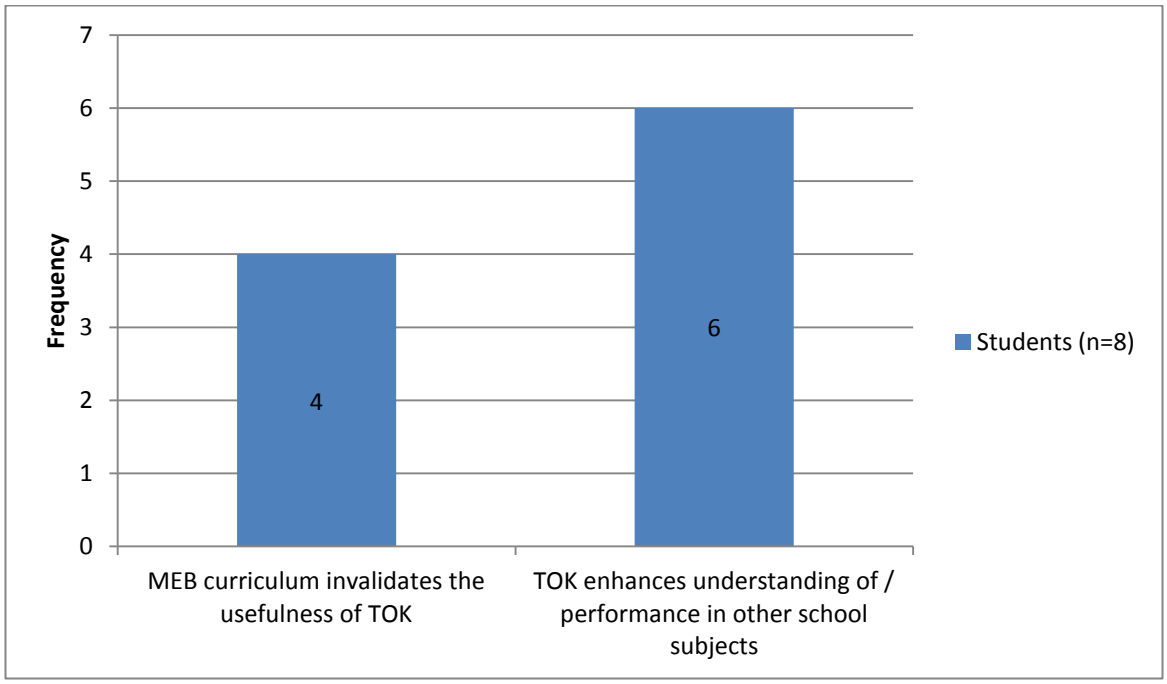

Figure 10. Student perspectives on how useful and important TOK is within their school system (Coded open-ended responses)

However, half of the students who responded (none of these from school A) were also pragmatic in their evaluation of the course in relation to their immediate context. Ultimately, the value of TOK was seriously diminished due to the fact that it had few hours, had no assessment component which translated into their national high school graduation transcript, and was also not going to feature on the YGS exam. One student highlighted this by stating, "students cannot see the value of TOK, especially when compared to English, maths or Turkish", all subjects that are assessed frequently, feature on the YGS and are given class hours which are often three times those of TOK.

Even as a part of the IB diploma programme, one student mentioned that TOK was less important than the other subjects due to lack of MEB assessment and class hours. This perspective partially supports what staff had previously asserted: that the national system creates an educational paradigm that focuses solely on examination and output, rather than the process of learning itself.

Difficulties with TOK as a course

When asked whether schools should have the option to deliver the TOK course in Turkish or not, the responses seem to show a lack of coherent perspectives on this issue within any of the schools, with many staff and students feeling generally unsure about the answer (see Figure 11). These responses were developed and clarified further in the qualitative, open-ended section which followed shortly after this item on the survey.

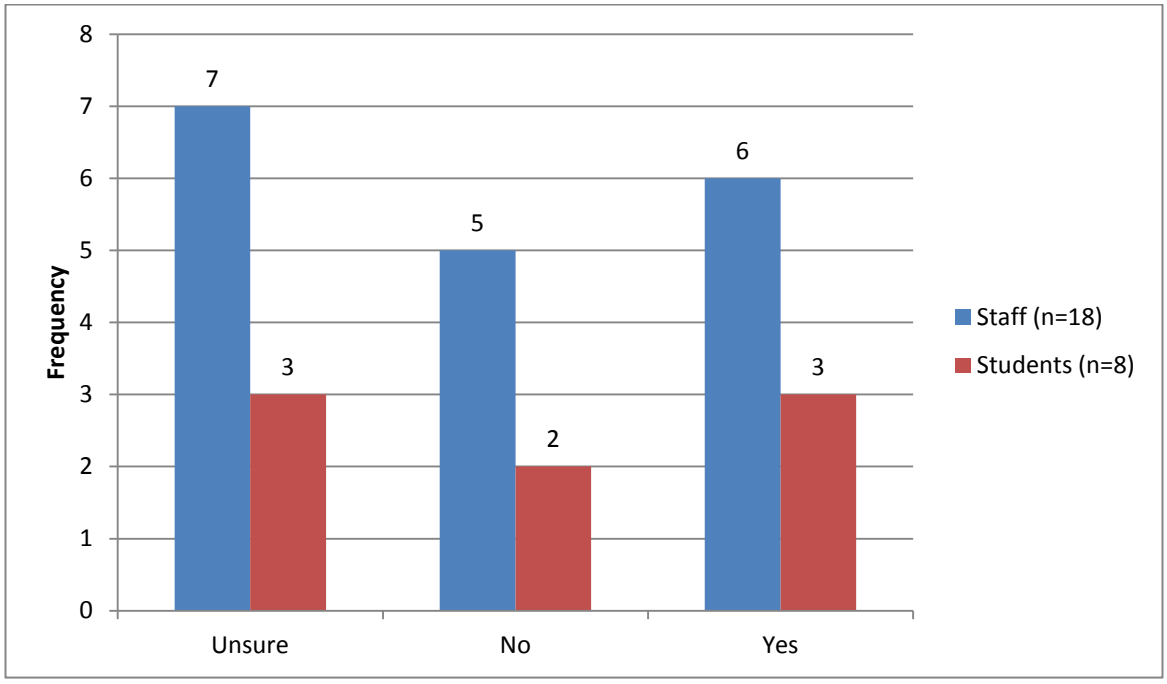

Figure 11. Should TOK be optional in Turkish?

When asked, just over half of all staff perceived TOK as a difficult subject to teach, whilst the rest either disagreed, or were unsure about this issue (see Figure 12). This neutrality was even more so (4 responses) when asked to consider how difficult TOK was for students to learn. However, the majority also agreed that it was in fact difficult for students (see Figure 13).

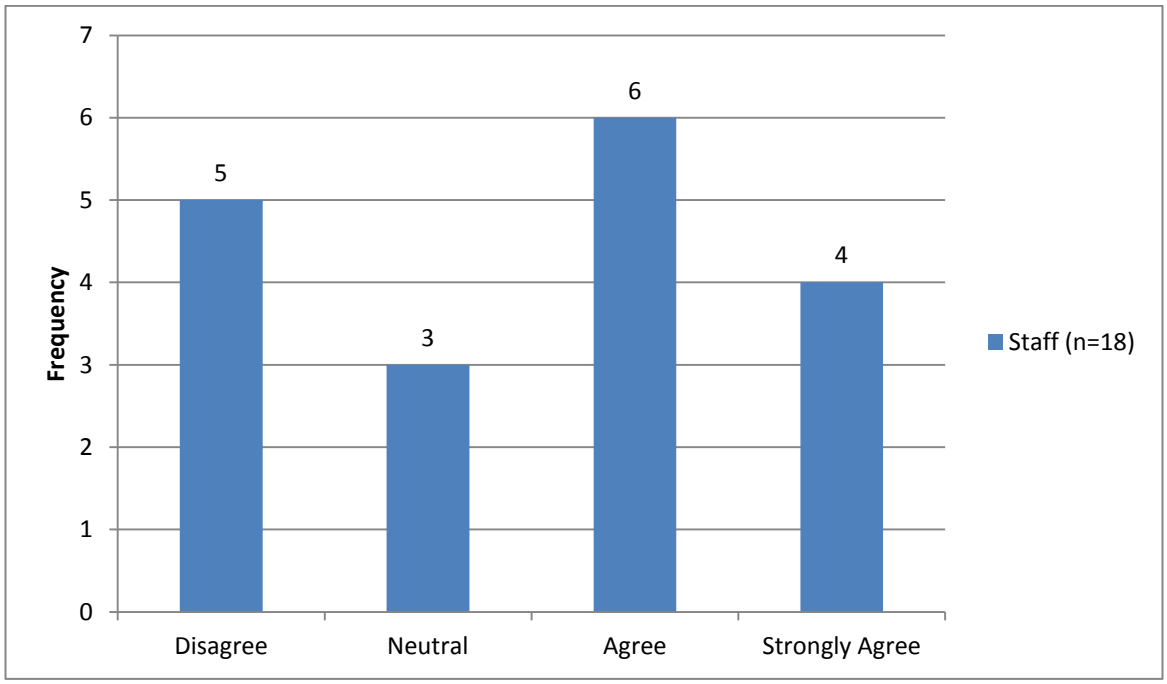

Figure 12. TOK is difficult to teach

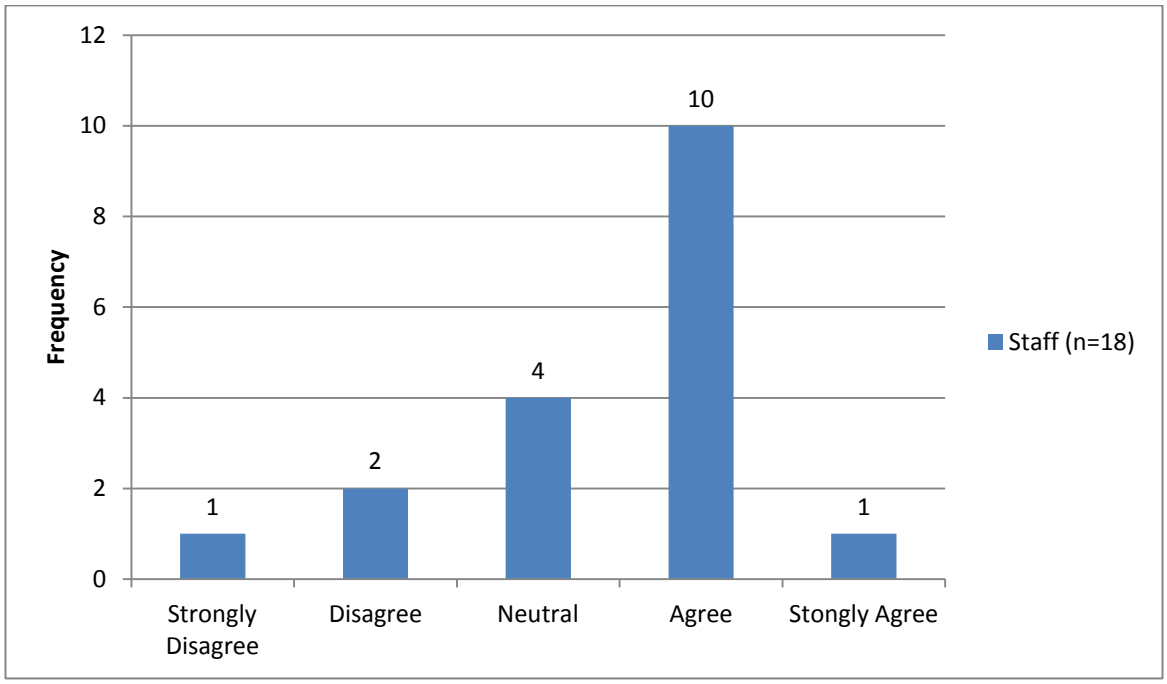

Figure 13. TOK is difficult for students to learn

Figure 14 shows the coded responses of staff, clarifying their answers to the previous three items in the survey, which asked whether TOK should be delivered in Turkish and how difficult to teach and to learn they perceived TOK to be.

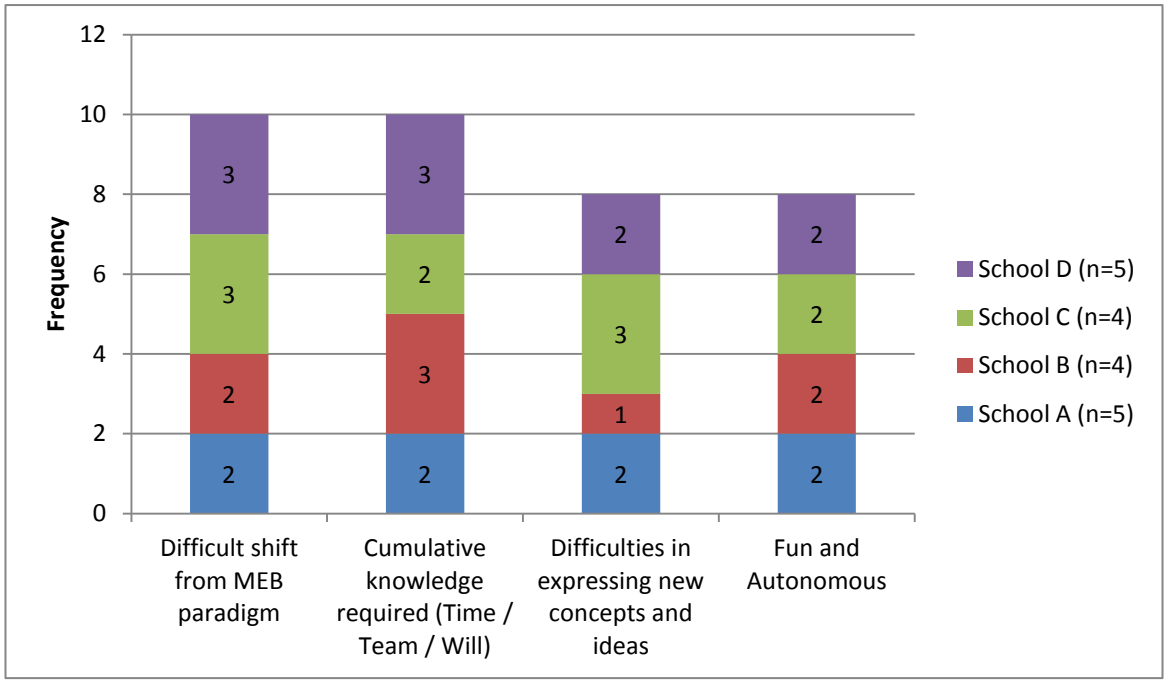

Figure 14. Staff perspectives on the difficulties of teaching and learning TOK (Coded open-ended responses)

A pattern of response seen in previous survey items was continued where ten participants expressed the difficulty for both students and teachers in shifting from the MEB paradigm, described as a "memorization cycle" by one respondent, to that of TOK, which participants saw as "flexible" and "abstract". Staff indicated that because TOK represented a new set of thought processes it was difficult, but also important for staff and students to engage in; however, they admitted that teachers often found it difficult not to be prescriptive in the way they delivered the course.

