

Faith

as a way of knowing



A sample unit plan and teaching guide for the IB Theory of Knowledge curriculum developed by the Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa.

In this package:

- Rationale and Guiding Principles
- IB DP Unit Planner, with ATL's indicated
- Lesson Plans
- Handouts and Powerpoint Slides
- Samples of Student work



Image: Swahili Door in Mombasa's historic Old Town, carved with an inscription from the Qur'an that reads "Inna Fatahna Laka Fathan Mubina" translated as "Truly We have opened out to you a clear opening" (48:1) and colloquially understood as "If you desire an opening then [know that] the opening has come to you." It is often found on doors and entrances in Old Town and is associated with faith based beliefs of divine protection and blessing for the owner of the house.



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faith / fāTH/

noun

1 complete trust or confidence in someone or something

2 strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof.

- *a system of belief: the Christian faith*
- *a strongly held belief or theory: the faith that life will expand until it fills the universe*

As of the most recent curriculum review, the IB Diploma Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course has been restructured to include a greater variety of ways of knowing as well as new areas of knowledge including religious and indigenous knowledge systems. This change is an effort by the IB to expose students to broader paradigms of knowledge¹ beyond those inherited from the Scientific Revolution and Western Enlightenment. The result has been an inclusion in the 2015 Guide of additional four ways of knowing (faith, memory, intuition and imagination) to the existing four (reason, sense perception, emotion, language). Schools are asked to choose four ways of knowing (WOKs) to explore in depth, although all WOKs should be touched upon. Exploration of selected WOKs should address two main questions:

1) how do I know?

2) how do we know?

These two questions ultimately lead us to differentiate between personal knowledge and shared knowledge, and explore the connections between the two. This exercise should allow students to also assess their own personal beliefs and assumptions ultimately fulfilling the course aim of students living more thoughtful, responsible and purposeful lives.

In the context of religion and faith, assessment and critical examination of one's personal beliefs can often be a difficult process to navigate. For some, the fear of the impact this examination may have on one's worldview may lead to a resistance of the process altogether. This package has been created by TOK teachers at the Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa to begin a conversation on how the question of faith might be addressed in the TOK classroom, particularly in social contexts defined by strong religious belief and orientation.

¹ TOK Curriculum Review Report 2, page 3

our context

In 2000, His Highness the Aga Khan initiated the establishment of the Aga Khan Academies, an integrated network of 18 residential schools across 14 countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South Asia. The Academies are dedicated to expanding access to the highest standard of education for exceptional young men and women, regardless of their ability to pay. The schools are grounded in an educational approach that measures success not just by academic achievement, but by how students apply what they know to make the world a better place. Each school emphasises the importance of academic excellence while instilling in students a sense of civic responsibility, leadership skills, and the desire, ability, and commitment to give back to their communities locally and globally. Students receive a grounding in ethics and also develop openness toward difference and acceptance of pluralism by living in diverse communities.

Immersion in diversity is a characteristic of the Academies and is expressed both in the diverse religious, socio-economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds of students and teachers as well as the environments each school is located in. Located on the culturally rich and diverse Swahili Coast of Kenya, the Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa has benefited greatly from the heritage of its local context. Mombasa has witnessed centuries of interaction between Arab, Persian and Indian merchants and local Bantu cultures. Later, European exploration of Africa brought the Portuguese and the British to the Swahili Coast. The various waves of migration have created a history of communal identity based on religious lines, resulting in a contemporary environment that is well acquainted with the challenges and rewards of encountering and engaging with difference.

Added to this history of cultural diversity is the recent sectarian and religious tension that has led to conflict and violence in the Coast Region. Although the conflict is not always an issue of religion, divides made along the lines of faith are not uncommon in a context where faith plays a central role in community identity.

The mix of our school culture, our local context and the history and politics of our regional environment necessitate that we approach Faith in the TOK classroom with nuance and sensitivity.

prior learning

The unit plan and lesson plans that follow build on the following ideas, topics and understanding espoused by the TOK curriculum. The unit is most successful when taught after these ideas/topics have been explored.

- *Plato's definition of knowledge as 'true justified belief'*

Plato's definition of knowledge typically serves as the starting point for all discussion in TOK. This unit builds on student knowledge and requires comfort in exploring nuanced concepts of 'true,' 'justified' and 'belief.'

- *traditional debates regarding emotion and reason as, sometimes, conflicting ways of knowing*

The debates regarding the differences between emotion and reason and their differing methods are similar to discussion of the differences between faith and reason, particularly in Western tradition. Prior knowledge of these debates is helpful in making connections between the limitations of reason, emotion and faith as ways of knowing, while also exploring similar issues in a different context.

- *the difference between personal versus shared knowledge, particularly in building systems/areas of knowledge*

This unit guides students in an important journey of self reflection. Fundamental to the success of this introspective journey, is for students to be able to apply their understanding of the difference between personal versus shared knowledge. Linked to this is an understanding of the role of personal experience in shaping knowledge. Note: If student understandings are not secure a recap session is strongly recommended.

principles that guided development of the unit

Stepping beyond our context, we have identified the following two principles which have guided the development of this unit, and which we believe many other IB schools worldwide can relate to.

We endeavoured that the curriculum should:

1. Be sensitive to a context that is defined by strong religious belief where the majority of students come from faith-based backgrounds and it is rare to question the centrality of faith to daily human life. In light of this, the curriculum should not shy away from discussion but provide students with a safe and appropriately challenging environment in which to begin articulating what faith means to them and how it affects their understanding of the world.
2. Acknowledge that although there exists a diversity of interpretation regarding the concept of faith, where the term means many different things to different people, its use in the TOK classroom must be specific and clear. As such, a conceptual tool must be developed to allow students to engage meaningfully, comfortably and robustly in the exercise of understanding what faith means to them.
3. Allow students to move beyond a view of reason and faith as opposite forces which are mutually exclusive. Students are invited to consider the possibility that these two ways of knowing can complement one another and work together to build knowledge.
4. Provide an opportunity to engage deeply with a single approach to the generation of knowledge enabling a depth of analysis. In this case, Foundationalism has been adopted as an epistemological starting point, though we acknowledge that many other theories of knowledge are equally applicable.

essential understandings

By the end of the unit, students should understand the following ideas regarding faith as a way of knowing:

- *the role of faith as a way of knowing is different from that of faith as an act of trust; one leads to truth statements/knowledge claims the other leads to statements of belief*
e.g. 'I know through faith that God exists' versus the statement 'I have faith in God.' The difference between the two is subtle but important.
- *the role of cultural and linguistic diversity in shaping plural understandings of the term 'faith' and the ways this makes faith a unique WOK in comparison to the others*
e.g. Faith in Latin ('fides') means loyalty and confidence, whereas the Arabic word for Faith 'iman' implies spiritual belief.
- *the acknowledgement that faith may not be the only WOK associated with a given knowledge claim*
e.g. "I know everything in the Bible to be true." Such a statement can be known potentially through emotion or reason and not only faith alone.

is faith a way of knowing?

The aim of this unit is to engage in the intellectual exercise of exploring how faith might operate as a way of knowing. The unit and lesson plans that follow almost immediately assume that faith is indeed a way of knowing (WOK). That said, many students may reasonably question the inclusion of faith as a way of knowing to the traditional list of reason, sense perception, emotion and language. Even for those students who do not challenge faith's inclusion as a WOK, it is worth addressing the following arguments against faith as a way of knowing:

- *it doesn't require factual evidence*

How can we test (based on sense perception) that faith based beliefs are true? Often these beliefs are self-justified and many hold them because they *want* to believe them.

- *beliefs may be conditioned by contexts that constantly change*

Education, upbringing and exposure to other ideas can influence what we hold to be true and what we disregard. As time passes, faith based beliefs may change. How reliable is knowledge that changes over time?

- *certainty is difficult to measure or apply universally*

Are faith based beliefs of one person in country X more certain or true than those of another in country Y? Students may also connect this idea to ongoing conflicts between different religious groups.

a foundational truth

An extension of the essential understandings, the main conceptual tool employed by this unit is the notion of a foundational truth. Drawing from Foundationalism as Theory of Knowledge, a foundational truth is a statement upon which other knowledge claims are based. Each of us as human beings make many knowledge claims on a daily basis, especially in the realms of ethics and religion. In these areas of knowledge, the basis of our claims can rest upon one particular truth that is called a **foundational truth**. The relationship between a foundational truth and a set of beliefs can be compared to the role of axioms and axiomatic reasoning in mathematics.

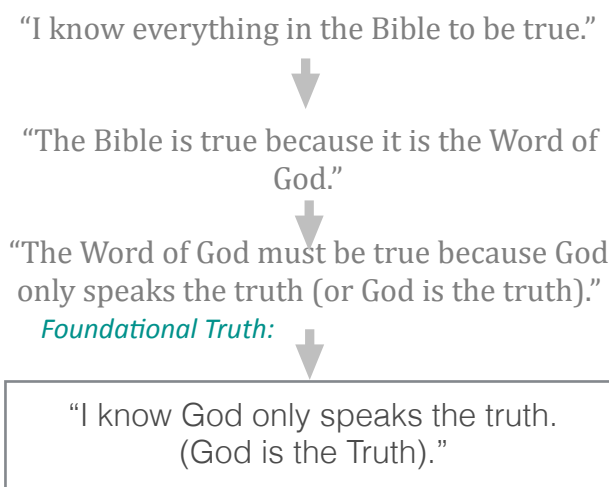
Often in the context of religion or morality knowledge claims are mistakenly taken to be foundational truths, when in fact such statements rest upon another deeper truth. Take for example, the statement “I know everything in the Bible to be true.” Such a statement can easily be taken to be an individual’s foundational truth. Upon deeper questioning of why we know this to be true, it becomes clearer that this claim is based on another belief, that in the sanctity of the Bible. We can then come up with a knowledge claim to represent this belief; “The Bible is true because it is holy and the word of God.” If we follow this line of deeper thinking, even this statement may rest upon another belief held to be true: “The word of God must be true because God only speaks the truth.” Thus, in this example a foundational truth could be “I know God only speaks the truth.” When viewed this way, it becomes clearer that the truth of every other knowledge claim ultimately rests on this foundational truth - known to the individual through faith.