This difficulty seemed to stem from the vague nature of the TOK syllabus, coupled with many teachers' long standing experience with the MEB curriculum.

As both a requirement of effective course delivery, and an added difficulty, eleven staff noted that teachers delivering the course often required a lot of "cumulative knowledge", in that the TOK course covered a lot of areas and required a broad knowledge base of educators. Building on this, all IB coordinators were clear in responses from the surveys and through interviews, that TOK required collaboration between teachers across subjects in order to be truly successful. They agreed that without shared specialist knowledge, the course is delivered incompletely, with the TOK teachers lacking the specific "in-depth knowledge" required to communicate a fuller understanding of each specific area to be covered (the course being roughly divided into sections based on "ways of knowing" and "areas of knowledge"). Staff often agreed with this, or at least acknowledged that any teacher who wants to deliver the TOK course must have the "motivation and time to research and prepare", with one participant noting that they wished TOK "could be more of a team effort" in their school.

This set of responses highlighted that TOK is often difficult to teach because of the time, the will or motivation, and the potential coordination between teachers that is all required to deliver a comprehensive course. These responses also suggested that not all these criteria were being fully met in any of the schools, and there was a recognition of this from many staff.

Almost half of all staff also indicated that students found TOK difficult to learn because of the fact that it required students to express themselves in often abstract

terms, and because English, the language of instruction for this course as required by IB and in part chosen by the schools (the IB language of instruction must be either French, Spanish or English) , was not the first language of those studying the course. Within these responses, staff also reflected that "students would be more proficient at explaining their ideas in Turkish", and that the importance should be on the ability to express oneself, therefore supporting the delivery of TOK in Turkish.

In terms of changing the language medium of the course, many indicated that they were unsure. They reasoned that TOK concepts are new to the students in any language, and so it should not matter which one they are learned in, and some indicated that perhaps learning in English would give them more of an advantage if they decided to attend universities outside of Turkey or even those within Turkey whose exclusive language of instruction is English.

Finally, eight participants thought that it was in fact the total flexibility, amount of new discovery along with research required, and novelty of perspective, which made TOK a fun and liberating course to teach or to learn. Many seemed to feel that it was a great opportunity for all involved, and that any "good teacher" could be successful in the delivery of this course. When staff were asked to clarify, several participants agreed that a "good teacher" referred to an educator who was experienced and able to match lessons to the overall goals of the TOK programme as stated in the official guide (IBO, 2008).

Contrary to staff's claims that TOK is difficult for students to learn, half of students surveyed indicated that TOK was not difficult to understand (see Figure 15).

However, over a third still agreed that there was some difficulty in the learning process.

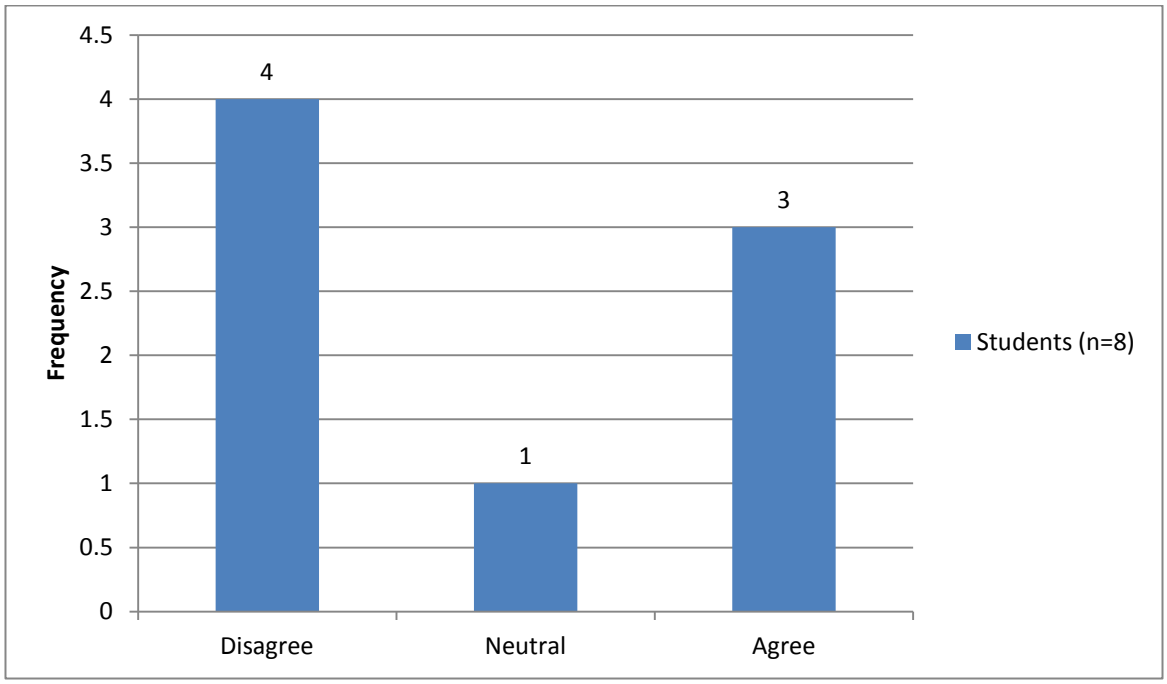

Figure 15. TOK is difficult to understand

Despite this sense of difficulty, all students were positive when evaluating how personally interesting TOK is as a course, with all students either agreeing, or strongly agreeing that TOK is an interesting subject within their curriculum (see Figure 16).

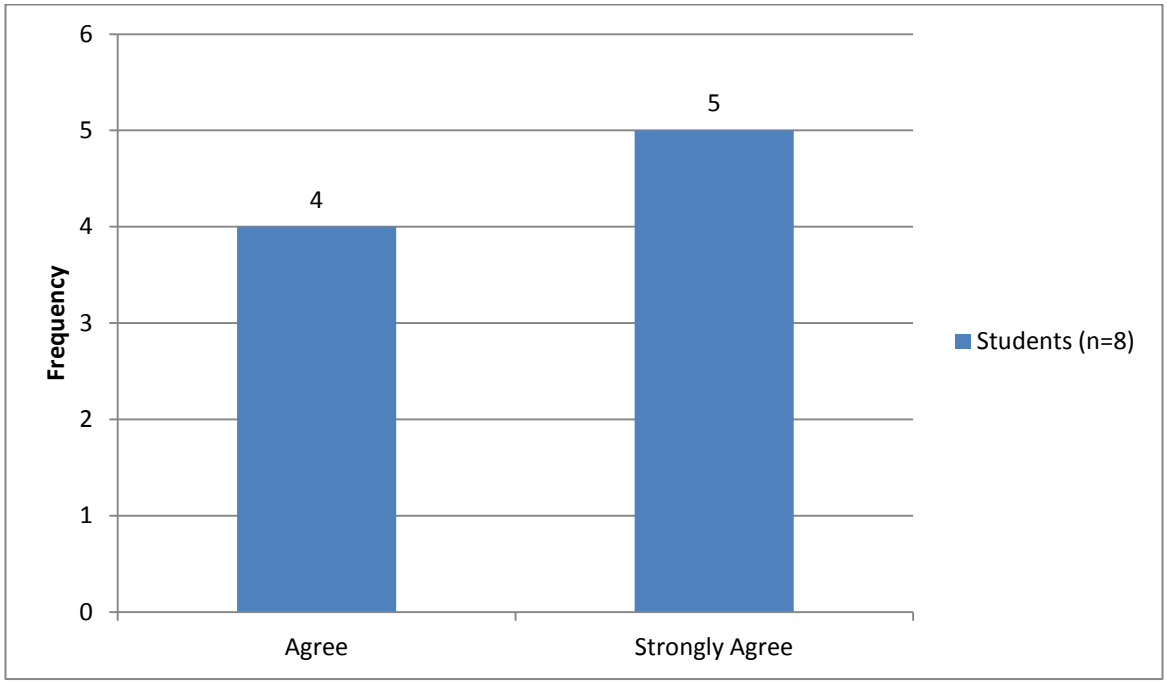

Figure 16. TOK is an interesting subject

The qualitative responses from students when asked to develop their previous claims about the difficulty of TOK and how interesting it is, painted a mixed perspective toward the course as it stood in their schools. Positively, three quarters of students indicated that TOK was very "interesting" and "unique" (see Figure 17). Unlike staff who compared the novelty of TOK to the existing MEB system, students simply noted that TOK provided them with "things never taught before" and a "free thinking environment". Although not explicit, these comments do however imply a contrast by suggesting that free thought was new to them, and had not been "taught before" within their existing school system. Students saw TOK as "free thinking" and "relaxed" because of its loose nature in terms of how it should be delivered, its focus on open questioning and the relatively few assessments to study for or worry about. These elements certainly made for a refreshing change from the perspectives

of these students, who were used to frequent high stakes examinations, and helped capture their interest in the subject.

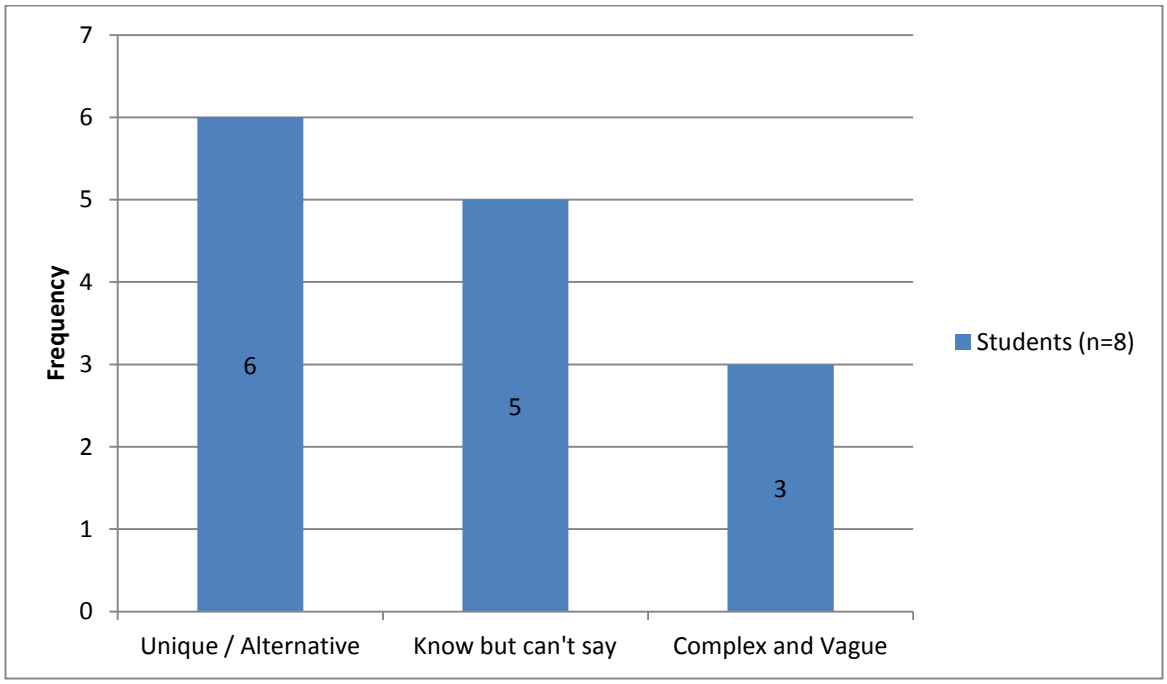

Figure 17. Student perspectives on the difficulties of learning TOK and how interesting the course is (Coded open-ended responses)

Almost two-thirds of students were also clear in claims that learning TOK in English was an impediment to getting everyone on-board with the concepts, methodology and general philosophies of the course. As one grade 12 student aptly phrased it, "Many students in class know what the topic is and have good ideas, but can't say them." This sentiment was reiterated by others who matched teacher comments in stating that, "explaining yourself in TOK is not easy." Students also went further to suggest that English acts as a "barrier to understanding" and discourages participation. This is significant, as it suggests that the language of instruction makes the course less accessible, democratic or desirable within their schools, as

there are only a minority of students in the school who have "high level English skills" which allow them to engage in the lessons more fully. This appeared to be true in the case of schools B, C and D; however school A was a predominantly an English medium school, which meant that the language barrier was far less of an issue for them.

Over one-third of students also indicated that the course itself was vague, in that it "does not come to a point", and complex. This linked with staff comments on the difficulties of teaching TOK, where one teacher stated that it was difficult to "narrow and focus" the wide ranging content, and others stressed the need for a well experienced teacher. For some students, the course seemed unstructured and too abstract; something which was very different from what they were traditionally used to. In this case then, it became important for students to have teachers delivering the course who would empathise with their feelings of uncertainty, and adapt content to successfully introduce students to complex concepts; focusing lessons enough so that students could see a clear outcome at the end of each session.

Impact of TOK on students

Despite the difficulties in learning the course, or perhaps because of these difficulties and the process of overcoming them in some ways, three quarters of students indicated that the TOK programme had had a significant or very significant impact on the way they thought about learning and education (see Figure 18). Importantly, although a quarter of students were neutral on the issue, none indicated that the impact of TOK was insignificant on their perceptions of what it meant to learn.

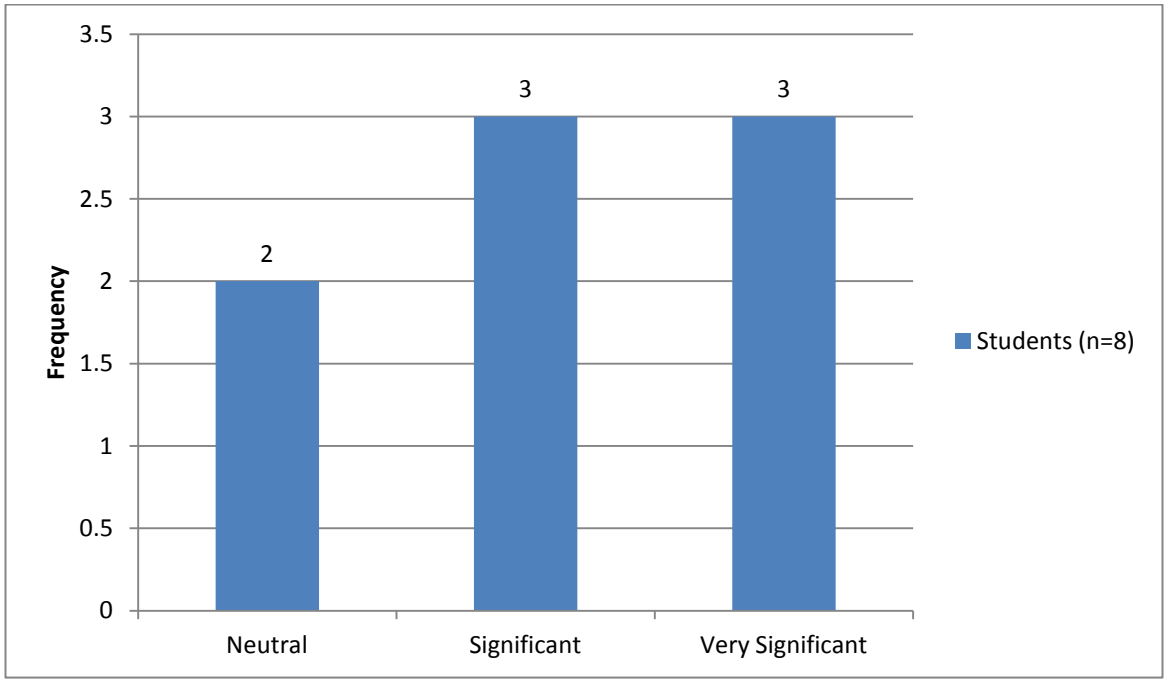

Figure 18. How would you rate the impact TOK has had on the way you think about learning and education?

When asked to clarify their perspectives in qualitative form, half of all students mentioned that TOK had given them the opportunity, and encouraged them to question where their knowledge and beliefs came from, and how valid these were. This sense of self awareness was valued by students, who said they were able to "refine" their "perceptions and thinking" and "know ourselves better". This refining was a process which they did not feel was fostered in other subjects, and an aspect of education which they had not considered before, therefore this had altered their perspectives on what education should be, and on the best ways to learn.

Three-quarters of students also indicated that TOK improved their overall approach to education, and to their other subjects (see Figure 19). They indicated that the knowledge gained in TOK was applicable across the different areas they learned, and

that the skills of analysis and reflection were something they tried to use beyond the TOK class. They claimed that their perspectives had altered due to the fact that they actually scrutinised their views more closely and reflected on the validity of their ideas, as encouraged by the TOK philosophy of questioning knowledge.

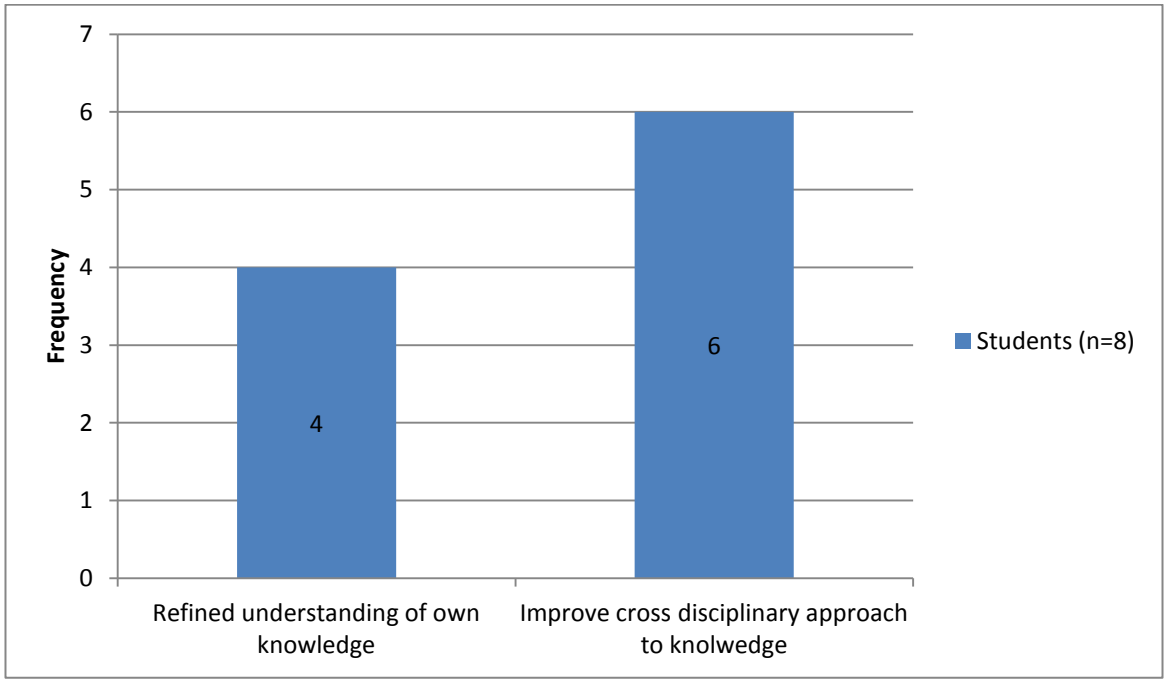

Figure 19. Student perceptions on how TOK has impacted the way they view education (Coded open-ended responses)

Teachers' educational philosophies and TOK

When asked to rate the similarities between their own educational philosophies and those of the TOK programme, staff began to show a divide between Turkish and non-Turkish nationalities.

Although all staff indicated that the connection was at least similar, it is clear that almost all of the non-Turkish teachers indicated that their own philosophies and

those of TOK were *very* closely aligned (see Figure 20). The majority of Turkish staff also recognised a positive correlation, but did not see it as strongly.

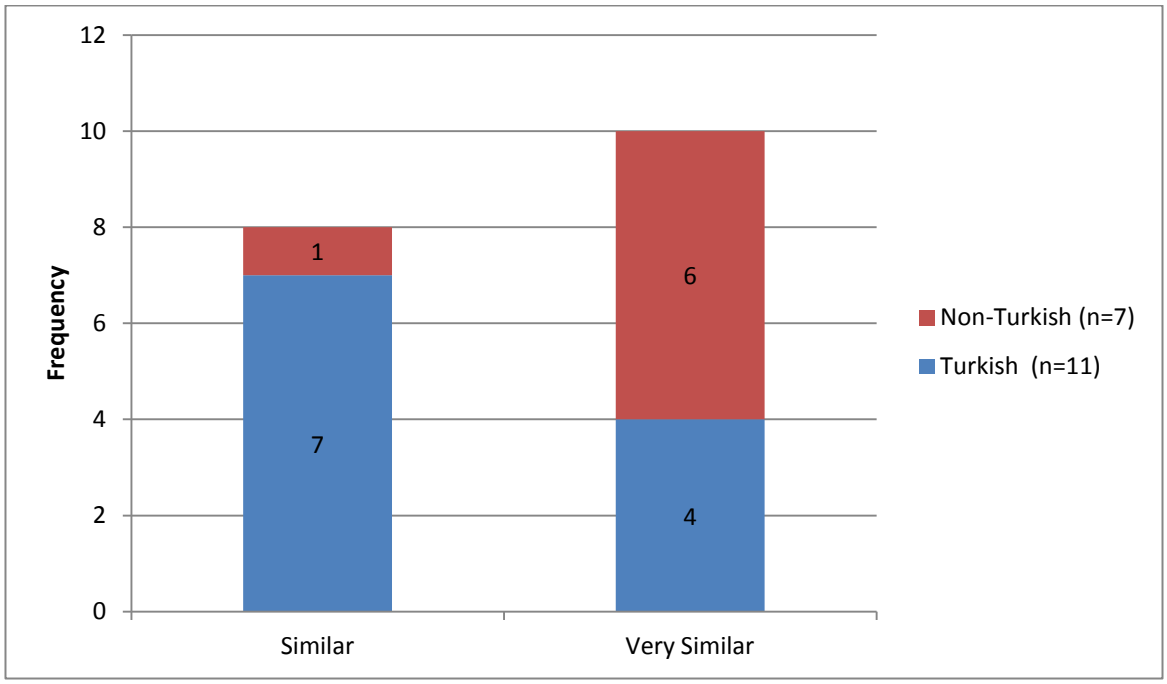

Figure 20. How would you rate the similarities between your own educational philosophies and those of the TOK course?

This separation between different nationalities and their responses, continued when staff were asked to clarify the link between philosophies, in a qualitative form.

In two areas referring to the philosophies of creating life long learners, and of always questioning the knowledge we have, responses were almost equal from both nationalities. However, only Turkish staff chose to relate TOK to their own subject areas (see Figure 21).

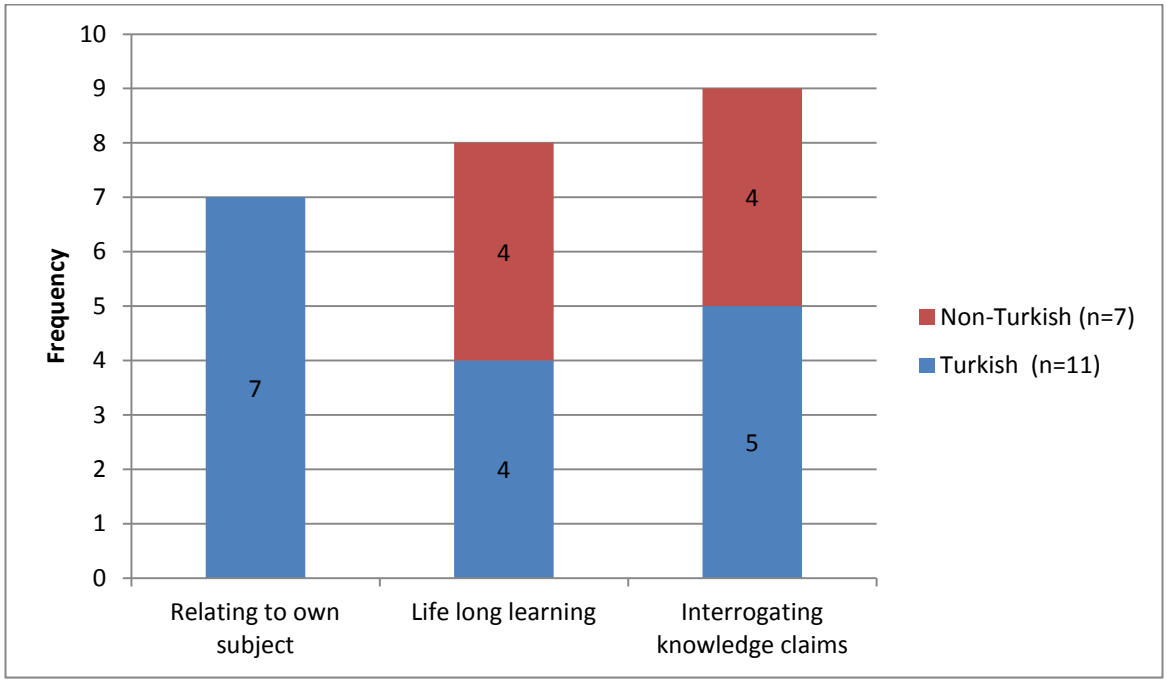

Figure 21. Staff perspectives on links between their educational philosophies and those of TOK (Coded open-ended responses: Broken down by nationality)

Turkish teachers from areas such as maths, philosophy, science and English all related TOK methods and philosophies, with those which they employ in their own lessons, or with the overall aims they have for their subject lessons. Phrases such as "I also" or we "also need", when relating TOK skills to their own lessons highlighted that Turkish staff were keen to recognise that TOK was not necessarily doing something new, the word "also" implying a similarity. In this way, staff perceived that the values of the TOK course already existed in some form within their own classrooms.

Despite Turkish teachers claiming that their subject lessons contained many TOK elements, when interviewed, IB coordinators indicated that teachers often had

difficulty linking TOK with their own subject areas or did not have time to do so in classes, due to the pressure of national exams and the demanding curriculum load.

Interestingly, no foreign staff mentioned links with their subject areas, but instead linked their general pedagogical outlook with that of TOK, as they perceived it. These types of comments were also made by Turkish staff.

Almost half of staff indicated that TOK matched their own philosophies in that it "empowered students" and made them "life long learners." These responses highlighted that staff were keen to have students become more independent and have more control over their learning, and that staff recognised the need for these qualities if students were to succeed beyond high school and well into university. To highlight this, many respondents specifically used either the words "future" or "university" when commenting on the shared concerns and aims of their own educational philosophies, and those of TOK. Also the uses of words such as "imperative" "need" and "must" highlighted the importance these staff placed on life long academic skills in terms of expressing complex concepts and arguments, and approaching knowledge claims with a reasoned scepticism. When asked to clarify this position, staff indicated that these skills were not being provided enough and even TOK was not enough, only being taught once each week and even then, lesson times sometimes being taken up by other teachers for students to complete arts projects or revise for exams.

Teachers wished to encourage independent students in their own classes, regardless of TOK or not, but were also restricted by curriculum loads and the format of

national tests, which they claimed did not necessarily require learners to be "empowered."

Finally, half of all staff also indicated that their philosophies linked with TOK in wanting students to interrogate knowledge through well reasoned questioning and argument; highlighting that students must know the "reasons behind ideas" and not just the ideas themselves. Again, however, there was an implication that in order to put this philosophy into practice, more time than was currently available to teachers of both MEB and IB curricula was required. In the cases of these staff, they claimed that MEB exams and preparation for MEB exams dominated the time resources available to them.

The Ministry of National Education system and TOK

In responses to previous questions, most staff and students had already made some comments concerning the interaction between the MEB curriculum and the TOK curriculum. In the following sections however, participants were explicitly asked about this relationship, and encouraged to provide more specific detail regarding their perceptions of the issue. These answers provided further insight into the position of TOK within these schools, and revealed some key divisions in the way staff were perceiving this emerging relationship between curricula.