The skill of unpacking the series of knowledge claims associated with a strongly held personal belief, and isolating the real basis of one’s beliefs is the skill this unit seeks to engender in students of strong faith-based backgrounds. A deeply introspective process, the skill of isolating one’s foundational truth is central to gaining a better understanding of how faith affects our understanding of the world.

Additionally, it is important for students to recognise their own foundational truths may have changed over time and will likely continue to do so. Familiarising them with the skill of unpacking this truth will better prepare them to continue this introspective journey in the future.

To summarise, the unit’s **significant concept** can be expressed as follows:

Faith as a way of knowing is belief without empirical evidence in a foundational truth upon which other knowledge claims are based or derived. This foundational truth can be metaphysical in nature (i.e. Belief in God) or moral in nature (i.e. Belief in Goodness).



critiques of foundationalism

As students engage in deep reflection of their own beliefs to uncover a **foundational truth**, they will be practically apply the theory of foundationalism. In this process, it is likely that students will identify key challenges or gaps that many philosophers have noted as the 'pitfalls' of foundationalism. While the focus of the unit is still on faith as a way of knowing, it is important for students to acknowledge the limitations of foundationalism as a theory of knowledge. Two of the most common critiques of both modern and classical philosophers are as follows:

- *the problem of arbitrariness*

Foundationalism rests on the assumption that all beliefs rest on a single foundational truth, but what if this truth is believed to be true for no reason at all? A potential response to this problem is to point out the importance of critical self reflection, constantly engaging with one's **foundational truth**.

- *basic beliefs that don't make sense*

What if the believer identifies a foundational belief, but then starts to question its truth? If the basic belief no longer makes sense, what happens to the entire belief system? As students engage with personal beliefs, some may engage purely logically, while others may have strong emotional reactions upon realisation of this challenge. A potential response to this deeply personal problem is to encourage students to adopt an attitude of resilience, treading carefully but not fearfully as they engage with a system of beliefs.

the student journey

This unit intentionally takes students on a highly introspective journey. Before delving into the specifics of the unit and lesson plans, it is worthwhile to picture the journey as a whole. The following diagram, based on Anderson and Krathwohl's revision of Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives,² outlines the cognitive processes and developments in conceptual understandings that a student will likely experience through this unit.

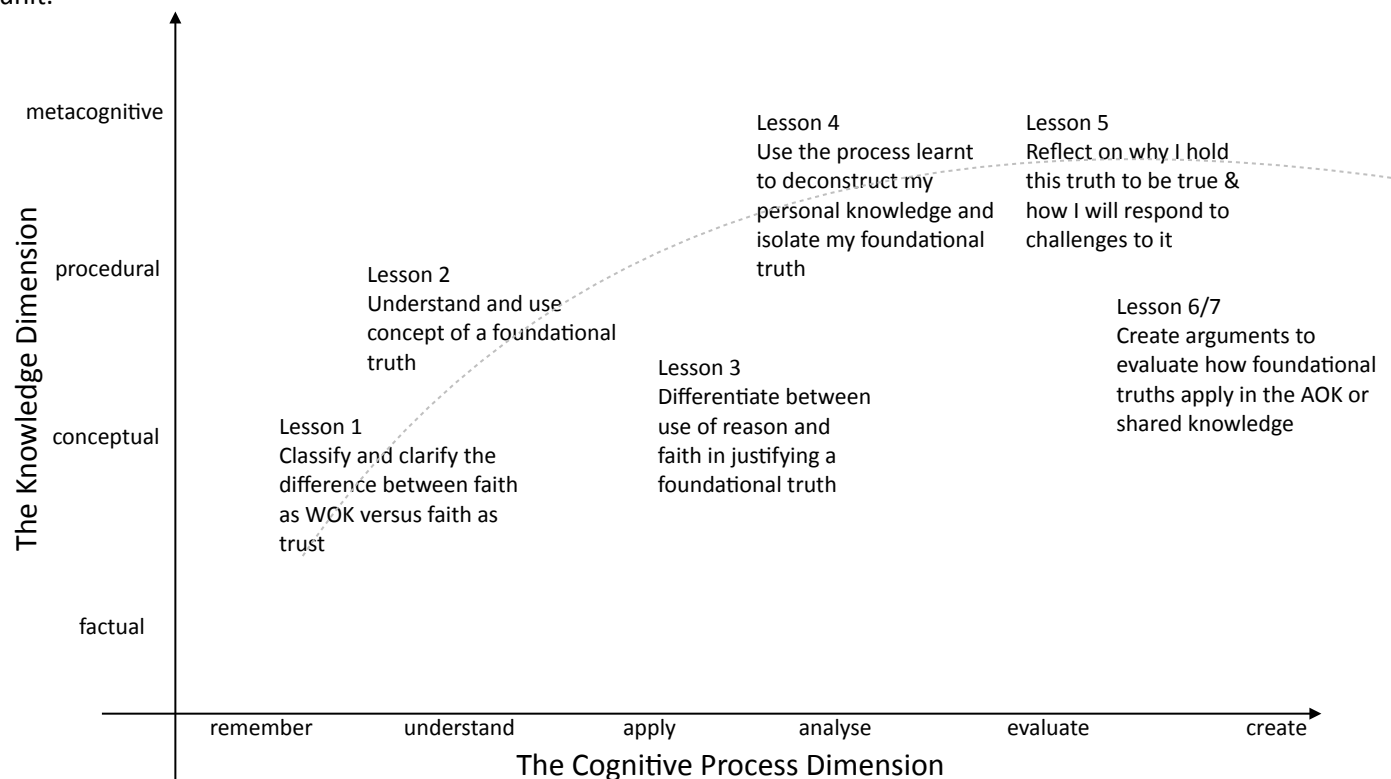


Diagram of learning objectives and trajectory based on Anderson and Krathwohl's revision of Bloom's Taxonomy

² Anderson, L.W. (Ed.) and Krathwohl, D.R. (Ed.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Complete edition). New York: Longman.

Rationale and Guiding Principles

Teacher(s):		Subject group and course:	Theory of Knowledge		
Course Part:	Faith as a way of knowing	DP Year 1 or 2:	DP1	Dates:	Feb 2014

INQUIRY: establishing purpose of unit

Group/Course Aims (from DP Subject guide):	Assessment Objectives (from Subject guide):
<p>Specifically, the aims of the TOK course are for students to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. make connections between a critical approach to the construction of knowledge, the academic disciplines and the wider world 2. develop an awareness of how individuals and communities construct knowledge and how this is critically examined 3. develop an interest in the diversity and richness of cultural perspectives and an awareness of personal and ideological assumptions 4. critically reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions, leading to more thoughtful, responsible and purposeful lives 5. understand that knowledge brings responsibility which leads to commitment and action. 	<p>It is expected that by the end of the TOK course, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify and analyse the various kinds of justifications used to support knowledge claims 2. formulate, evaluate and attempt to answer knowledge questions 3. examine how academic disciplines/areas of knowledge generate and shape knowledge 4. understand the roles played by ways of knowing in the construction of shared and personal knowledge 5. explore links between knowledge claims, knowledge questions, ways of knowing and areas of knowledge 6. demonstrate an awareness and understanding of different perspectives and be able to relate these to one's own perspective 7. in their formative assessment, explore a real-life/contemporary situation from a TOK perspective.
Essential understandings	
<p><u>Significant concept:</u> Faith as a way of knowing is belief without empirical evidence in a fundamental foundational truth upon which other knowledge claims are based or derived. This foundational truth can be metaphysical in nature (i.e. Belief in God) or moral in nature (i.e. Belief in Goodness) and often focus on human nature or the human condition.</p>	
Inquiry questions	

Rationale and Guiding Principles

Lesson 1: Intro to Faith

Exploring our conventional use of faith through language and the notion of faith as trust. Comparison of having faith in versus knowing through faith. What is the difference between having faith in something and knowing something through faith? Is it possible to 'know' something through faith? Is this an independent process (i.e. separated from other ways of knowing)?

Lesson 2: Foundational Truths & Faith

Exploring the idea that religion is something that can be known through faith. In what ways do faith, religion and belief differ? What kinds of truths are known to us through faith? (Religion here is only a case study) Outside of religion, what other foundational truths can you identify?

Lesson 3: Faith and Reason

How are faith and reason used to create an argument in the context of religion? Are there parallels with Maths and Science? Do faith based arguments require justification through reasoning?

Lesson 4: Faith and Mindfulness

How can we use mindfulness to allow us to create a space between ourselves and our beliefs and thoughts? How can we see our thoughts as an observer? Can this be helpful in identifying our own foundational truths to help and to help us examine these truths?

Lesson 5: Faith, Evidence and Doubt

Why do we hold our foundational truths to be true? What happens if you come across evidence and arguments that challenge your fundamental truth? What are the intellectual, emotional and instinctive/intuitive reasons to hold on to a foundational truth?

Lesson 6/7: Faith and AOK

What role does faith play in the Arts, Sciences or Maths? How does the 'foundational truth' operate in these areas? Does faith allow us to justify knowledge claims in these AOK?

All lessons were planned for 50 minute slots, with two lessons of TOK per week. Prior to completing this unit students have studied the following areas: Natural Sciences, Arts, Mathematics, Reason and Emotion.