When asked about the similarities between the educational goals of the MEB and those of the TOK course, teachers seemed split, with one half claiming that there was little similarity, whilst the other half were either neutral or indicated there were

similarities. On the other hand almost all students clearly perceived little similarity between the two programmes (see Figure 22).

It is worth noting that all of the "Similar" responses from staff came from school C, whose staff population was exclusively of Turkish nationality, and that three of the "Neutral" responses came from IB coordinators.

Also, what teachers' perceived as the goals of TOK corresponded with their answers to the question 'What are the 3 main aims of TOK?' (see Figure 3) and also to the six main objectives as stated in the official TOK guide (IBO, 2008).

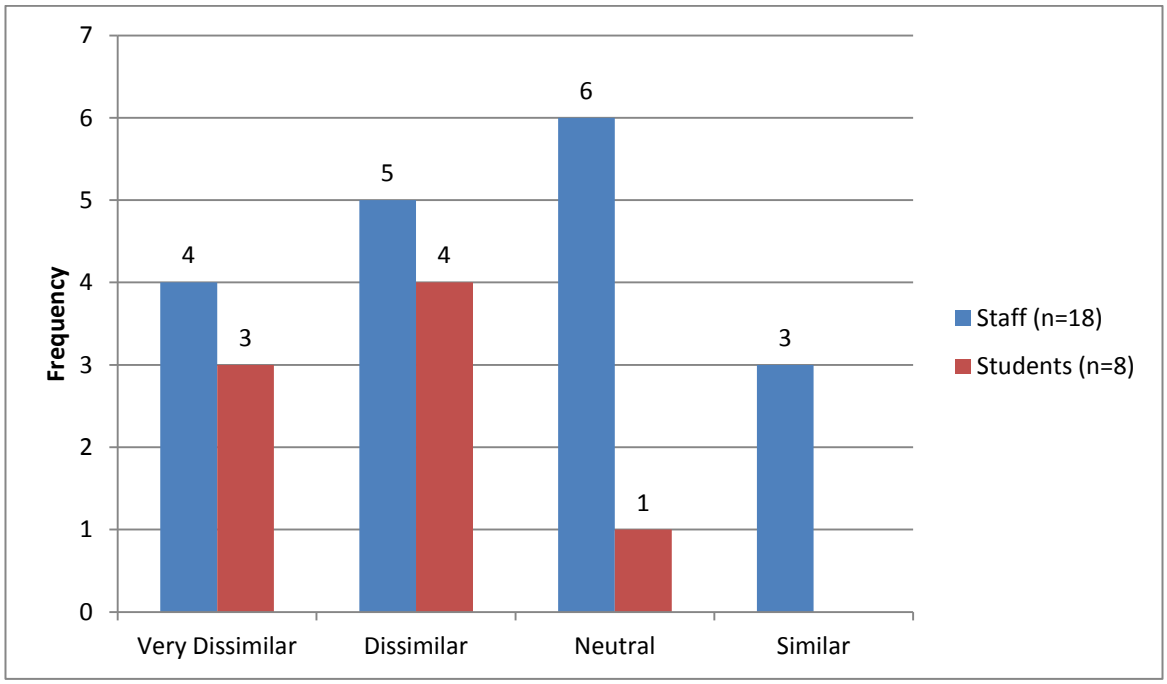

Figure 22. How would you rate the similarities between the educational goals of the MEB and those of the TOK course? (Coded open-ended responses)

When coding the qualitative responses to how similar staff perceived the link between the goals of the MEB and TOK programmes, another clear division by nationality became apparent. As seen in Figure 23 only foreign staff made statements which implied that the MEB placed no value on TOK. These staff indicated that the MEB curriculum was "only interested in one particular view" rather than multiple perspectives, and that the aims of TOK seemed "peripheral to the ministry's goals." The comments of this nature were all absolute in their wording, with one teacher expressing that "TOK skills are not being developed in any other lesson" (underlining in original). This underlining of the word "any" reflects the emphatic nature of these perspectives, and perhaps a feeling that non-TOK teachers were uninterested in TOK aims. When asked to clarify their statements in follow-up interviews, staff seemed both disappointed and frustrated by this belief that the ministry did not value TOK goals and the methods used to achieve these. One teacher, in their written response on the survey, tried to frame this in terms of what the MEB *does* value, by noting that because the TOK course is not assigned a grade in the national grade entry system (e–Okül) it showed that the ministry of education did not consider TOK valuable.

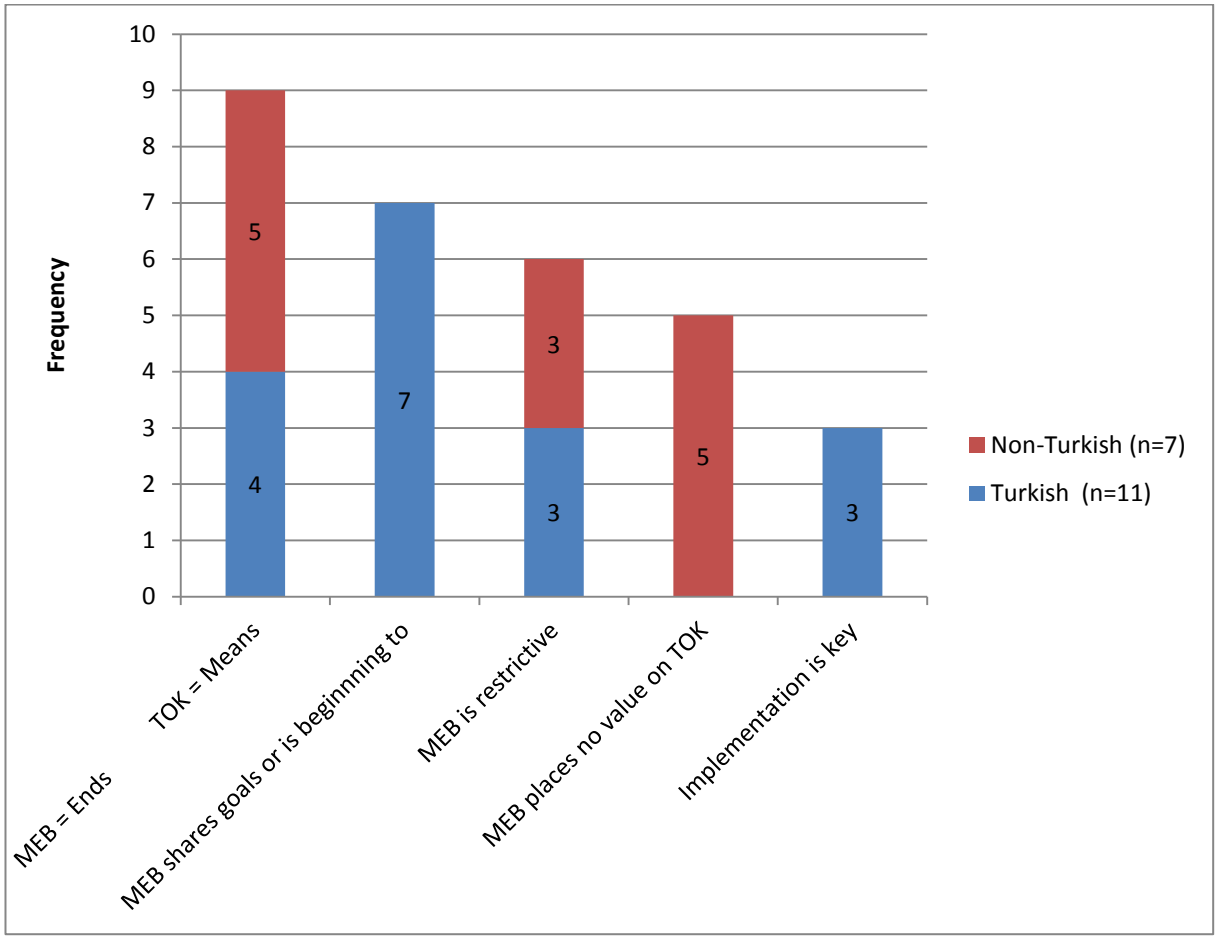

Figure 23. Staff perceptions of the links between educational goals of the MEB and TOK programmes (Coded open-ended responses: Broken down by nationality)

This last statement in particular hinted at a disconnect between developments within the ministry curriculum and system as a whole, and how (un/)informed foreign staff were of these developments. After speaking to IB coordinators it was revealed that the ministry had in fact wished to assign an official grade to TOK, but in order to do so students would have had to sit a TOK exam at least twice a year. Schools delivering the IB and TOK persuaded the Ministry of Education that TOK was not an examinable subject, and that in trying to make it one they would be contradicting

the philosophies of the course. The ministry listened, and consented to the schools' wishes, leaving TOK without any nationally recognized grade.

This disconnect is more apparent when we look at the fact that only teachers of Turkish nationality perceived that the MEB system's goals were similar to those of TOK, or that they were beginning to move in that direction. This is exemplified through the contrasting comments of a Turkish principal who noted that "the ministry is trying to combine the TOK style into their own objectives" and an American principal who wrote "I am unaware of any similarities". This seems to highlight a lack of information about the MEB aims available to foreign staff, and so the word "unaware" highlights the fact that foreign staff form their beliefs based on student comments and through observing the exam culture, but rarely from any official sources.

Other Turkish teachers indicated that the MEB goals were being revised constantly and that MEB curricula "also aimed at critical / high order thinking". Also a process of compromise and evolution was highlighted by one IB coordinator who said: "it appears as though the MEB and TOK are moving towards one another". This coordinator indicated that both programmes would have to make some concessions in order to better suit the realities faced by students in Turkey, these being both challenges of high stakes exams and also those of higher order academic expression.

However, not all Turkish staff were so positive, and a third of them recognized that some similarities in educational goals existed, however such similarities were irrelevant unless they were implemented properly. In several cases participants noted something similar to the IB coordinator who said: "On paper and meetings

similar aims to TOK are stated by the Ministry of Education, however, in practice this is not the case". What is highlighted here is a tension / conflict between what the ministry is saying officially and what is happening in reality. Respondents in this category mentioned that teachers were "unfamiliar" with and "untrained" in these changing goals, and how to achieve them, resulting in a lack of effective implementation, and potentially fueling perceptions of the foreign staff that nothing is changing.

Interestingly one TOK teacher of Turkish nationality, who was also a philosophy teacher and had been at their school for more than three years, indicated that TOK had a much stronger link with social responsibility than anything in the MEB curriculum, although she did note that the MEB had made curriculum changes to begin including compulsory hours of self-selected community service for high school students. This teacher indicated that more should be done to link TOK and CAS (the compulsory Creativity, Action and Service component of the IB diploma), so that students' development of self awareness and critical faculties could be applied for the benefit of the wider society.

Fitting with previous responses in other survey items, half of all staff indicated that there was a conflict between the "ends" based goals of the MEB, focusing on exams, and the "process" focus of TOK, looking at how knowledge is formed and how valid it actually is.

One third of staff also indicated that because of the time demands of the MEB system, and the clear focus placed on it within schools, TOK was restricted in terms of how well it could actually achieve its goals.

It is also worth noting that school C, whose staff population were exclusively Turkish, were the most positive in terms of their overall claims relating the similarities between the MEB and TOK goals (see Figure 24).

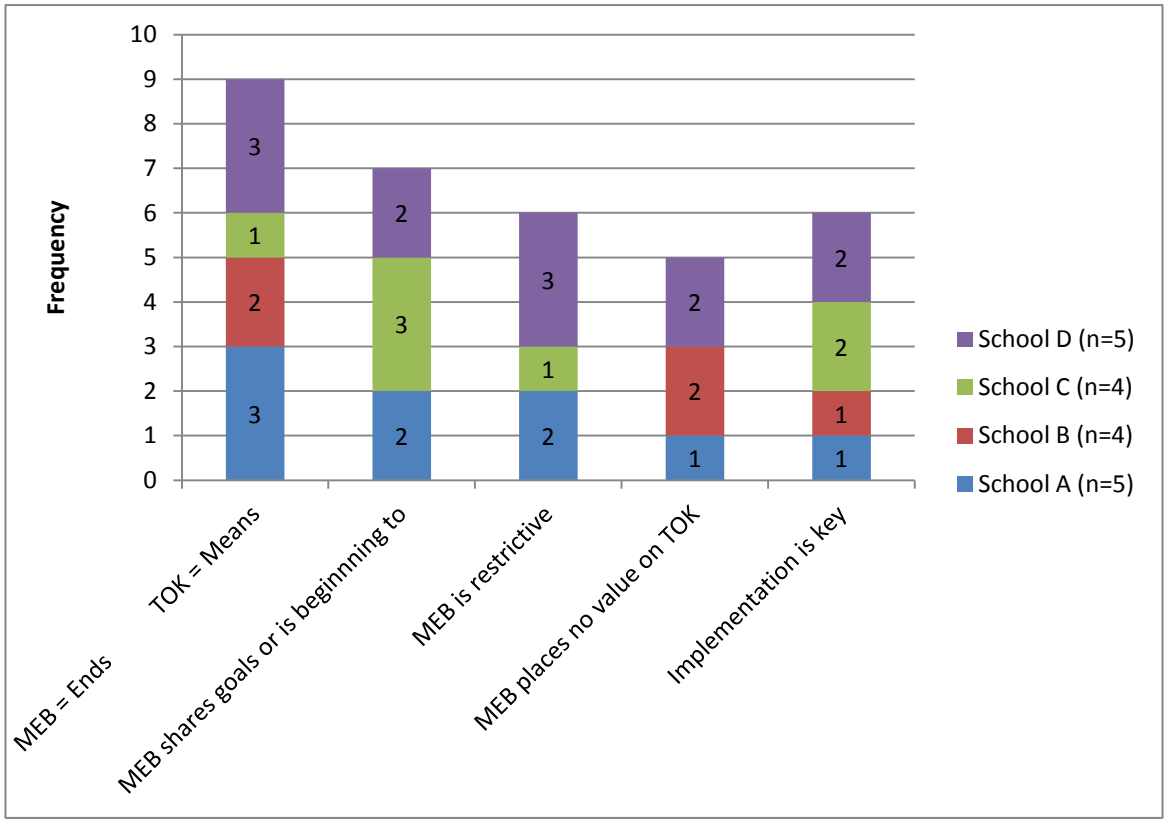

Figure 24. Staff perceptions of the links between educational goals of the MEB and TOK programmes (Coded open-ended responses)

When students were asked the same question as staff, pertaining to the links between the educational goals of the MEB and TOK programmes, their responses fell into two areas, which coincided with some of the responses from staff.