Rationale and Guiding Principles

Approaches to learning (ATL)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thinking – critical thinking, reflection - Social - Communication - Self- Management – resilience - Research <p>As students begin this inquiry, they should be courageous and open minded in exploring positions that may challenge what they hold to be true. Such a process will require the development of critical thinking and reflection skills, and a positive approach towards embracing the challenge of resilience building. The skill to be developed here is the skill of deciphering what exactly one's faith is placed in; an attempt to de-mystify on a personal level the ambiguity of knowledge based upon faith. Students will be challenged to consider their own 'foundational truths' and asked to consider the knowledge claims, particularly in relation to religion and ethics, associated with these truths. Students will be given the tools to tease out often confusing and intersecting knowledge claims and to explore the primary role of reason, emotion and sense perception in deriving claims that we often mistakenly attribute to faith. At no point will students be asked to throw away their fundamental truths, but rather to assess the means by which they have arrived at them.</p>	
Language and learning	CAS Connections
<p>For the successful implementation of this unit, it is important for the following terms to be used precisely. Teachers and students should reach common understandings of the terms listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - faith (as opposed to trust) - religion (as opposed to faith) - belief (as opposed to knowledge) - personal versus shared knowledge - metaphysical topics (i.e. subjects not known through physical senses) - reasoning (axiomatic, inductive and deductive) - foundational truth 	<p>These will be specific to the CAS programme run by individual schools. It may be appropriate for students who have foundational truths that are closely related to their CAS project to consider this aspect in their CAS reflection activities.</p>

Rationale and Guiding Principles

ACTION: teaching and learning through inquiry

Content		Learning process
Students will know/be able to:		Learning experiences and strategies/planning for self-supporting learning: (See lesson plan for details)
Lesson 1 -	Acknowledge the difference between having faith in something versus knowing something through faith. Appreciate the diversity of definitions associated with faith. Come up with a working definition of faith.	Open discussion with ultimate aim of creating a working definition of 'faith as a way of knowing'
Lesson 2 -	Understand the difference between faith and religion. Understand the relationship between faith and foundational truths, through exploring their own foundational truth.	Use of images to invoke ideas of religion and religious belief, this then provides context to dig deeper regarding the difference between faith versus religion. What does this image tell us about faith? What does it tell us about religious practice?
Lesson 3 -	Understand Foundationalism as a key theory of knowledge. Reflect upon relationship between reason, logic and faith. Explore the complications of justifying knowledge gained through faith.	Case study approach. Use a key thinker who has tried to merge faith based arguments with logic and reason. Potential thinkers could be Descartes, Aquinas or al Ghazali. <i>The Philosophy Book</i> (New York: DK Publishing, 2011) can serve as a great resource for this.
Lesson 4 -	Reflect on the role of mindfulness in thinking through and re-evaluating one's foundational truths.	Silent contemplation in an open space, to allow them to deeply internalise and reflect upon what they have been exposed to so far.
Lesson 5 -	Appreciate the diversity of reasons behind belief in a foundational truth. Understand the role of evidence in strengthening faith.	As there are a number of different reasons to explore, this is best divided in group work or a jigsaw activity.
Lesson 6 -	Appreciate the relationship between faith and doubt. Understand the ways faith can apply to Science, Maths or Arts (or any other AoKs explored by this point). Articulate an understanding of faith and foundational truths explored thus far.	Preparation for and participation in formal debate.

Rationale and Guiding Principles

<p>Students will able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - articulate the various meanings of faith - recognise that faith can be defined in different ways - define their own understanding of faith - understand the relationship between faith and trust - apply ToK language to their understanding of faith by using terms such as truth, certainty, skepticism, evidence, personal/shared knowledge, knowledge framework - analyse the ways faith interacts with other ways of knowing - evaluate the strength of faith as a way of knowing - create knowledge questions related to faith as a way of knowing 	<p>Formative Assessment</p> <p>A reflective piece on the student's foundational truths. Firstly they identify a truth, and explain why it is foundational to their other beliefs. Secondly they explain why it is something they know through faith and identify if it is metaphysical in nature i.e. about a subject that can't be known through one's senses). Thirdly, they acknowledge how other knowledge claims are linked to it and whether or not foundational truths can or should be justified.</p>
	<p>Summative Assessment</p> <p>Articulation of key ideas through participation in end of unit debate.</p>
	<p>Differentiation</p> <p>Differentiation will be mainly by outcome. Students will be comfortable in engaging in this introspective exercise at different levels. At all times it should be clear that the unit is highly personal and the purpose is for students to better understand their beliefs, not necessarily to challenge them.</p>
<p>Resources</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TED Talk - <i>The Philosophy Book</i> (New York: DK Publishing, 2011) - Readings on Mindfulness by Katherine Weare and John Meiklejohn (recommended) 	

Rationale and Guiding Principles

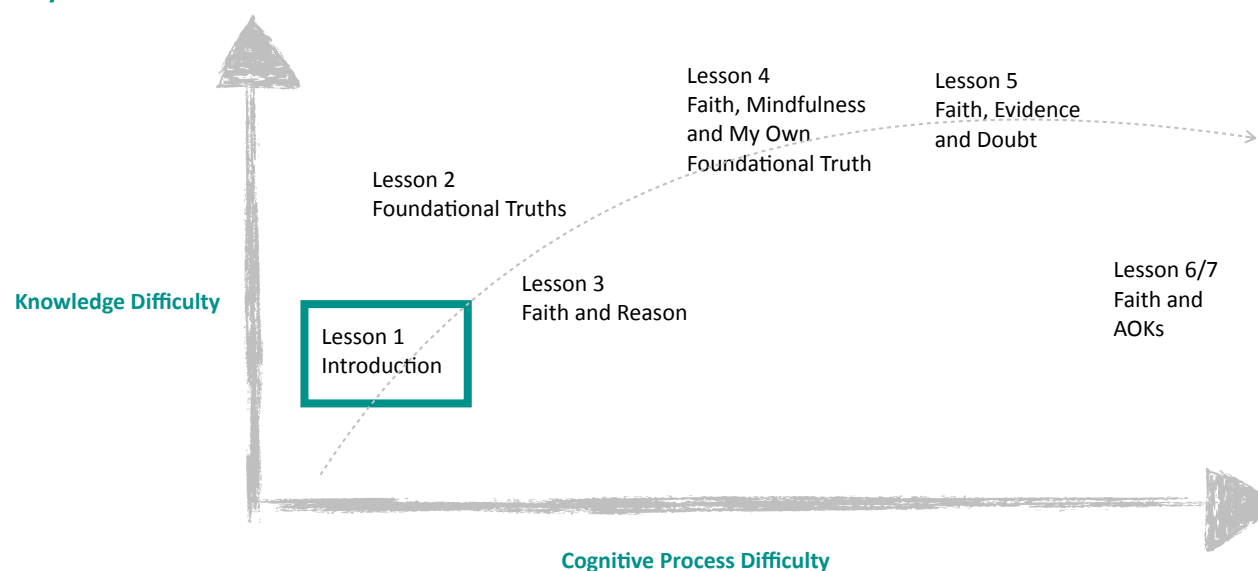
REFLECTION: considering the planning, process and impact of the inquiry

Prior to studying the unit	After the unit
<p>Our concerns prior to were mostly driven by the sensitivity to our students' personal beliefs, which in this context were quite strongly held and seldom examined.</p>	<p>Student reflections on their fundamental truth were deeply introspective and demonstrated evidence of deconstruction of and reflection upon their foundational truths. Two reflections are attached as samples.</p> <p>A concern was that no students had picked faith as a topic for their practice presentation, which might indicate a lower level of comfort with the topic as compared to other ways of knowing. Students also commented that it was a more abstract unit than reason or emotion and thus more difficult and still interesting.</p> <p>More could also be done to consider the links of faith to other areas of knowledge.</p>

Lesson one: Introduction to Faith as WOK

As an introduction, this lesson takes a largely constructivist approach, working with students' prior experiences and understandings of faith to begin examining it through a TOK lens.

Where are we in the student journey?



Where are the learning outcomes?

Student will be able to:

- Acknowledge the difference between faith as an act of trust versus faith as a way of deriving knowledge
- Appreciate the multiple understandings of what faith is and the challenges in understanding how it works as a way of knowing
- Come up with a working definition of faith

Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources	Homework
<p>(10mins) Ask students to write down, individually, five “I have faith in X” statements. Give them about two minutes to write the statements and then ask them to share their responses in pairs/ threes and do the following in a quick brainstorm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classify what kinds of things it is possible to have faith in Identify the reasons why people might have faith in such things (i.e. Why do they have faith in this? On what basis?) <p>Students may come up with the following range of responses: “I have faith in...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People/Human interactions: parents, community, teachers or authority figures Abstract aspects of life: love, higher power, religion, afterlife, meaning to their existence, moral beliefs <p>(10 mins) Ask students to write down another five statements, this time filling in the following “I know through my faith ...X... to be true.” Students may also rephrase to “I know through faith that is is true that ...” Note: the statements do not need to be topically related to the earlier task. An example statement might be “I know through my faith that the existence of heaven is true.”</p> <p>It should be noted that students will likely struggle with this exercise because this may be the first time that they are asked to express a belief in the structure of an explicit knowledge claim. Take note of each student’s mental struggle and the similarity of their statements in this exercise to the previous one. This will be useful in the debrief.</p> <p>Once complete students should pair and share on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you know this solely through faith? Do reason and emotion play a role in these knowledge claims? What kind of knowledge are these claims about? (i.e personal, collective truths, spiritual truths – let students come up with their own qualifiers) 	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge the difference between faith as an act of trust versus faith as a way of deriving knowledge Appreciate the multiple understandings of what faith is and the challenges in understanding how it works as a way of knowing Come up with a working definition of faith 		<p>The working definition will likely not get completed in one class. It is helpful to ask them to consider their own definition for homework.</p>