An overwhelming majority of seven out of eight students explicitly noted that the MEB system was purely aimed at “memorisation” and “preparation for the YGS” university entrance exam, whilst the TOK course was more about “teaching ideas”

and “individual thinking”. The language used paints a picture of a restrictive programme versus one which offers flexibility and encourages a variety of answers. This shows how diametrically opposed students see these two programmes in terms of what they aim to achieve.

In addition, half of the students who participated indicated that the intensity of the MEB programme in terms of time and importance completely overshadowed the TOK course. Students noted that the conflict in aims between the two programmes created a sense of “confusion” and that with the IB and MEB together; students were under “a lot of pressure” and experienced “big time issues.” When asked to clarify, students indicated that the opposition in systems gave them conflicting messages, and that ultimately they had to be practical and spend far more energy on achieving the perceived goals of the ministry system and performing as well as possible on the YGS.

All four IB coordinators confirmed that this was a significant issue for them when students were in grade 12, because they often completed TOK essays last minute, and placed little value on the course due to their other commitments. The coordinators all noted a significant decrease in enthusiasm for TOK as students progressed through grade 11, into grade 12 and closer to the YGS exam.

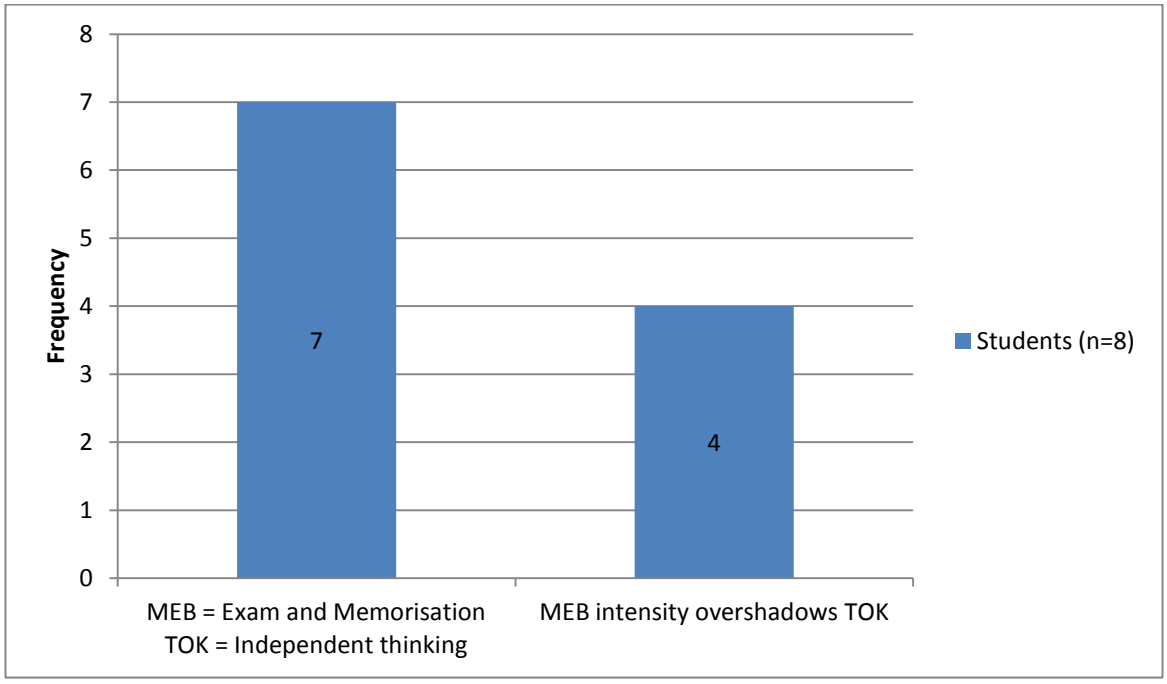

Figure 25. Student perceptions of links between educational goals of the MEB and TOK programmes (Coded open-ended responses)

TOK outside the TOK classroom

To see how far participants perceived TOK was being experienced within the whole school, they were asked how often elements of TOK are used in their classrooms.

The staff population mainly claimed that they applied elements of TOK frequently in all of their lessons, with eleven participants answering that they did so either "Often" or "Almost Always". In their self evaluation, the staff were generally positive, with no one answering any less than "Sometimes" (see Figure 26).

However, this view was not shared by all students, and half indicated that they could not see much of a connection made between TOK and other subjects by their teachers.

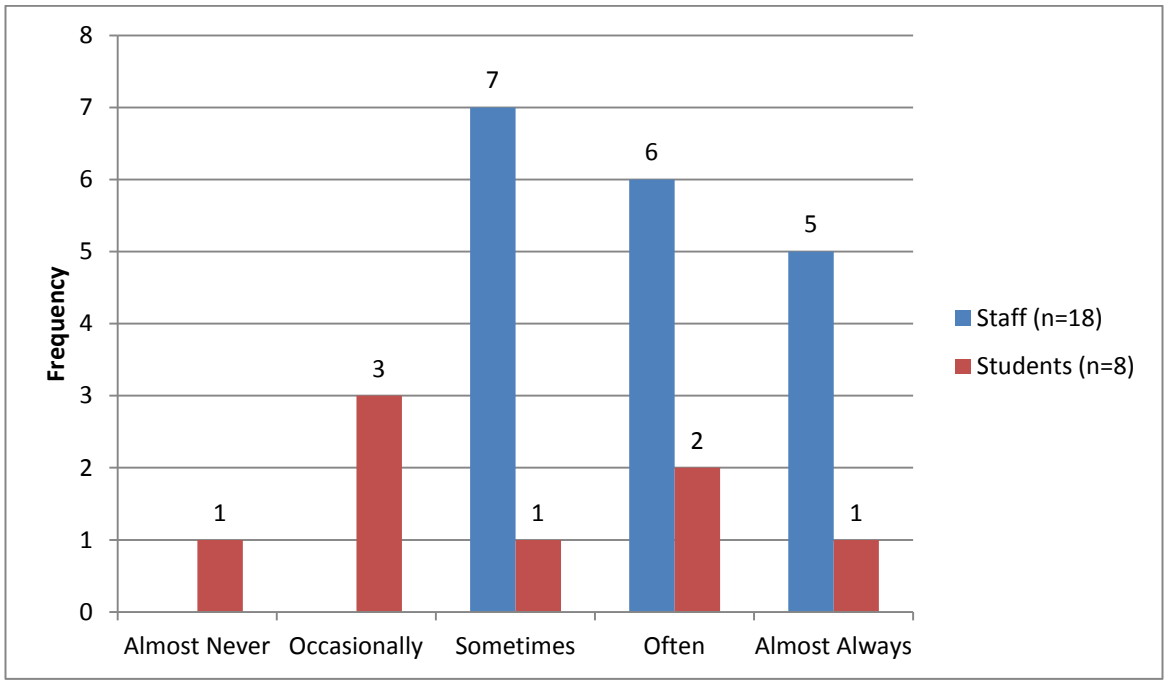

Figure 26. Staff and student perceptions of how often TOK ideas and methods are used in non-IB classes

When staff were asked whether teachers in their schools shared their teaching ideas and methods a clear split between Turkish and foreign staff was observed. In Figure 27 it can be observed that all foreign staff were either "Neutral" or indicated that there was very little sharing of professional practice in their institutions. However, this response was mirrored in the opposite by Turkish teachers, who were either "Neutral" or indicated that there was a definite culture of sharing and collaboration within their schools.

When the IB coordinators were asked about this discrepancy, all four of whom were of Turkish nationality, they were also unsure about the results. They indicated that

in some cases there was some collaboration and sharing of ideas, however they did not perceive it to be as prevalent as some staff had expressed in their surveys. One IB coordinator stressed that sharing good practice and expert knowledge was actually the key to driving forward a successful TOK programme, and often foreign English teachers were left to teach the course on their own, with no input from other departments.

These results suggest that perhaps foreign staff assume there is a lack of interest in TOK within the school, and that they therefore do not actively try to establish networks to share practice and expertise. Conversely, they also suggest that perhaps teachers of Turkish nationality may perceive that they collaborate, but that this is not perceived by other members of staff around them who perhaps expect more systematic or formalized forms of departmental and cross departmental coordination.

The lack of communication may also be a matter of language barrier between the mostly English speaking foreign teachers and mostly Turkish speaking teachers of Turkish nationality.

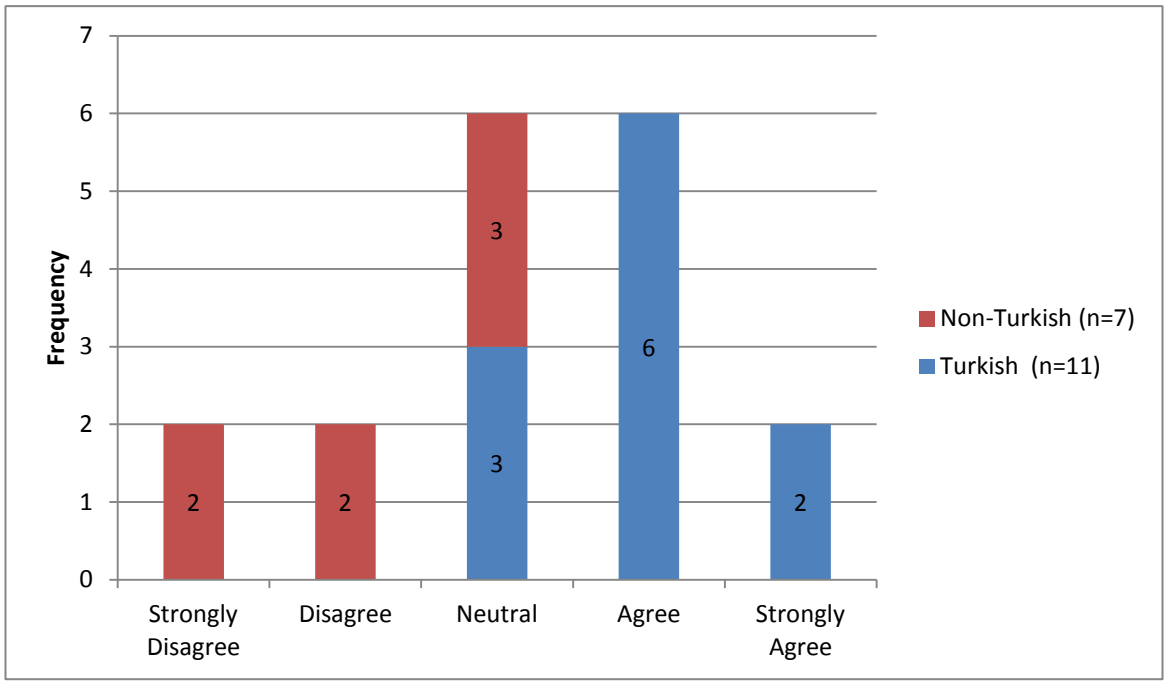

Figure 27. Teachers across subjects share their teaching methods and ideas

When students were asked whether TOK issues were discussed by students beyond the classroom five out of eight agreed that this did occur (see Figure 28). This suggests that the content of the course feels relevant and significant enough to them, that they continue the discussion outside of the "bubble" perceived by one teacher in an earlier response.

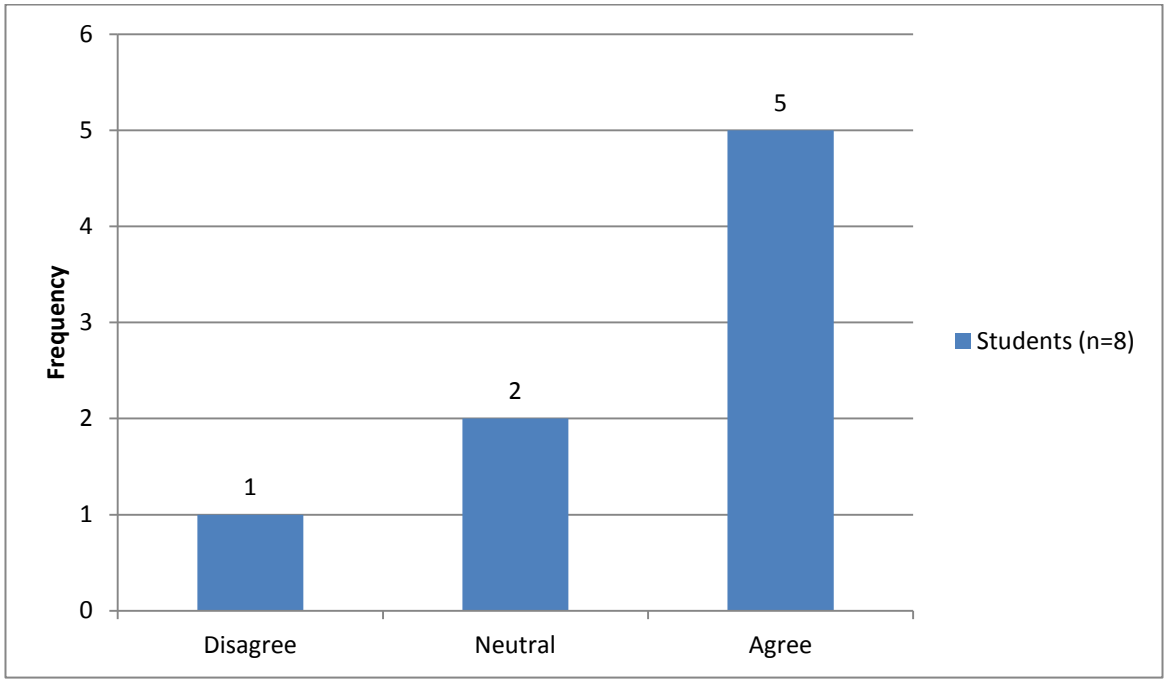

Figure 28. Students in your school discuss TOK ideas and topics outside of the classroom

The majority of students (three quarters) and many staff (9 participants) indicated that teachers who do not deliver the IB in their schools are also not well informed about the main aims and methodology of the TOK course (see Figure 29). Over a third of staff also chose to answer "Neutral", but when asked further they explained that they had not spoken to many other co- workers about these specifics and did not wish to make a guess at what other staff members did, or did not, know.