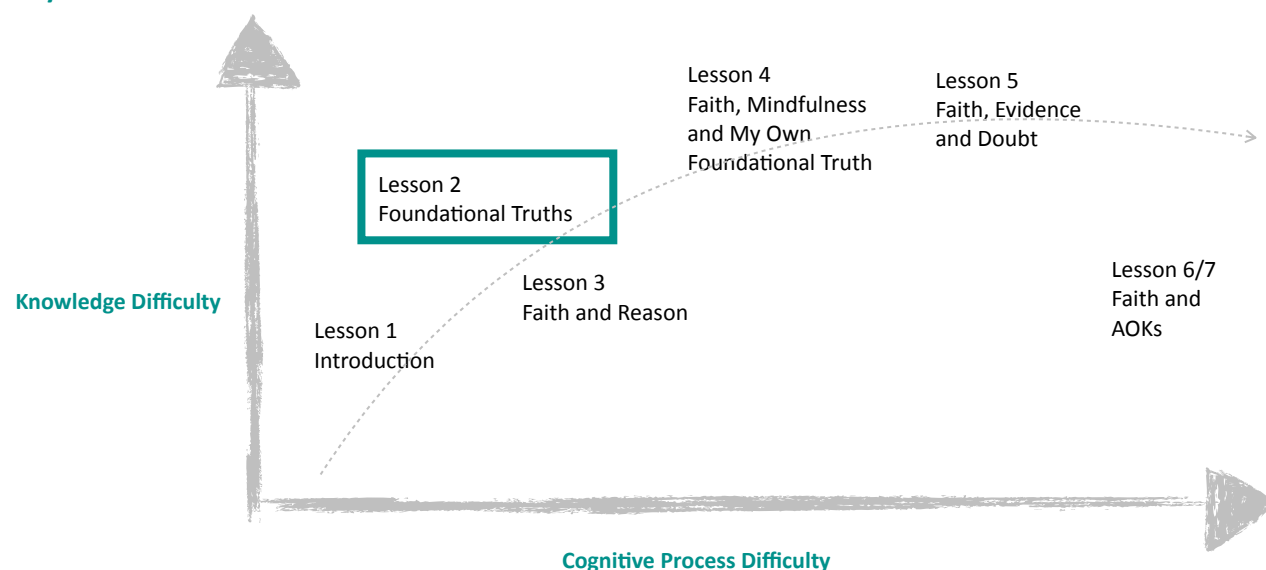
Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources	Homework
<p>(15 mins) Debrief the challenges the exercise posed, allow questions to be raised on what exactly faith is. To begin the debrief ask students which exercise they found more difficult and why. Ask them to compare the two statements and isolate the difference between them.</p> <p>As it is the introductory lesson, the discussion should flow as freely as possible, with students sharing their responses and opinions. If the discussion needs some facilitation try asking the following questions:</p> <p>What kind of knowledge claims arose from the first group of statements as opposed to the second group? When it comes to the second group of statements, do you only know X to be true based on faith or do other ways of knowing contribute?</p> <p>The following four points should be addressed by the discussion (lead discussion towards them where possible):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faith is not independent from reason, emotion and other ways of knowing (this point might take some teasing out) Knowledge from faith can be personal and shared Truth can be relative in the “I know X to be true” statements. Who is it true for? Is faith hope, belief, or trust? What is the strength of faith we are referring to? These all differ on a scale of varying degrees of certainty and conviction or confidence. (It could help to think of a spectrum of certainty, and as a class plot each along) <p>(10 mins) Point out that these themes will be revisited throughout the unit, but that it is necessary to come to a working definition of faith in order to move forward. Give them class time to come up with this, otherwise assign as homework.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge the difference between faith as an act of trust versus faith as a way of deriving knowledge Appreciate the multiple understandings of what faith is and the challenges in understanding how it works as a way of knowing Come up with a working definition of faith 		<p>The working definition will likely not get completed in one class. It is helpful to ask them to consider their own definition for homework.</p>

Lesson two: Foundational Truths

This lesson is crucial to the whole unit as it is the first explanation of the idea of a Foundational Truth. It is recommended that teachers take time to engage with the lesson plan and adjust the examples to their own context and comfort level. This lesson requires both teacher and student to step out of their conventional ways of thinking about faith and develop the ability to phrase statements of belief as explicit knowledge claims.

Where are we in the student journey?



Where are the learning outcomes?

Student will be able to:

- Understand the difference between religion and faith
- Understand the relationship between faith and foundational truths

Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources	Homework
<p>(10 mins) Start class by asking students to share their individual definitions (done for homework) with a partner, take some responses with the whole class and identify common features between each definition. For example, you might ask, "How many included phrase/word X in your definition?" Notice the similarities and differences and point out the relationship the differences have to the very personal and cultural nature of the term. Acknowledge that for TOK purposes we need to be on the same page and by the end of the class we'll propose a definition that we can work with.</p> <p>(15mins) For now, explain that you will build on the difference between 'having faith in' versus 'knowing through faith' by using religion as a case study - not because it is the only area of knowledge that works with faith, but because it is the one we associate most with faith. Raise the point that in our social use of the term faith it is still difficult to understand exactly how we use it to derive knowledge (as a WOK), rather than just to denote trust.</p> <p>Explain to students that they will be looking at 4 images that depict religious beliefs. As you show them the series of images, taken from their local context, have students follow along on their handout and prompt whole class discussion by asking the following two questions: What does the image tell you about...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...what one might have faith IN? ...what one might KNOW through faith? <p>(See powerpoint for example of images used in our context). Spend about 4-5 minutes per image, completing this exercise for 3 of the 4 images.</p> <p>It will likely be difficult to get a straight answer to each of these questions, and this is the point of the activity. The purpose is to illustrate just how difficult it is to separate the way of being (trust) aspect from the way of knowing aspect of faith. Save the last image for the next activity.</p> <p>(15 mins) After struggling to answer the two questions for each of the 3 images, students will likely ask something to the effect of, "Why does the difference between the two matter? If I have faith in X, and if I know through faith that X is true...am I not saying the same thing but in two different ways?" If this question is not raised, bring it up as you come to the last image. Note: It is recommended that the last image be related to an amulet or protection so as to better follow along with the lesson plan.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the difference between religion and faith Understand the relationship between faith and foundational truths 	<p>Handout to help follow along with images (made from PPT).</p> <p>4 images taken by teacher expressing different kinds of religious belief in the local context. Easy themes to include: death/afterlife, piety, protection.</p>	<p>Come up with their own foundational truth.</p> <p>Pre reading for next class (case study).</p>

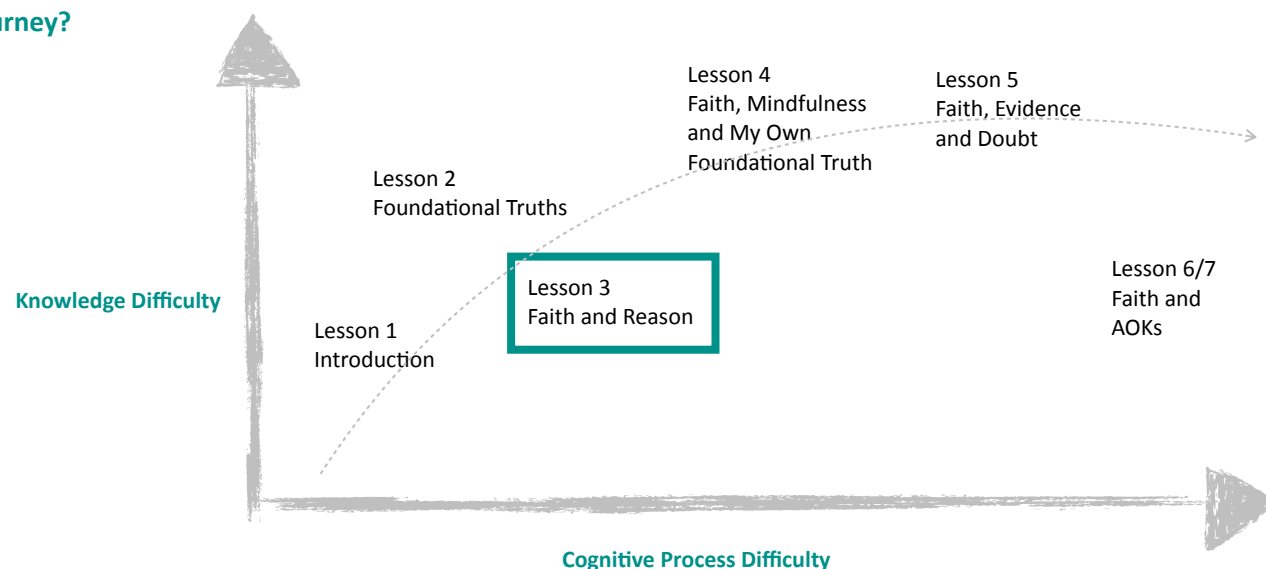
Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources	Homework
<p>At this point, remind them that in TOK we are concerned with assessing the certainty and truth of knowledge claims. If we take the two statements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have faith in X. 2. I know through faith that X is true. <p>And if we use the example of a last image whose depiction is of an amulet protecting humans from evil or harm. The claims could then look like:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have faith in a higher power that protects me from harm through this amulet. 2. I know through faith that I will be protected from harm by this amulet. <p>Then explain to them the following two points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimately, the two statements claim different degrees of certainty. Trusting in a higher power is different than knowing that you will be protected. The exercise of rephrasing belief statements in this manner forces you to allocate a certain degree of certainty to their belief. • Often in the case of religion, and at time other things, once you start phrasing things in the manner of statement two (i.e. I know through faith that X is true) we begin to see that we can go deeper with the exercise of rephrasing because the statement's truth. What becomes apparent is that our faith based statements are often based on a deeper belief or knowledge claim, which is also based on faith and without which none of the other beliefs would make sense. For example, the belief in protection by the amulet is ultimately linked to belief in a higher power that protects and as such could be rephrased to "I know through faith that there is a higher power who can protect me from harm." Without this knowledge claim, the other claims would not make sense. <p>Knowledge claims related to faith are often a web of inter-related beliefs bound together by a deeply held belief that must be true. For example, the many beliefs that are held about protection, an afterlife, goodness etc. are often linked together by a foundational claim in the belief in a higher power without which there could be no belief in anything else. (It is important to make sure this is understood before moving on.)</p> <p>(5 mins) Remind students that we sought to have a common definition of faith to work with, and that this understanding gained from our exploration of religion can give us a tentative definition. Propose to them the following: 'FAITH as a way of knowing: belief without empirical evidence in a fundamental truth, upon which other knowledge claims are based.' For homework, ask them to come up with a foundational truth that they believe is the basis of many of their other personal beliefs. They should also complete the reading for next class.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the difference between religion and faith • Understand the relationship between faith and foundational truths 	<p>Handout to help follow along with images (made from PPT).</p> <p>4 images taken by teacher expressing different kinds of religious belief in the local context. Easy themes to include: death/ afterlife, piety, protection.</p>	<p>Come up with their own foundational truth.</p> <p>Pre reading for next class (case study).</p>

Lesson three: Faith & Reason (Case Study)

Having now explored the notion of a Foundational Truth, this lesson gives students the opportunity to determine the Foundational Truth of an external argument or chain of knowledge claims. A famous philosophical proof such as Descartes' Ontological Proof or Aquinas' proof of the universe's existence is recommended to give students the skill of deconstructing someone else's set of knowledge claims before attempting the same exercise with their own personal beliefs.