A similar response was given when asked whether non IB students were familiar with the aims and ideas of TOK (Figure 30). However, more staff gave a definitive response, feeling that they had a better idea of how well informed students were, as most staff taught a range of classes within the schools, or were in regular contact with many students.

Overall it seems the perception is that TOK aims and methods do not extend far beyond the IB programme and those who teach or are enrolled in it.

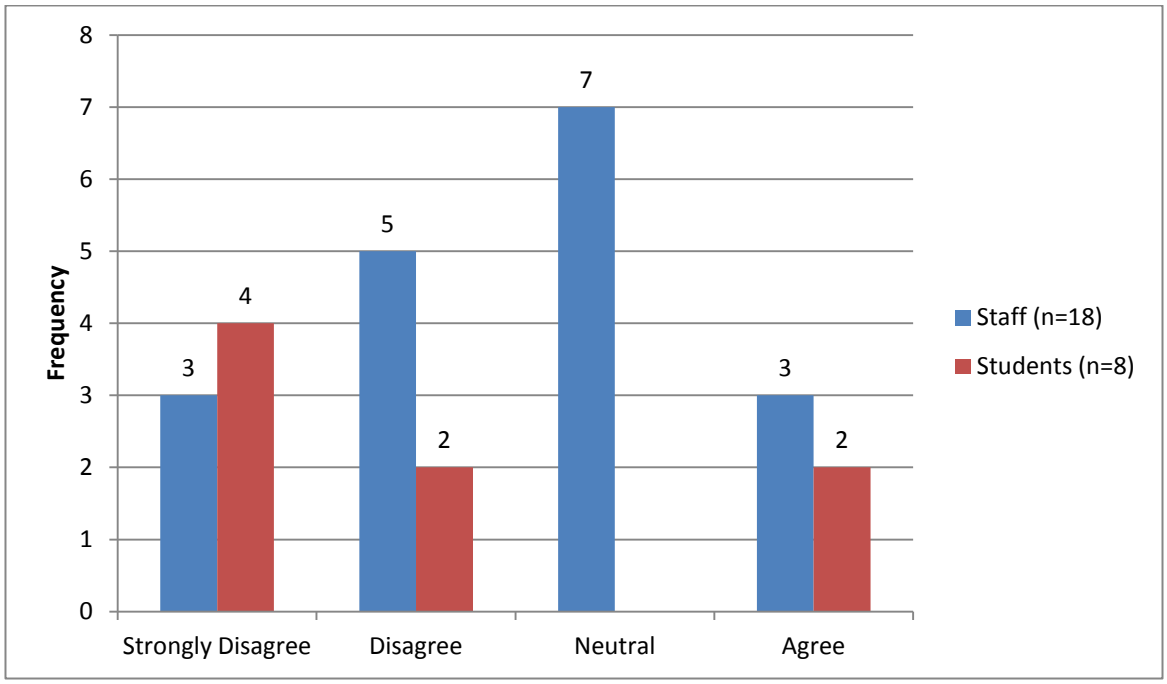

Figure 29. Teachers who do not deliver the IB are well informed about TOK aims and methods

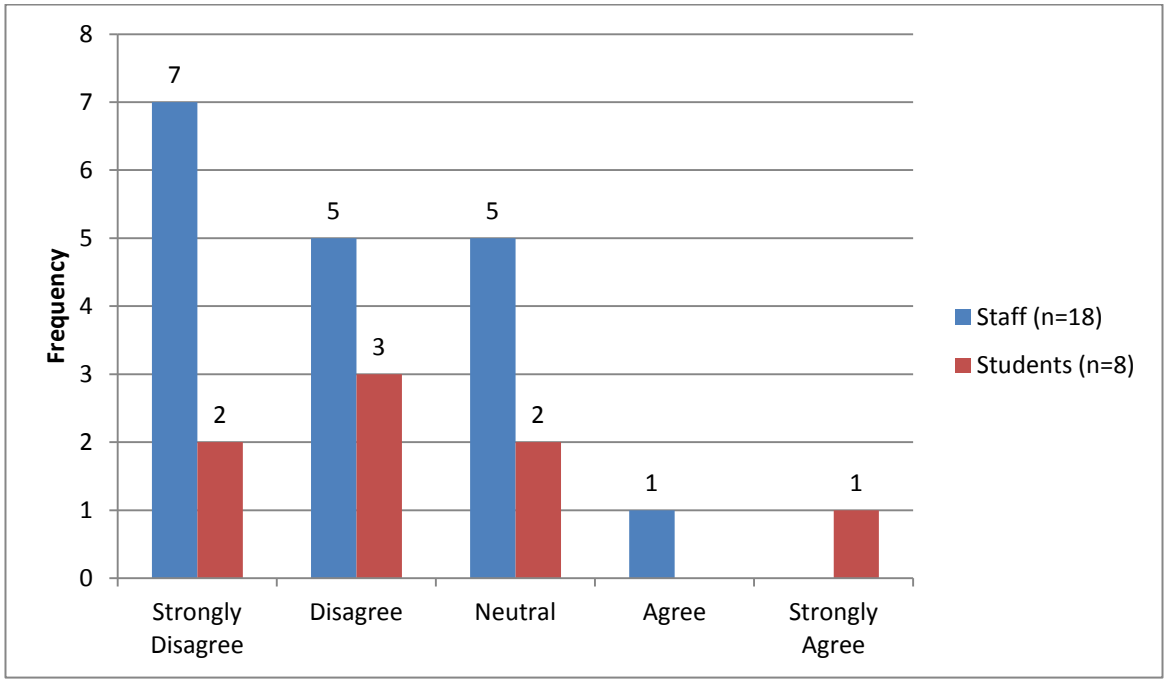

Figure 30. Students who are not enrolled on the IB Diploma Programme are aware of TOK aims and ideas

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

As this was exploratory research it was not embarked upon with any specific hypothesis, but instead looked to find the answers to three overarching research questions and further explore the implications of these results. As such, this chapter is organized by looking at each of those three questions in order. As the answers are discussed, it is also appropriate to include the implications for practice which naturally link with each section individually. The implications for practice will then be summarized together in a separate section and implications for further research will be discussed.

Discussion of the findings

Research question one: How is TOK implemented?

Basic implementation

Through this question, the aim was to investigate how the participant schools implement TOK as a course, along with any issues which arose from this process. The perspectives of teachers were vital in this area as "The success of a school curriculum, whatever the intention is, depends mostly on the teacher, who is the key person enacting it" (Akiroğlu & Akiroğlu, 2003, p.254).

Each school delivered the TOK course over a period of two years in accordance with the IB guidelines, and each delivered TOK as a lesson once per week, totaling

between 70 and 90 minutes. However, due to routine examination weeks and extracurricular activities, teachers claimed that TOK classes were sometimes taken away, reducing the total teaching time available throughout the course.

Issues with teaching and learning

Students noted of the course that it was often "confusing" within the context of their study in the national system. This confusion came from the disparity between the methods and content of the TOK course, and most other courses they were taking, specifically the core subjects of math, Turkish literature and science, which combined both IB and MEB curriculum elements in order to cover all the necessary material for students. One student further developed this idea by stating that the focus of TOK was often on western ideas and western examples, and this was supported in some ways by other students who suggested a Turkish version of TOK might be more accessible in terms of content for students.

When we look at the implications of this, some issues of bias or cultural irrelevance come into play. Three out of the four schools surveyed had TOK teachers who were foreigners, and who taught either English or social sciences, and the school which employed a Turkish TOK teacher had no foreign teachers on their staff. IB coordinators from the three schools also claimed that it was generally a pattern in Turkish schools delivering the IB to have one of the foreign English teachers deliver the TOK course without coordination with any other teachers, and expressed an awareness that this was generally not good practice.

When discussing issues about teacher education in Turkey Akiroğlu & Akiroğlu highlight one of the key issues: "courses that we were asked to complete did not address crucial points about issues related to our country. Instead, they taught knowledge that was produced to address the issues of a completely different society" (2003, p.260). This same issue seems also to be effecting the perceptions students have about TOK. As the course is predominantly delivered by foreign teachers who design and teach the curriculum alone, there is bound to be a bias in the content and methodology used. In many senses, the TOK teachers did not see this as a problem, because they saw the course as an alternative to the singular perspective students gained from their traditional MEB education. However, teachers also recognized the difficulty students had in being able to switch perspectives, and attributed this to "fossilized practices" from earlier education. The foreign staff all seemed to follow this line of reasoning, and were also generally negative about how far their colleagues were willing to adopt the philosophies of TOK in their own classrooms.

However, when considering the tensions often experienced between Turkish and foreign teachers Çelik notes of Turkish teachers that "being of the same culture, they often have an enhanced understanding of the students' need and an ability to predict (…) problems" (2006, p.375). The confusion of students then, may suggest that TOK teachers are not currently planning a course which is totally culturally relevant to students in terms of content and methodology. Combining both culturally relative references and ideas with those from multiple other perspectives, including those from Western points of view, could allow students improved access to the course as they progressed. There should also be an awareness, however, that the TOK course

should not become too centralized around a Turkish cultural context, otherwise the international aspect of the course and its philosophies regarding multiple perspectives may become overshadowed (Hughes, 2009). A balance should be attained in order to ensure that the course does not become tokenistic in its treatment of any culture and therefore highlights a complex and academic approach to the often difficult abstract concepts inherent in the course (Simandiraki, 2006). If a balance is carefully considered, a mix of methodologies might also anchor the course more firmly within the whole school curriculum, rather than existing in a "90 minute bubble" as one teacher phrased it.

In terms of TOK's position within the whole school context, all staff and most students noted the time pressures of the MEB curriculum, which bore down on periphery courses like TOK and either took time away from the course, or shifted both the focus of students and teachers toward the practicalities of the university entrance exams. This contributed to the perceptions that TOK philosophies gained little traction throughout the whole school community, and rarely reached beyond IB. This is ironic when placed in the context of student and staff responses, where there was a unanimous emphasis placed on the value of TOK philosophies and methodologies, and the skills it provided learners. In short, staff and students all claimed that TOK was an important course, which developed skills they stated were crucial in order to create critical thinking life-long learners, but in practice they seemed resigned to the fact that the MEB curriculum was the most pressing concern and must be delivered in whatever manner would allow them to cover all the content necessary. Regardless of their value placed on TOK and its philosophies, they spent

the majority of their time and effort on the MEB curriculum and preparation for the YGS, a problem previously identified by Haser & Star (2009), who found that teachers began their teaching careers in Turkey with philosophies that were based around student-centred learning, but slipped into opposing practices due to the perceived realities of the MEB curriculum.

Finally, the IB coordinators interviewed all recognized that some form of collaboration between teachers when delivering TOK was important; however this was not the case in any of the schools that they worked in. One IB coordinator was especially vocal, noting that it was impossible to deliver the course effectively, or disseminate the TOK philosophy throughout the schools unless a serious programme of collaboration existed.

Research question two: In what ways has the TOK course shaped the educational perspectives of IB Teachers, IB Administrative staff and IB students?

The purpose of this research question was to see what, if any, influence the TOK course had on the way students and staff perceived education, and more specifically education within their own teaching/learning contexts.

Student perceptions

Almost all students claimed that the course was about "learning how to think" and that TOK was a course centered on free and open discussion. The phrase "learning

how to think", when clarified by students implied that they felt the MEB curriculum was something passive and automatic, where the knowledge did not need to be considered but only memorized. In contrast, the TOK course asked students to question ideas and beliefs and to discuss them freely, often with no definitive answers needed or offered. Students claimed that this made them independent in their learning, rather than being bound to a text book or a teacher providing the answers at the front of the class.

This value then is something which could be exploited by Turkish schools, who wish to foster life long, independent learning (something which almost all staff expressed in open-ended responses). Students enjoyed TOK for the fact that it gave them freedom to think, and enabled them more intellectual space to engineer their own views of education and of the difficult concepts studied in lessons. This suggests that they willingly buy-into the concept and practices of student-centered learning which are central goals of both the MEB and IB curricula.

The response students gave also highlights that in implementation TOK teachers are using discussion-based approaches to learning, and that these are effective, or at least are perceived to be by the students. As the study by Applebee et al. in American schools shows

> when students' classroom experiences emphasize high academic demands and discussion-based approaches to the development of understanding, students internalize the knowledge and skills necessary to engage in challenging (…) tasks on their own. (2003, p.723)

This means that schools teaching and coordinating The Turkish National Curriculum have an opportunity, through the TOK programme, to not only provide lifelong

learning skills to students before they leave for university, but that students may respond enthusiastically to student-centered learning processes and that perhaps TOK is a starting point for experimentation in other curriculum areas, in order to meet institutional aims, MEB aims and IB aims.

TOK may be an appropriate starting point due to the fact that it seems TOK teachers are already employing these methods to some extent, but also the TOK curriculum is highly flexible and so lends itself to innovative planning and collaborative teaching. Whereas teachers perceived that the current MEB curriculum was rather restrictive and placed a lot of pressure on them to cover large amounts of content, which served as an encumbrance to implementing student-centered learning methods.

Staff perceptions

In keeping with students all staff expressed a sense of value in TOK, especially through its promotion of critical thinking skills and provision of valuable academic skills, such as extended writing and the evaluation of abstract concepts. Also like students, staff claimed that TOK was a positive alternative to some of the more restrictive elements of the MEB curriculum, with two-thirds of participants asserting that TOK played a large role in creating independent learners.

Overall then, staff expressed that TOK had provided an alternative model of education to the MEB curriculum, a curriculum which most of the teachers were charged with delivering alongside the IB, although some foreign teachers had no involvement in the MEB curriculum at all. In their responses they claimed that the TOK course had less changed their perspectives, than aligned with their existing

values more so than any other course they knew of. By seeing the model of TOK in action however, teachers had rekindled an interest in student-centered learning and high level critical thinking skills. Although many teachers stated that they tried already to enact their perceptions of good education within their classrooms, IB coordinators in all schools (all of whom were Turkish) expressed a skeptical attitude toward these claims, especially in relation to Turkish staff. Instead, coordinators explained that teachers of Turkish nationality may perceive the value of critical thinking and student based learning, but do not show this through practice due to the high workload and demands of the MEB curriculum they must deliver. As Yıldırım states in his study within primary schools in Turkey:

> the most common problem mentioned by teachers was the difficulty they experienced in bridging the gap between the requirements of the national curriculum and the realities of the classroom. They stated that certain units in the national curriculum may not be in line with students' background, needs and interests; as a result, what they planned in units may not be achieved fully during instruction. (2003, p.533)

Just as IB coordinators expressed, Turkish teachers in this study recognized what is lacking in the MEB curriculum, and the value of TOK methodologies and concepts, however they have little autonomy to put their own educational values into action, and must bend to the realities of the students immediate needs; primarily success on ministry of education exams and the university entrance exam (YGS).