Where are we in the student journey?



Where are the learning outcomes?

Student will be able to:

- Understand Foundationalism as a key theory of knowledge, with diverse perspectives over time
- Reflect upon the relationship reason, logic and proof have with faith
- Explore the complications associated with justifying knowledge gained through faith

Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources	Homework
<p>(10 mins) Remind students of the definition of faith proposed at the end of last class. Explain to students that this understanding of faith is linked to a key theory of knowledge called Foundationalism. The basic idea of Foundationalism is that there exists for a given set of knowledge claims, a foundational truth upon which all of them are based and without which they could not be taken to be true. (For more robust explanations Stanford and Princeton's online Encyclopaedia of Philosophy provide good detail.)</p> <p>In simpler terms, when assessing a group or chain of knowledge claims, they should be looking for the starting point. They should always ask themselves, is this the basis of the argument? If not, dig deeper. Maybe it's something that is unstated, or assumed. Point out the similarity here with axiomatic reasoning in maths.</p> <p>Explain to students that today's class will focus on teasing out these starting points or foundational truths. To do this, we will use a case study of a famous philosophical argument that consists of a set of knowledge claims, known through faith and justified through reason. Our task is to pull out the argument and find the foundational truth. (Students should have read the reading prior to class.)</p> <p>Note: As this lesson is based on a case study approach there are many famous philosophical justifications for faith based claims that would work well. Some suggestions include Descartes' famous Ontological Proof or Al Ghazali's Incoherence of the Philosophers. This particular lesson uses Thomas Aquinas's proof of the universe's existence with passages taken from the <i>The Philosophy Book</i> (New York: DK Publishing, 2011) due to its easy to read style.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand Foundationalism as a key theory of knowledge, with diverse perspectives over time • Reflect upon the relationship between reason, logic and proof with faith • Explore the complications associated with justifying knowledge gained through faith 	<p>Reading from <i>The Philosophy Book</i>, (New York: DK Publishing, 2011), pages 88-95 on Aquinas.</p> <p>**If using this reading, note that there are two separate (though related) arguments made. Focus on the one in relation to the universe's existence as opposed to the one on the human soul.</p>	<p>Revisit your foundational truths and answer the following questions in a typed one page response:</p> <p>Why is it something you know through faith?</p> <p>Is it a truth for which there is no empirical evidence?</p> <p>How do other knowledge claims build upon it?</p> <p>Can or should you justify it?</p>

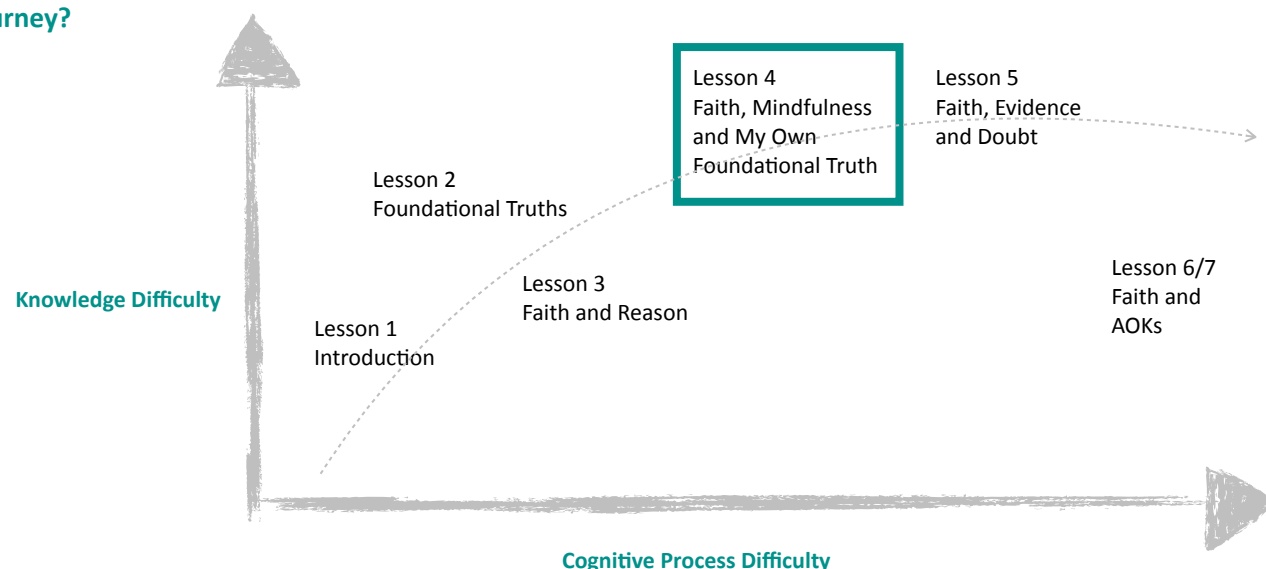
Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources	Homework
<p>(20 mins) Case study: Aquinas.</p> <p>This activity should be the focus of the lesson. Ask students in groups to lay out Thomas Aquinas's argument on <u>why the universe has always existed</u> (not on the human soul, Aquinas makes two arguments here). Ask students to respond to the following two questions in groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the foundational truth? Or the hidden premise? • How is reasoning used to link the foundational truth to the other knowledge claims? <p>Once groups have completed the task, allow them to present their description of his foundational truth on the whiteboard. Comment on similarities and differences that come up between each groups' response. It is interesting to note if all groups come to the same conclusion or not. If they don't what does this imply about the universality of Aquinas's reasoning? Is it as linear as axiomatic reasoning in Maths or is there perhaps more room for interpretation?</p> <p>(15 mins) Point out that Aquinas takes a lot of effort to explain through reason, something he knows through faith. There are some challenges to his argument, but overall it is an interesting effort to integrate two seemingly opposing ways of knowing. Some might say he is justifying a claim that he need not. Pose the following questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why might have Aquinas felt the need to justify his foundational truths in such a way? • To what extent do knowledge claims based on faith need justification? <p>(5 mins) Introduce homework task on Foundational Truths.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand Foundationalism as a key theory of knowledge, with diverse perspectives over time • Reflect upon the relationship between reason, logic and proof with faith • Explore the complications associated with justifying knowledge gained through faith 	<p>Reading from The Philosophy Book, (New York: DK Publishing, 2011), pages 88-95 on Aquinas.</p> <p>**If using this reading, note that there are two separate (though related) arguments made. Focus on the one in relation to the universe's existence as opposed to the one on the human soul.</p>	<p>Revisit your foundational truths and answer the following questions in a typed one page response:</p> <p>Why is it something you know through faith?</p> <p>Is it a truth for which there is no empirical evidence?</p> <p>How do other knowledge claims build upon it?</p> <p>Can or should you justify it?</p>

Lesson four: Faith, Mindfulness & My Foundational Truth

By this lesson students should have completed a written articulation of their Foundational Truth and the ways in which it relates to other knowledge claims. After the last lesson they should have begun to question whether or not they justify their truth and to what extent faith based claims require such justification, particularly through the use of reason. Given the steep upwards climb in difficulty of the last three lessons, this lesson is meant to provide an opportunity for reflection through mindfulness techniques. Teachers are encouraged to read about mindfulness in education and carefully consider the tone with which they begin the lesson.

Where are we in the student journey?



Where are the learning outcomes?

Student will be able to:

- Consider the ways in which our thinking habits work, understand the importance of stilling the mind and practice concentrating on thoughts without distraction (mindfulness in thinking)
- Reflect on their foundational truths and consider if what they wrote in their reflection is in fact the knowledge claim at the base of their other personal beliefs

Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources
<p>(2-3 mins) Discuss homework assignment, acknowledge the challenge of the task. Mention this class is a bit of a breather from the heavily intellectual discussion of the last few classes. Now they have a chance to reflect, contemplate, meditate on what we have covered so far.</p> <p>(5 mins) Ask them to leave bags, taking only their notebook and a pen. Ask them to create a single file line and silently follow the teacher. Seriousness and quiet is important for this exercise and sets the right tone for their reflection. The purpose here is to get them in the space of retreating inward, ask them to walk while concentrating on the way their feet fall upon the ground - noticing the way they walk is a way of concentrating their mental attention.</p> <p>(10 mins) Upon arrival in an open space (to signal a break from the space of the class room), gather them together and mention that we have had a confusing, difficult but rewarding discussion of faith up till now. Perhaps amidst all this confusion we are in need of some stillness and quiet to really reflect upon our Foundational Truth and whether we've really figured out what it might be.</p> <p>Introduce that although we will be reflecting this class, we will be doing so mindfully. It would help to explain the idea that our mind, according to certain philosophies, is like a monkey brain – with ideas and thoughts swinging around. Through concentration and stillness we can learn the skill of discernment, of picking apart the distracting thoughts from the ones of substance. Today we are going to practice that.</p> <p>Ask them to attempt to concentrate on their foundational truth. In thinking about it, their mind will likely wander as it 'thinks freely' – this is okay, but they need to try to develop this skill of concentration. They should initially focus on <u>noticing</u> when they start going off course, because often we don't even notice this.</p> <p>Lastly, ask them to jot down their thoughts about their foundational truth, as they contemplate upon whether or not it truly is the foundation for them.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the ways in which our thinking habits work, understand the importance of stilling the mind and practice concentrating on thoughts without distraction (mindfulness in thinking) Reflect on their foundational truths 	<p>This lesson requires the teacher to have read about mindfulness in teaching and learning.</p> <p>Recommended readings list:</p> <p>Katherine Weare, "Evidence for the impact of mindfulness on children and young people" published in association with Exeter University and the Mindfulness In Schools Project.</p> <p>Meiklejohn, John, et al., "Integrating Mindfulness Training into K-12 Education: Fostering the Resilience of Teachers and Students" published in the Springer Science and Business Media Journal.</p>

Lesson Plans

(20 mins) Silent contemplation – wherever they choose in an area where they can be seen by the teacher. 2 minutes before the end of time, begin to gather them back.

(10 mins) Form a close circle, provide space to first share experiences and their ideas. In speaking about experience, it is worth sharing that the skill of concentrated contemplation is valued in all areas of knowledge, careers and aspects of life. In discussing ideas, on the spot facilitation is required as the quality of discussion is dependent on what comes out of their ‘free thinking.’

At the end, remind them to jot down what they thought about if they haven’t done so already.

Student will be able to:

- Consider the ways in which our thinking habits work, understand the importance of stilling the mind and practice concentrating on thoughts without distraction (mindfulness in thinking)
- Reflect on their foundational truths

This lesson requires the teacher to have read about mindfulness in teaching and learning.

Recommended readings list:

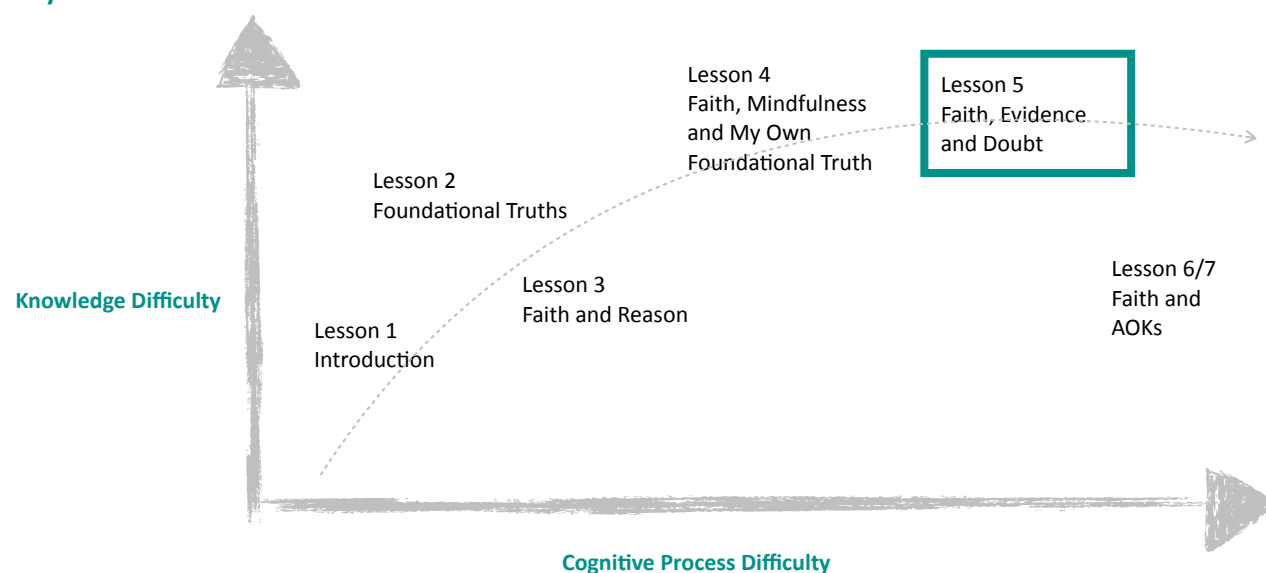
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Meiklejohn, John, et al., “Integrating Mindfulness Training into K-12 Education: Fostering the Resilience of Teachers and Students” published in the Springer Science and Business Media Journal.

Lesson five: Faith, Evidence & Doubt

This focus of this lesson is to allow students to investigate and evaluate the strength of the reasons and evidence upon which they choose to believe in or accept their Foundational Truth as true.

Where are we in the student journey?



Where are the learning outcomes?

Student will be able to:

- Appreciate that our reasons for believing in a foundational truth are a mix of intellectual, emotional and instinctive/intuitive drives
- Acknowledge limitations of each reason
- Understand the role of doubt and evidence in the strength of faith

Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources
<p>(5 mins) Explain to students that having acknowledged what our Foundational truths are, reflected upon them, analysed if and how we justify them and accepted that a Foundational Truth can change as you keep digging deeper... it is now time to ask ourselves the underlying question: Why do we choose to believe in them? What are our reasons for accepting a given knowledge claim as our Foundational Truth?</p> <p>Point students towards the Venn Diagram which leads into explanation of our various reasons for believing our fundamental truths. Explain briefly the different groups of reasons (Intellectual, Emotional and Instinctive/Intuitive). These three groups have been chosen to reflect the ways of knowing studied so far (reason, emotion and intuition).</p> <p>(2 min) On Venn Diagram handout, ask students to quickly make a star of where they think they fall, in terms of what combination of reasons do they have for believing in their truth. Students can be prompted by asking, do you feel you are currently based more on the emotional side? Or perhaps your reasons are primarily a mix of reason and emotion. It helps here for the teacher to give a personal perspective to illustrate. It is also worth mentioning to students that we hope after this process you appreciate the role played by reason - and that reasoning does not mean logic alone but includes inductive reasoning based on prior experience.</p> <p>(10 mins) Sort them into groups based on the 3 reasons (it is perhaps easiest to have the classroom already arranged into 3 groups). Using the standard example of a “I believe that heaven exists” as a Foundational Truth, ask them to work together in their groups to explain this belief based on the reason they are given (emotional, intellectual, instinctive/intuitive). In their groups they should answer the following question:</p> <p>What makes an explanation based on this reason (the reason they have been assigned) plausible?</p> <p>Ask them to jot down their response on the handout, and be prepared to share with the class.</p> <p>Note: Sharing of this activity can be done now or at the end of the second activity.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate that our reasons for believing in a foundational truth are a mix of intellectual, emotional and instinctive/intuitive drives • Acknowledge the limitations of each reason • Understand the role of doubt and evidence in the strength of faith 	<p>Handout</p>

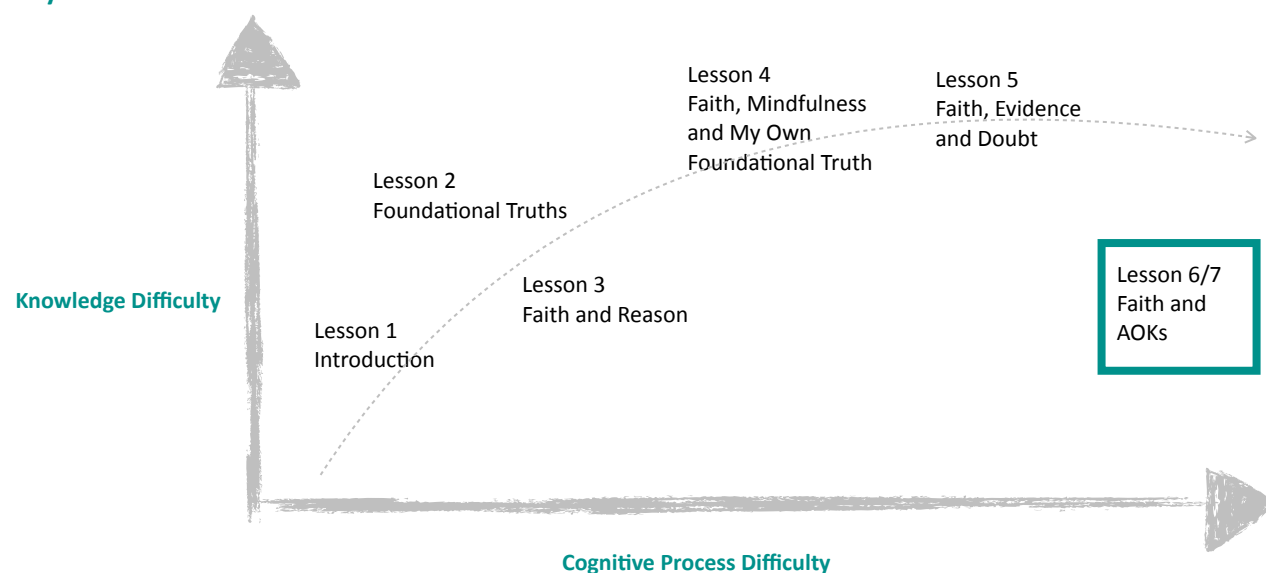
Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources
<p>Potential responses could include the following:</p> <p>Intellectual – the strength of logic, reasoning and philosophical arguments</p> <p>Emotional – trust placed in authorities who teach us what we believe to be true (that trust might be warranted and not necessarily taken for granted), emotions provide meaning to life, if it makes you happy does it matter if it's true?</p> <p>Instinctive/intuitive – involves subconscious reasoning based on prior experience</p> <p>(10 mins) Now, each group should answer a question that challenges the plausibility of their 'reason'. The questions are as follows:</p> <p>Intellectual – What are the limits of language and evidence?</p> <p>Emotional – Can you apply the scientific method to beliefs?</p> <p>Instinctive/intuitive – What happens when we have evidence that changes our beliefs?</p> <p>(15 mins) Share responses so that all students have points to take away.</p> <p>Highlight at the end of discussion that confronting your reasons for believing is a part of the process introspection. These reasons, just like your Foundational Truth, may change over time.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate that our reasons for believing in a foundational truth are a mix of intellectual, emotional and instinctive/intuitive drives • Acknowledge the limitations of each reason • Understand the role of doubt and evidence in the strength of faith 	<p>Handout</p>

Lesson six: *DEBATE - Faith & AOK (2 lessons)*

At the end of the unit, students now have the opportunity to articulate all that they have learnt, create their own arguments and knowledge questions, and evaluate the role of faith in other areas of knowledge beyond ethics and religion.