Öztürk (2011) suggests that even with recent educational reforms there must be a further focus on improving the levels of teacher autonomy to decide their own subject content and methods of delivery. Focusing mainly on the new history curriculum, he notes that with extensive unit descriptions and sample lessons, which

potentially map out each lesson to be taught, teachers often end up delivering the course with little of their own input. This perceived lack of autonomy may not only affect the freedom of teachers to teach according to their preferred pedagogical stance, but as a direct corollary it may impact on the student experience of learning. As Öztürk states "in order that the teacher encourages learning autonomy of the pupils and plans the teaching activities based on the needs, natures and features of those students, they should possess some degree of autonomy" (2011, p.116). In effect, students are more likely to remain passive learners and may not benefit from the possibilities TOK offers if their teachers do not sense that they have power and control over the implementation of their curricula.

Research question three: What is the relationship between TOK and the Turkish National Curriculum, as perceived by IB teachers, IB administrative staff and IB students?

The purpose of this question was to ascertain whether IB staff and students perceived any changes in the MEB curriculum which may have been a result of its interaction with the TOK course, being delivered within the schools studied.

University entrance exam (YGS)

Overall IB students perceived no real impact made by TOK on the MEB curriculum. In their responses they emphasized the huge roll that examinations within school and also the YGS exam played in their education. Because the final two years of high school were basically a prolonged preparation for the YGS exam, students claimed

that TOK took a back seat in terms of how the school and individual students prioritized it, and its general pedagogical approach. If anything, they claimed that the MEB curriculum was impacting poorly on TOK, and hampered its ability to be delivered effectively.

The reality of this situation is that TOK will not provide any advantage for students taking the YGS exam. As Azar (2010) showed in his study of 121 Turkish high school students, being more disposed to critical thinking has no significant advantage in terms of achievement on the YGS, and as all staff unanimously agreed in this current study, critical thinking is one of the main foci of the TOK course.

This reality reflects the tension which two IB coordinators, one principal and some Turkish teachers also stated; that the MEB claims its curriculum is designed "to meet the needs of individual and society, to integrate theory and practice, to provide learner-centered education and detailed teaching …" (MEB, 2001, p.19) but that the current realities of demands and implementation are not in keeping with this. In theory TOK can meet many of these stated aims; however the final assessment on which students rely to determine their educational future clearly does not reflect a valuing of these standards / skills.

Bearing this in mind, Turkish schools delivering TOK need to ask themselves some difficult questions about what their aims are as an institution. Are they aiming to help students gain the best scores in the YGS at the cost of providing the lifelong learner skills which most staff, including senior administrators, claimed to value?

Perhaps it is also pertinent to consider that studies globally over recent decades have shown an increasing trend in employers desiring graduates who have "the capacity for independent thought and action" (Kremer & McGuiness, 1998, p.44). These skills are those fostered through the pedagogical methods inherent in the TOK course, and are catered for less in classes preparing students for the YGS. It is also not necessarily true that these skills will automatically result from a university education, where teaching may be exclusively through lecture and tutorials.

This is not of course to say that a large focus should be taken off the YGS, which is a social and political reality which is not soon to change in Turkey. However, it is to suggest that TOK may allow for a better balance in the profile of students who graduate from national institutions, if administrations of schools are willing to invest the time, teachers and resources to raise the profile of the course in the context of the MEB curriculum, and in the eyes of students.

Teachers' conflicting perspectives

Yet it is not true to say that the MEB places no value on TOK skills and methodologies, despite the fact that this was adamantly expressed by all foreign staff who were surveyed. Results showed that whilst foreign staff were clear that they perceived TOK to be peripheral to the aims of the MEB, Turkish staff generally claimed that the interaction between the IB, TOK and the MEB was producing some tangible policy changes.

One example of this is that "The head of the Higher Education council (has been) talking about the IB diploma being recognised for direct entry into universities in the

near future" (Onür 2011, p.88), a move which would be significant in recognizing that the MEB aims and those of the IB (and therefore TOK) are becoming closer. Not only this, but it would eliminate the need for students to focus on YGS preparation and would allow them to focus more on the skills required in the TOK classroom.

The fact that this seemed to be unknown to the foreign staff surveyed is also significant, in highlighting an information gap in the schools studied. It seemed that IB coordinators and principals were aware of the current discussions happening on a national platform but did not inform staff, especially foreigners. This led to a resentful tone from many foreign teachers when asked about the relationship between the MEB and TOK, where they saw one as the antithesis of the other. This seemed to also foster the feelings of isolation some foreign teachers expressed, in terms of delivering the course alone, and claiming that other teachers were not really interested in TOK because it did not relate to MEB goals.

This can be exemplified further when one foreign TOK teacher stated that the MEB placed "no value" on the TOK course because they did not assign it a grade, nor asked students to do exams in TOK which would appear on their high school transcript. However, one IB coordinator, when asked about this claimed that in fact representatives of schools delivering the IB in Turkey had met with ministry officials to dissuade them from examining the TOK course. Again the fact that this discussion was not known by teachers meant an atmosphere where teachers delivering the course made false assumptions about its role in the national system.

Not only this, but the teacher who saw the lack of exams for TOK as a negative thing also implied in their statement that examining of TOK may actually help raise its profile in the school community. IB coordinators in the discussion with Ministry officials argued that assessment in the form of exams was opposed to the philosophies of TOK, but it is certainly a question worth asking, as to whether the TOK course must make some compromises in order to work more effectively within the realities of a Turkish National education framework. It also raises issues about how far this discussion involved IB teachers within schools.

The lack of democratic involvement in the act of shaping what TOK is to be within the Turkish school system is a problem which Akşit also identifies with the recent educational reforms in the MEB curriculum; where a lack of consideration of the perceptions and ideas of those who will actually teach the curriculum can lead to a situation where "personal goals, values, concerns and beliefs (…) go unaddressed, a mistake which would have crucial bearings on the success of the whole endeavor" (2007, p.136).

It appears clear then that more communication between TOK teachers and administration is required within schools. This is further the case because Turkish staff were aware, as is clear from their responses, that MEB reforms to curriculum do appear to reflect a movement in pedagogy toward that of TOK, reforms such as those to seek more "formative assessment" and a movement "from a teacher-centered didactic model to a student-centered constructivist model" (Akşit, 2007, p.133). Yet foreign staff, including the principal of one school, claimed that they were unaware of any similarities between the two curricula.

However, in the case of these reforms IB coordinators also noted similar issues to those facing TOK, where the philosophies and methods were on paper, but were not necessarily being enacted. In this sense it seems that both the TOK and MEB curricula share some similarities in the difficulties of their implementation, and as TOK is a smaller component of a larger programme, perhaps lessons learned through its effective implementation can be transferred to the wider issues of the MEB curriculum.

Implications for practice

The TOK course is being delivered by single teachers, who feel that they have little support and a broad curriculum to both design and implement. A system of organized collaborative teaching could effectively address the concerns of teachers, who stated that the course was difficult to implement due to the large amount of "cumulative knowledge" required, and would also seem to address regrets one teacher had that TOK was not "more of a team effort". This coincides with survey research conducted by Halicioğlu (2008) with a larger sample of 154 staff and administrators involved in delivering the IB in a national context around Turkey. In her findings, Halicioğlu reported that over half of respondents desired more time for peer observation and collaboration.

In this case collaborative teaching may be defined as "any academic experience in which two (or more) teachers work together in designing and teaching a course that itself uses group learning techniques" (Robinson & Schaible, 1995, p.57). And through this method, using teachers from various subject fields, it would not only be

possible to spread the course load and ensure a wealth of expertise, but also act as insurance against an "ingrained tendency to slip back into the banking mode of teaching with the student as passive receptacle" (Robinson & Schaible, 1995, p.59), which IB coordinators stated was something common in Turkish staff who espoused the values of TOK but often failed to implement them consistently.

By embarking on a serious commitment to collaborative teaching, educational institutions may be able to align practice with the espoused values of some of their major stakeholders, these being the teachers, students and administrators. Beyond this, through the collaborative process the TOK course also has the ability to further embed philosophies of critical thinking and independent learning into the school culture. It can do this by providing professional development, where teachers are able to learn from one another and refine their approaches as well as experimenting with others. Where "traditional modes of teaching tend not to facilitate mutual support or encouragement" and do not lend themselves "to the thoughtful exploration of different approaches and points of view" (Matthews, 1994, p.187), collaborative teaching may offer participants a means of exploring TOK and IB philosophies and methodologies in a professional and supportive environment. An additional benefit from this process is often that teachers then apply the methods and concepts, which they have willingly bought-into, to their other lessons regardless of which curriculum they are delivering. This is clearly shown through the context of Koç high school in Istanbul, Turkey, where Jale Onür traces a process of "curriculum convergence" which shows that "once teachers adapt their teaching

skills to IB pedagogy, they apply the same skills in teaching non IB groups too" (2011, p.77).

However, this process of crafting a more school-wide approach to teaching and learning must take place between a mix of Turkish and foreign teachers to ensure that the realities of students needs and issues are being met (Çelik, 2006), with a healthy compromise in course content and delivery being the aim.

Teachers delivering both the MEB and IB curricula are also under a lot of pressure to meet a host of goals and this not only causes them stress, but gives them the perception that they have very little power over how they deliver their curricula, and what the content is. This perceived lack of autonomy may lead to an equal lack of autonomy for students within these classrooms (Öztürk, 2011). Therefore more staff, on rotations, should be given access and responsibility in designing and delivering the TOK course. If this is the case, the autonomy will free them to enact their espoused values of critical thinking, independent thought and student-centered learning. If staff are all given the opportunity to engage in this form of planning and teaching, it is likely they will make more effort to also implement these experiences throughout all of their teaching (Onür, 2011), which would fulfill the goals of both the MEB and IB curricula.

In addition to this and to the extent it is possible for administrators to do so; schools should attempt to engage in serious dialogue with the MEB in a bid to gain more autonomy over their curricula. In particular, private schools in Turkey who deliver the IB are in a better position to achieve such a change as "private schools do not need to follow the same calendars, course books or curriculum as do public schools"

(Cinoğlu, 2006, p.681). This autonomy must be passed on to classroom teachers who may take more responsibility for planning their own course and therefore may better express their value toward critical thinking and independent learning.

TOK is also seen as a subject little valued within Turkish school communities by both staff and students. School administration must work to change this perception through a commitment to ensuring that the course it given its full course hours and through implementing serious collaborative programmes, as already mentioned.

Finally, information about the MEB's changing curricula and current discussions by the MEB concerning the IB in Turkey does not seem to be communicated clearly enough within institutions. As a result, this may assist in fostering conflicting perceptions of the two programmes of study, and in some cases frustrated feelings on the part of foreign staff. As Akşit (2007) suggests, lack of involvement of staff in the processes of shaping the curricula they must deliver can cause ultimate problems with the success of the curricula's implementation. It would be advisable for MEB curriculum changes to be shared with the whole school community, including foreign teachers, and discussed and explored together, to increase understanding and teacher buy-in, and to also highlight potential problems, difficulties and solutions. The same applies to possible changes in the IB and TOK being shared and discussed with IB teachers. The enactors of the curricula must have as much involvement as possible.

Implications for further research

In the schools from this study, the IB coordinators all recognized that collaborative teaching was the most effective way of planning and delivering the TOK course, however, they also all stated that no collaboration was currently occurring between teachers in relation to the TOK course in their schools. This tension between theory and practice, especially from the perspective of IB coordinators, must be examined further, to explore administrative and/or cultural factors within the institutions which may serve as an impediment to collaborative teaching.

Other than focusing on impediments, it is also important to investigate the most effective means of collaborative teaching within Turkish schools, in order to shape an improved learning environment for both staff and students.

Also, it is worth examining whether TOK could become a MEB curriculum elective. In this sense it would mean that IB students would take exams in the subject and their grades would be officially recognized on their high school transcripts. Inherent in this research are also questions about how valid examining of TOK would be, considering the course structure, and stated aims. It would also be useful to investigate how testing students on a subject which many participants (both staff and students) in this study claimed to be associated with open thought and discussion, may alter student and staff perceptions of the course.

Further to this, research into the potential development of a MEB conceived version of the TOK course could be extremely valuable for all Turkish schools, as also expressed by Sen (2001). Focus should be placed on how the course might be

structured, taught and made available to more than just IB students, and to what extent it should have any cultural bias.

Finally, this study focused on a small sample of schools, and did not incorporate perceptions of parents, who are important stakeholders in a private school environment. Further, wider and more detailed research in the area of TOK and the IB Diploma is important in a country where private education is expanding, and with it the popularity of the IB programmes.

Limitations

This research is ultimately limited by its small sample; with a total of eighteen staff and eight students from across four schools. Although the schools were geographically spread around the city of Ankara and had diverse school populations, they were also all private schools and so their situation is quite different from the experiences of public schools within Turkey. Therefore the research is only applicable to private schools.

There are also possibilities of my own bias playing a role in the collection and interpretation of the results. This bias comes from the fact that I myself am a foreign TOK teacher in a Turkish school, and have formed my own set of perceptions about the course and its position within the whole school curriculum. Not only this, but one of the schools involved in this study is the school at which I currently work.

I tried to address these issues through multiple strategies. These included having peers review my instruments and the coding of my results to ensure that in both cases the material I collected and analyzed was as objective as possible, and having

the IB coordinator in my school deliver and collect the instruments. I also had a colleague conduct any follow-up interviews within my own institution, asking set questions which I had provided and recording the conversation so that I could also listen to the results as well as receiving notes.

Another limitation in some respects is that in two schools the principals declined to take part in the study, and so the view of head administrator within two of the schools is missing. This may mean that important perspectives were not included.