Where are we in the student journey?



Where are the learning outcomes?

Student will be able to:

- Appreciate the relationship of doubt to faith
- Understand the ways in which faith could apply to Science, Maths or Arts
- Articulate understanding of faith and fundamental truths explored throughout the unit

Lesson Plans

Learning Activities	Outcomes	Resources
<p>First class:</p> <p>(Before class) It is recommend to pre arrange teams for the debate, mixing students according to comfort level with the topic and to allow for new individuals to work together. Strong debaters or public speakers should be distributed evenly between the two teams. It is also useful to have students seated in the teams they have been arranged in for the debate, to save shuffling time. It is not necessary to indicate that a debate will take place, as the debate itself will take place in the second lesson.</p> <p>(10 mins) Revisit the last class and reflect upon key learning from the Venn Diagram handout. Stress that where you placed yourself will change, just as your Foundational Truth may change. The factors upon which you base the strength of your faith (or how tightly you hold on to that Foundational Truth) will change as you evolve as a person. Also comment on how the intellectual dimension seemed the hardest to find reasons for; it often makes you question (or doubt) your Foundational Truth and therefore doesn't seem like a solid grounding for this Truth.</p> <p>(2 mins) Remark that although it is tough, we should not shy away from the intellectual approach... this is the greatest life skill. To give us more perspective we will look at a TED talk on the subject of doubt and its place in strengthening faith.</p> <p>(15 mins) Show Lesley Hazelton clip.</p> <p>(5 mins) Debrief the clip. In debriefing ask for her main point. Unpack key terms in the video (agnostic, secular, atheist, doubt, faith, awe). Use awe as a way to explain that her definition of faith could actually include things that go beyond simply religion.</p> <p>Segway to debate: in the same way that she broadens the definition of faith, we now want to broaden the way we have looked at faith and see what its applications can be beyond our personal truths, but in terms of areas of knowledge.</p>	<p>Student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate the relationship of doubt to faith • Understand the ways in which faith could apply to Science, Maths or Arts • Articulate understanding of faith and fundamental truths explored throughout the unit 	<p>TED Talk by Lesley Hazelton, The Doubt Essential to Faith http://www.ted.com/talks/lesley_hazelton_the_doubt_essential_to_faith</p>

Lesson Plans

(5 mins) Introduce the statement to be debated: “Faith as a way of knowing is reliable only when used in Ethics/Religious Areas of Knowledge” ; breakdown some possible connections students can make to the areas of knowledge covered so far. Maths and Natural Science are important areas to include. Stress that points should be backed up by examples.

(10-15 mins) Work time.

Second class:

It is useful to have two rows of desks arranged at opposite ends of the room facing one another.

(15 mins) Prep time.

(30 mins) Debate

Note: Possible structure for debate

Opening Remarks (2 mins) – For

Opening Remarks (2 mins) – Against

Crossfire – Free questioning of the other side based on their opening remarks and any other questions that need to be raised. Each student must speak once before a student can make a second comment. Opening/Closing speakers may not participate - to encourage more participation.

Closing Remarks (2 mins) – For

Closing Remarks (2 mins) – Against

(5 mins) Closing reflection on the unit addressing changes in viewpoints and challenges faced along the way.

Student will be able to:

- Appreciate the relationship of doubt to faith
- Understand the ways in which faith could apply to Science, Maths or Arts
- Articulate understanding of faith and fundamental truths explored throughout the unit

TED Talk by Lesley Hazelton, The Doubt Essential to Faith
http://www.ted.com/talks/lesley_hazelton_the_doubt_essential_to_faith

Handouts - Lesson 2



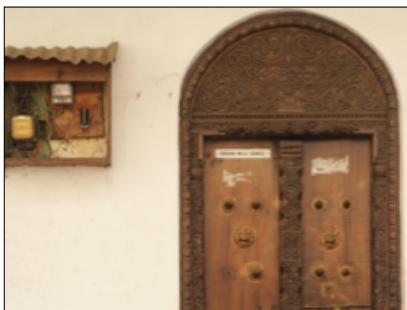
In the context of religion and religious belief, what does this image tell us about:

- a) what one might have faith in
- b) what one might KNOW through faith



In the context of religion and religious belief, what does this image tell us about:

- a) what one might have faith in
- b) what one might KNOW through faith



In the context of religion and religious belief, what does this image tell us about:

- a) what one might have faith in
- b) what one might KNOW through faith

Handouts - Lesson 2



In the context of religion and religious belief, what does this image tell us about:

- a) what one might have faith in
- b) what one might KNOW through faith



In the context of religion and religious belief, what does this image tell us about:

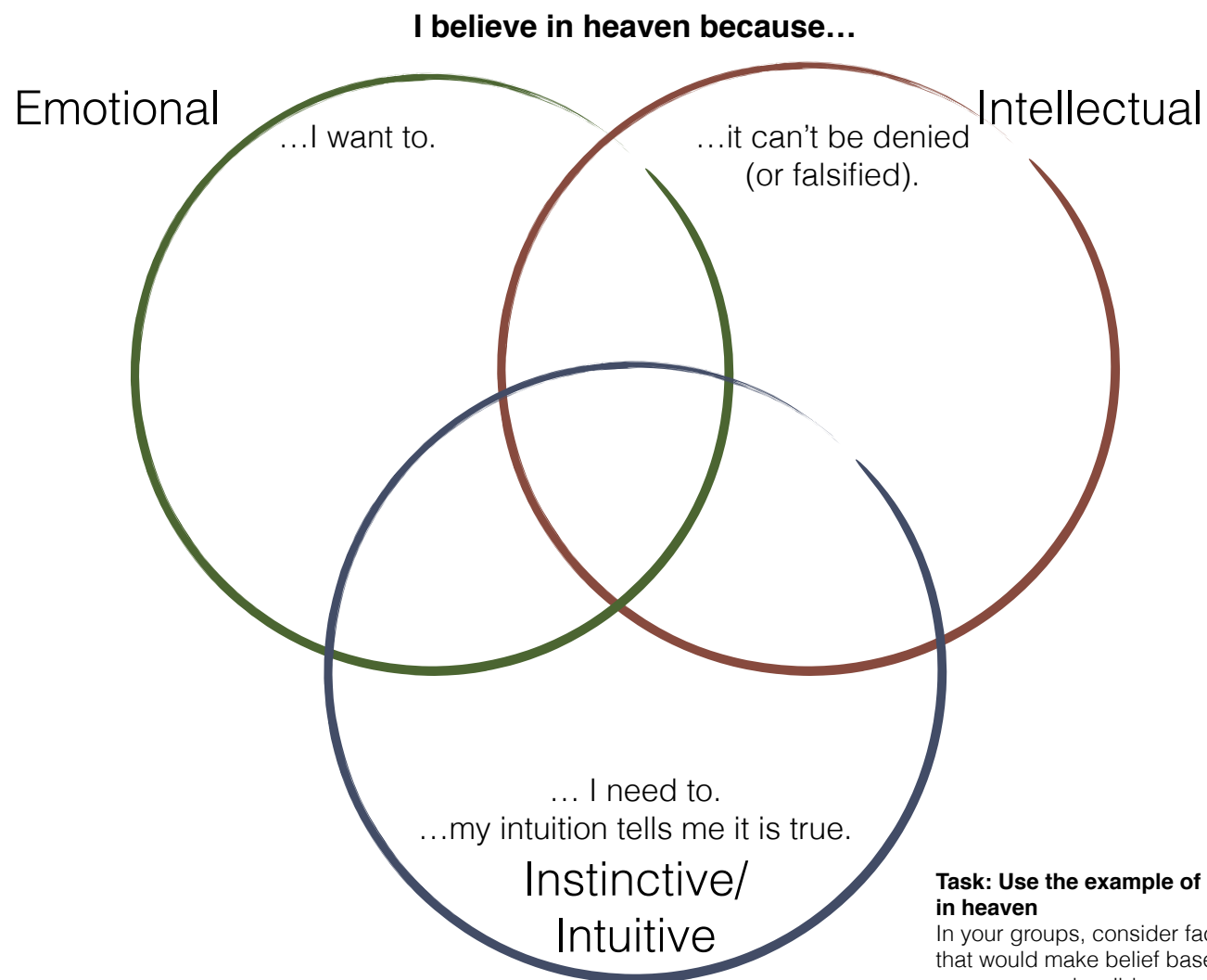
- a) what one might have faith in
- c) what one might KNOW through faith



In the context of religion and religious belief, what does this image tell us about:

- a) what one might have faith in
- b) what one might KNOW through faith

Handouts - Lesson 5



Task: Use the example of belief in heaven

In your groups, consider factors that would make belief based on your reason plausible.

Discussion Questions to Challenge your reason:

1. Can you apply the scientific method to this belief?
(*Emotional*)

2. What are the limits of evidence? (*Intellectual*)

3. What happens when we have evidence that challenges our beliefs? (*Instinctive/Intuitive*)

Formative Assessment - Samples of Student Work

What is a foundational truth upon which you have built your world or your way of life? Why is it something you can only know through faith? How do some of your other beliefs or knowledge claims build upon it?

Every idea, thought or principle is based on a certain truth. My life is governed by a number of principles which I believe I cannot do without. They give me a sense of direction and a purpose. These are my foundational truths. Foundational truth as we have come to describe it in class is a belief on which other claims are based.

My fundamental truth therefore is the belief of the existence of a life after death. I believe that when I die, I get a second life. This is a second chance for me to live the life I deserve. As a result if in my first life I was selfless, caring, and constantly working towards making others' lives better, then my second life would most definitely be full of joy, peace, and success. However if in my first life I was rude, selfish, a trouble maker and a sadist then my second life would be full of misery and failure. The quality of my second life therefore comes as a result of how I lived my first life.

For this reason every day of my life I strive to live a meaningful life. A life where, I keep the needs of others before myself and try as much as I can to refrain from judging them. Each and every moment I appreciate the people and the things around me. I recognise others' strengths and praise them. I work with others to improve them and to improve myself. I strive to be understanding; I strive to be caring-taking time to say please and thank you to the chefs and the cleaners. Taking time to say good morning to the *askaris* every morning as I pass them by and thanking them for helping me carry my luggage up my room. Visiting the nurses once in a while to keep them company. Donating clothes and toys to children in orphanages and in church. Working with the wema centre choir during my summer-sacrificing my holiday to teaching them on how to sing not in unity and how to be professionals. Then watching them jump around in joy after emerging first place and winning a trophy during the national music festivals held in nakuru.

I aspire to dedicate my life to making others smile. I constantly draw my happiness in the joy and satisfaction of others. When others succeed, I celebrate with them and when they fail, I motivate them to keep trying. I try live my life in such a way that people are able to look up to me. Being someone's role model means that my way of life as well as my personality is pleasing to them hence I endeavor to be obedient to my elders although most of the times it seems almost impossible.

It seems crazy right? I mean why would someone believe in life after death? But over the years I have discovered many more claims that have converged with this

fundamental truth. Hence strengthening it. Of course there is no evidence suggesting the existence of a life after death for when one is dead they simply loose life-that cannot be regained. But it is through this that I have also come to believe that each one of us has a soul that does not die even when our bodies do. The living soul separates from the body when one is dead. It is this soul that reincarnates in the second life. Our soul I believe contains our conscience-the voice in our head that tells us what to do.

Additionally even as there is life after death, our souls go on living in places they deserve. Therefore if I have fulfilled the criteria of a good person then I get to live in a place separate from one that hasn't. Hence the belief of the existence of heaven and hell. Heaven- being a paradise that is beautiful and full of joy-housing the good souls. Hell being an unpleasant place full of trouble that hosts the bad souls. I want to believe that what I live through right now is not the only thing life has to offer and that there is a second life that treats everyone fairly and practices justice. Therefore it is only on faith that I base these claims as well as my foundational truth.

Every once in a while we are faced with a choice. One we have come to believe is between good or evil. Every day of my life I aspire to make the right choice-in every area of my life. I would like to live a life where others would look up to and aspire to have. My foundational truth directs me towards accomplishing this. This truth can definitely only be known through faith. The belief that my good deeds will not go to waste. If not in this life then in the second life, my good deeds will conjure happiness. I strongly believe that there will be a place where I will not only be the one making others smile but someone will be there to make me smile as well. A place where every good deed I have done is reciprocated. This belief of another life is the force that drives me each and every day to help better other people's life.

It encourages me to go on. As one's actions define them, I find that over time my good deeds start defining and refining my character. From my constant good deeds that beget my behavior, my character is built from which defines me. From this fundamental truth, I find a purpose for my life and a force that pushes me to fulfill this purpose. From the simple fundamental truth in life after death, I have shaped my life into one suited for a comfortable second life-I hope. My faith in my fundamental truth has shaped my purpose in life and has given me something to live for.

Formative Assessment - Samples of Student Work

Theory of Knowledge, Homework

Theory of knowledge – Faith as a way of knowing

Write about a foundational truth upon which you have built your world, or your way of life. Is this a metaphysical truth? (Or can it be known through empirical evidence?) Is it something you can only know through faith, if so why? How do some of your beliefs or knowledge claims build upon it?

Extension Question: Do you feel it can or should be justified?

Fundamental Truth

God does what is best for us, teaching us especially at times when we are most hurt from the means by which he achieves this.

I have mainly derived this belief through prayer, and by no other means in life. It offered me deep contemplation where I could self-evaluate my actions. My fundamental truth that I live by cannot be proven and is metaphysical. It can however, be proven false by **reason**, but only to those who are weak enough to accept it through fear (**emotion**).

Example Experiences that help me understand this issue better

The other day, I was checking somebody's Snapchat, completely not intending to look at their chatlist nor their contacts. I wanted to play a joke by taking a picture of another person and sending it to someone whom I was certain was in their contact list. The person whose picture I took grimly asked why I had done such an act of *defiance*, such a breach of *trust* and completely revoked any opposition to this claim that I had made – that there was no internet so there couldn't have been any pictures coming in, and that I had no intention, that it was beyond, my principles to go into somebody's personal contents. Expectedly, he did not believe me. Through this, I was taught (by means of an impulse generated by God), to never go into another's personal files/ belongings else I should lose their trust and any thread of dignity, and also because I have many a time self-claimed that I am not a man to do such a thing. This act proves that I am not completely, nor always the person who I want to be, that there are flaws that I should try to work on, and reminds me that there is always somebody watching.

We can build from my fundamental truth, that in life, humans will always have an innate need to be better than those around us, however much we might even genuinely defy such a statement. This is my thought process:

1. God wants us to lead the most happy, meaningful life.
2. A happy and meaningful life is where you achieve your goals and aspirations, through merit.
3. Therefore, God wants us to be the best in order for us to be 'most' happy.

Looking at the human language, the very existence of, use of the term, and frequent use of the word, 'competition' shows that there is apparent need for us to be the best or to strive towards this ultimate goal. Reflecting, when having done a test, most wish to know their ranking in the class and their performance in comparison to others, particularly selected ones. Often, in class, I am a very active student, contributing to class discussions and enthusiastically responding, with detail, answers to questions and challenging our pre-conceived ideas (even at the lunch/dinner table). However, when I might not do as well I could have, people often jeer at me (on the other hand, this may be a natural impulse to see others jeer at you, because you are upset that you didn't do well, perhaps an instance where emotions blind us). People often tend to mock me for giving the impression that I am smart, but in reality am not. This was particularly the case in the Economics class, where I, embarrassedly, scored a 6/20 in one test of ours. It taught me that I cannot always expect to do well, and there are moments where the worst may result. In addition, this spurred a drive to do well in the exam, which I believe I did particularly well in. Despite this, in class, I have now resorted to remaining quiet and resist the zeal in discussions for fear of being mocked in front of the class. This has not been helpful at all. It has therefore, taught me that I cannot give up because of one bad moment and that embarrassment in front of the class from a bad grade or misinterpreted comment is better than living with misconceptions not cleared in our minds. It helps me strive for better and gives me drive. However, from these recurring experiences, it shows that the classroom is very

Theory of Knowledge, Homework

attentive to the highest performer in the class. I know this because I can 'see' people's expression when they happen to gain awareness of my grade, or even how I feel when another person becomes the highest in the class. I view this as a characteristic that God has given us. In his hope for us to lead meaningful, happy lives, we are inherently driven to achieve the best because, arguably, there is where most happiness lies. On the other hand, one may easily tackle this notion with **reason**, that many people who are not the best in their field, or in their class, are in fact, happy and content. Bearing this in mind, my emotions tend to refuse to believe this, thinking that happiness lies at the 'best'.

I am often mocked. People often look for the tiniest of details in my conduct that they may mock, perhaps out of jealousy, although I hide my perception of these actions and the shame that builds. The emotional trauma I went through in my previous IGCSE year was almost unbearable, with my best friend also joining those mocking me. It was even worse to see that they would do so on a regular basis. I therefore had to fight for friendships which would be seen as cowardice. Therefore, my goal was bent on simply sought to prove them wrong. To prove that I was not simply a hairy, not-so-good-at-sports person and that my mind was my most powerful tool. I kept to myself more, and found out more about my comforts, strengths, areas in need of improvement, got a better chance to contemplate my actions and ambitions, to pray without worry stirring in my head, etc. These, I believe, were critical in my final IGCSE results. God showed me the reality of my supposed friends, and the best way to achieve was I longed for all my life through my exams. It has also instilled and inspired a love for learning and discussion. On the other hand, by avoidance of participation in activities in class such as parties, or sport, lead to too much solitude, and often loneliness. In this respect, God taught me the importance of balance.

There are many conflicts that go along with this argument. To begin with, one might propose that seeing that most things have an unexplained effect from preceding events, we choose not to see it as coincidence or that we stretching the learning points too much to include God, simply because that is the only thing we can fill the 'gap' with. Furthermore, taking into account the perspective of God wishing happiness for us, my prank of sending a silly picture from Snapchat, the avoidance of my classmates and sport in my previous school, and the drive to excel in academics only to prove others wrong, were the opportunity cost of something better, not the best, and that the cost may have also brought me happiness and meaning, and therefore God does not entirely wish the best for us. But, through faith, I firmly believe that even in the worst situations, God has a reason for doing what he has done and that being transcendent, beyond comprehension, we cannot fully understand these reasons, nor will we ever.

The difficulty stems from my thought process:

1. God wants us to lead the most happy, meaningful life.
2. A happy and meaningful life is where you achieve your goals and aspirations, through merit.
3. Therefore, God wants us to be the best in order for us to be 'most' happy.

There does not seem to be much connection with the term 'best' and its relationship between happy and meaningful. Being taught from parents and in religious classes using these very terms, there is confusion as to what the meaning of happy and meaningful is. Perhaps it is my own construction of these terms that lead to me believing that the 'best' was what is good. On the other hand, many others can be seen quite happy without achieving the best, even when not to satisfactory levels. It comes to show that our surroundings mould our thoughts profoundly, making the *universality of my truth* brought in to question. Sufis, for instance, may be regarded as happy and leading a meaningful life, but so would (arguably) Hitler had he won the Second World War!

Also, the idea of 'best' is not directly linked to merit in (2) where merit is discussed. This may further introduce the limitation of language and humans' ignorance to these matters, further proving that language is in fact, inherent, although not completely understood.

Although I may notice the complications of my thought process and recognize its flaws, my truth remains unaltered, because of my emotions which cannot be tested, and therefore, not proven. My incorporation of emotion as a way of knowing has led me to believe this truth.