Finally, it should be noted that one of the schools which participated did not wish to actively fill in the surveys or have the IB coordinator interview recorded. This meant that their data was gathered in a different way from the other schools. I attempted to remove bias as far as I was able; however, there is certainly a chance that the responses may have been affected by my more active presence and by the different means of applying my instrument.

REFERENCES

Akiroğlu, E., & Akiroğlu, J. (2003). Reflections on teacher education in Turkey. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 26(2), 253-264. Retrieved from http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/0261976032000088774

Akşit, N. (2007). Educational reform in Turkey. *International Journal of Educational Development*,27, 129-137.

Applebee, A., Judith, L., Nystrand, M., & Gamoran, A. (2003). Discussion-based approaches to developing understanding: Classroom instruction and studentperformance in middle and high school English. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 685-730. Retrieved from http://aer.sagepub.com/content/40/3/685.full.pdf html

Azar, A. (2010). The effect of critical thinking dispositions on students' achievement in selection and placement exam for university in turkey. *Journal of Turkish Science Education*, 7(1), 61-73. Retrieved from http://www.pegem.net/dosyalar/dokuman/124762-20110902115155-7.pdf

Baker, A.M., & Kanan, H.M. (2005). International mindedness of native students as a function of the type of school attended and gender: The Qatari case. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 4(3), 333-349. Retrieved from http://jri.sagepub.com/content/4/3/333 doi: 10.1177/1475240905057813

Çelik, S. (2006). A concise examination of the artificial battle between native and non-native speaker teacher of English in Turkey. *Kastamonu Education*

Journal, 14(2), 371-376. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED497938.pdf

Cinoğlu, M. (2006). Private education as a policy tool in Turkey. *International Education Journal*, 7(5), 676-687. Retrieved from http://ehlt.flinders.edu.au/education/iej/articles/v7n5/Cinoğlu/paper.pdf

Darwish, B. (2009). Education as a political act: Dewey, Freire and the (International Baccalaureate) Theory of Knowledge curriculum. Manuscript submitted for publication, Faculty of Education, Queen's University, Ontario, Canada. Retrieved from https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/handle/1974/2579

Davis, R., Couper, M., Janz, N., Caldwell, C., & Resnicow, K. (2009). Interviewer effects in public health surveys. *Health Education Research*, 25(1), 14-26. Retrieved from http://her.oxfordjournals.org/content/25/1/14.full.pdf+html

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. (2003). *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*. San Diego, California: Sage Publications.

Dreyfus, H, & Dreyfus, S. (1991, September). From Socrates to expert systems: the limits and dangers of calculative rationality. Retrieved from http://socrates.berkeley.edu/-hdreyfus

Dunne, S., & Edwards, J. (2010). International schools as sites of social change. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 9(1), 24-39. Retrieved from http://jri.sagepub.com/content/9/1/24 doi: 10.1177/1475240909356716

Dwyer, S., & Buckle, J. (2009). The space between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative methods*, 8(1), 55-63.

Eryaman, M. (2011, January). The state of educational research in Turkey. Retrieved from http://www.eera.de/index.php?id=1487

Halicioğlu, M. (2008). The IB diploma programme in national schools: The case of Turkey. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 7(2), 164-183. Retrieved from http://jri.sagepub.com/content/7/2/164 doi: 10.1177/1475240908091303

Haser, Ç., & Star, J. (2009). Change in beliefs after first-year of teaching: The case of Turkish national curriculum context. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29, 239-302.

Hayden, M. (2001). Global issues: A necessary component of a balanced curriculum for the twenty-first century. In M Hayden and J Thompson (Eds.), *International education: Principles and practice* (pp. 90-122). London: Routledge.

Howe, K., & Moses, M. (1999). Ethics in educational research. *Review of Research in Education*, 24 (1), 21-60.

Hughes, K. (2009). International education and the International Baccalaureate diploma programme: a view from the perspective of postcolonial thought. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 8(2), 123-141. Retrieved from http://jri.sagepub.com/content/8/2/123 doi: 10.1177/1475240909105201

IBO. (2011, January 22). Country information for Turkey. Retrieved from http://www.ibo.org/country/TR/

IBO. IBO, (2009). IB learner profile booklet. Retrieved from IBO website: http://www.ibo.org/programmes/profile/

IBO. (2008). *Diploma programme theory of knowledge—guide*. Chippenham, England: Antony Rowe Ltd.

Jackson, M. (2005). The role of the host culture as a resource for developing intercultural understanding in a Dutch international secondary school. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 4(2), 193-209. Retrieved from http://jri.sagepub.com/content/4/2/193 doi: 10.1177/1475240905054390

Joppe, M. (1998, February 25). The research process. Retrieved from http://www.ryerson.ca/~mjoppe/rp.htm

Kaplan, S. (2006). *The pedagogical state: Education and the politics of national culture in post-1980 Turkey*. San Diego, California: Stanford University Press.

Kremer, J., & McGuinnes, C. (1998). Cutting the cord: Student-led discussion groups in higher education. *Education Training*, 40(2), 44-49. Retrieved from http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=837524&show=html

Mackenzie, J. (2000). Curricular interstices and the theory of knowledge. In M. Hayden (Ed.), *International schools and international education* (pp. 42-51). London: Kogan Page Limited.

Mathews, R. (1994). Enriching teaching and learning through learning communities. In T. O'Banion (Ed.), *Teaching and learning in the community college* (pp. 179-200). Washington, D.C.: Community College Press.

MEB. MEB, Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education. (2001). The Turkish education system and developments in education. Retrieved from UNESCO website: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE/natrap/Turkey.pdf

Onür, J. (2011). The IB diploma in a national education system: A case study of curriculum convergence in Turkey. In M. Hayden & J. Thompson (Eds.), *Taking the IB diploma programme forward* (pp. 77-90). Woodbridge, England: John Catt Educational Ltd.

Öztürk, I. (2011). Curriculum reform and teacher autonomy in Turkey: The case of history teaching. *International Journal of Instruction*, 4(2), 113-128. Retrieved from http://www.e-iji.net/dosyalar/iji_2011_2_7.pdf

Richards, L. (2005). *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Robinson, B., & Schaible, R. (1995). Collaborative teaching. *College Teaching*, 43(2), 57-59.

Sen, G. (2001). Internationalizing the international baccalaureate diploma programme. *IB Research Notes*, 1(3), 3-9.

Simandiraki, A. (2006). International education and cultural heritage: Alliance or antagonism?. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 5(1), 35-56. Retrieved from http://jri.sagepub.com/content/5/1/35 doi: 10.1177/1475240906061863

Spindler, G., & Spindler, L. (1992). Cultural process and ethnography: An anthropological perspective. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy & J. Preissel (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 62-85). London: Academic Press.

Turner, B. A. (1983). The use of grounded theory for the qualitative analysis of organizational behaviour. *Journal of Management Studies*, 20(3), 333-348. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-6486.1983.tb00211.x/abstract

Visser, A. (2010). International education in a national context: introducing the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme in Dutch public schools. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 9(2), 141-152. Retrieved from http://jri.sagepub.com/content/9/2/141 doi: 10.1177/1475240910370816

Wylie, M. (2008). Internationalizing curriculum: framing theory and practice in international schools. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 7(1), 5-19. Retrieved from http://jri.sagepub.com/content/7/1/5 doi: 10.1177/1475240907086885

Yıldırım, A. (2003). Instructional planning in a centralised school system: Lessons of a study among primary school teachers in Turkey. *International Review of Education*, 49(5), 525-543. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/3445314?uid=19323&uid=3739192&uid=2129&uid=5909400&uid=2&uid=70&uid=3&uid=67&uid=5910200&uid=62&uid=19322&sid=56122330403

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Semi-structured interview questions for IB administrators

These questions will help guide my discussion; although comments made by interviewees will be built upon and other questions may be asked to develop ideas or responses of interest/pertinence.

1. How long has your school been delivering the IB?
2. How long have you helped coordinate the IB?
3. What do you find are the challenges of delivering the IB in your school?
4. How many staff do you have teaching Theory of Knowledge (TOK)?
5. Are teachers trained in TOK?
6. What kinds of resources are allocated to TOK?
7. What do you think is the importance of TOK?
8. Do you think TOK is compatible with the non-IB curriculum?
9. What are the specific issues of delivering the TOK course and IB diploma progamme, in tandem with the Turkish National curriculum?
10. How do students perform on average in the area of TOK?
11. How do you think students and staff in general perceive the TOK course?

Appendix B: The Theory of Knowledge programme in Turkish Schools (staff questionnaire)

Please complete this survey to the best of your ability. Your time and effort is much appreciated.

School name

Position

- Classroom Teacher
- Department Head
- Administrator

Nationality

1) How long have you worked at this school?

- 0-1 Years
- 1-2 Years
- 2-3 Years
- 3 or more years

2)What is the main subject that you teach?

3) Do you teach IB in this school?

Yes

No

4) Do you teach TOK in this school?

Yes

No

5) If you teach TOK, have you received any training in this area from your current school?

Yes

No

6) If you have received training, please briefly describe where it took place, when and also the general content of the training provided.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7) How many teachers in your school teach TOK?

8) How many students in your school take TOK as a class?

9) Do the students use a TOK text book in lessons?

Yes

No

10) Please list the names of any books that are used frequently in the TOK classroom

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11) How many minutes per week do students spend in TOK class?

12) In your own opinion, what do you think are 3 key aims of the TOK course?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13) How important do you feel TOK is as part of the IB Diploma programme?

- Very Important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very Unimportant

14) How important do you feel TOK is as part of the whole school curriculum?

- Very Important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very Unimportant

15) How useful do you think TOK is for students in your school?

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Neutral
- Useless
- Very Useless

16) Please explain your answers to questions 13, 14 & 15 in more detail.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

17) Do you think students should have the option to take TOK in Turkish?

- Yes
- Unsure
- No

18) TOK is difficult to teach.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19) TOK is difficult for students to learn.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

20) Please explain your responses to the statements in 18 & 19 in more detail.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

21) How would you rate the similarities between your own educational philosophies and those of the TOK course?

- Very Similar
- Similar
- Neutral
- Dissimilar
- Very Dissimilar

22) Please explain your answer to question 21 in more detail.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

23) How would you rate the similarities between the educational goals of the Turkish Ministry of Education and those of the TOK course?

- Very Similar
- Similar
- Neutral
- Dissimilar
- Very Dissimilar

24) Please explain your answer to question 23 in more detail.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

25) Do you use elements of TOK in your other subject lessons (IB and Non-IB)?

- Almost always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Occasionally
- Almost never

26) Teachers across subjects share their teaching methods and ideas.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

27) Teachers who do ***not*** deliver the IB are well informed about TOK principals and methods.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral

- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28) Students who are *not* enrolled on the IB Diploma programme are aware of TOK aims and ideas.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

In this final section a page has been provided for your opinions. Please describe what you feel are the benefits or issues with delivering the TOK course in a Turkish school, and include any other additional comments you would like to make on the general topic of this questionnaire.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your insights, it is much appreciated.

Appendix C: The Theory of Knowledge programme in Turkish Schools (student questionnaire)

Please complete this survey to the best of your ability. Your time and effort is much appreciated.

School name

Grade

- 10
- 11
- 12

Nationality

1) Do you study IB in this school?

- Yes
- No

2) How many teachers in your school teach TOK?

3) How many students in your school take TOK as a class?

4) Do you use a TOK text book in lessons?

- Yes
- No

5) Please list the names of any books that are used frequently in the TOK classroom

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6) How many minutes per week do you spend in TOK class?

7) In your own opinion, what do you think are 3 key aims of the TOK course?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8) How important do you feel TOK is as part of the IB Diploma programme?

- Very Important
- Important
- Neutral
- Unimportant
- Very Unimportant

9) How important do you feel TOK is as part of the whole school curriculum?

- Very Important
- Important
- Neutral

- Unimportant
- Very Unimportant

10) How useful do you think TOK is for students in your school?

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Neutral
- Useless
- Very Useless

11) Please explain your answers to questions 8, 9 & 10 in more detail.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12) Do you think students should have the option to take TOK in Turkish?

- Yes
- Unsure
- No

13) TOK is difficult to understand.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

14) TOK is an interesting subject.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15) Please explain your responses to the statements in 12, 13 & 14 in more detail.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16) How would you rate the impact TOK has had on the way you think about learning and education?

- Very Significant
- Significant
- Neutral
- Insignificant
- Very Insignificant

17) Please explain your answer to question 16 in more detail.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18) How would you rate the similarities between the educational goals of the Turkish Ministry of Education and those of the TOK course?

- Very Similar
- Similar

- Neutral
- Dissimilar
- Very Dissimilar

19) Please explain your answer to question 18 in more detail.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

20) Do your teachers use TOK ideas or links in your other subject lessons (IB and Non-IB)?

- Almost always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Occasionally
- Almost never

21) Students in your school discuss TOK ideas and topics outside of the classroom.

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22) Teachers who do ***not*** deliver the IB are well informed about TOK aims and methods.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23) Students who are *not* enrolled on the IB Diploma programme are aware of TOK aims and ideas.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Strongly Disagree

In this final section a page has been provided for your opinions. Please describe what you feel are the benefits or issues with studying the TOK course in a Turkish school, and include any other additional comments you would like to make on the general topic of this questionnaire.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your insights, it is much appreciated

Appendix D: School C interview script

Greeting script (to be delivered in as close to this order as possible with each participant):

1. Hi, how are you doing?
2. Please sit
3. My name is Glyn Harris, I work at Bilkent High school and I am currently doing my MA research on TOK in Turkish high schools
4. I am specifically looking at a sample of schools here in Ankara
5. The aim is to see what teachers and students think about the TOK programme and its place within the schools
6. Today I am going to ask you a few questions
7. Whatever answers you give will be completely confidential, your name will not be used, and no one will know exactly what you said today except for me
8. Also I will give you my e-mail address after the questions, and if you would like, I can send you a full copy of the research once it is completed
9. You also have the option not to participate if you do not want to, or if you change your mind at a later date you can e-mail me and I will not use your responses in my final paper
10. Is all of this O.K. with you?
11. Would you still like to participate?
12. O.K. let's begin then

Phrases for clarification and encouragement:

- Could you please explain that point a bit more
- Why do you feel that way?
- Are there any other reasons why?
- What did you mean when you said ….?
- Could you please re-phrase your point?
- Could you please repeat what you just said?
- I am going to repeat what I noted down here, could you tell me if it is accurate?
- Would you like to add anything more?