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**Outline Guide for T.O.K. Oral Presentation**

***INTRODUCTION: (Nathan)***

Hello our names are Nathan Ha, Kyra Young and Teresa Mason. Here is a brief overview of our presentation that is going to be focused on society’s standards. Our main knowledge question will consist of reason, and our linking questions will be based on Natural Sciences, Art and Perception. We will discuss the main knowledge question first, and then answer the three linking questions which will further develop the final response at the end. The issue that recently caught our attention

***Our real life situation that got us thinking about our main Knowledge Question is: (Teresa)***

Occurred sometime in the year of 2012, when a girl from Russia named Valeria Lukyanova became known as the Human Barbie. In society, Barbie is seen as an icon that symbolizes perfection. Once Valeria had attempted to duplicate Barbie’s image, she was immediately judged because of the way she looked. Since her transformation, society began to look down upon her despite the fact that she resembled what was considered to be perfect. We’ve chosen this real-life situation when we were in the library discussing incidents about when society judges people due to their physical appearances.

***OUR MAIN KNOWLEDGE QUESTION IS: (Teresa)***

What determines the standards of being “normal” or “accepted” by society?

***BODY: (Kyra, Nathan, Teresa)***

***MAIN KNOWLEDGE QUESTION:***

What determines the standards of being “normal” or “accepted” by society?

***Claims/ Contrasting Claims/ Different Perspectives on First Secondary Knowledge Question***: (1. Nathan, 2. Kyra)

1. Monkey see, monkey do. If someone does something, we are more likely to do it too.
2. Without lateral thinking our society wouldn’t be able to evolve.

***How is each Claim/Contrasting Claim/ Different Perspective Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?***

1. Logical Fallacies: “Fallacies may occur by accident, or be used by people deliberately to persuade others of the dubious truth of what they are saying”. (theoryofknowledge.net)

According to the T.O.K textbook people may use fallacies to persuade others for their own benefits.

***Own Words:***

If majority of the population within a society does something, then we are more likely to do it as well.

Smoking is a prime example of how society may lure us into doing something that’s harmful and toxic to our bodies. With the information provided by lung.org, we can see that in 1865 when cigarettes were first introduced to millions of people, smoking rates began to increase year after year. This had a lot to do with the nicotine in the cigarettes because throughout time people became addicted. People that were smoking the cigarettes didn’t know about the addictive substance in the cigarettes before they began to smoke it.

Therefore in the smoking scenario, the nicotine acted as a fallacy which continued to make people crave the cigarettes even though it was bad for them. This story connects to our real-life situation because society advertised Barbie as a way to ensure that people would buy their products which would eventually increase their sale profits. This claim will help us decide what factors determine the standards of normality because through smoking we get a better understanding of how people think in terms of what’s normal and what’s accepted.

1. **Lateral Thinking**: “Lateral thinking complements traditional, ‘vertical’ logic…describes the difference between the two ways of thinking…since we cannot rely on traditional logic to give us new ideas”(136).

In the T.O.K textbook lateral thinking is described as thinking outside the box.

***Own Words:***

If society doesn’t think outside the box then our world would be a paradigm, which is something in a constant pattern.

Thomas Edison was a self-educated American inventor who created the lightbulb in 1879. He had an extremely challenging life growing up as his teachers constantly told him that he was too stupid to learn anything. Later on when he was older he had two jobs that he was fired from because his bosses said he was being unproductive. However, it fueled his ambition to invent the lightbulb. This was a trial and error process that took him over a thousand attempts to succeed.

Therefore, if Thomas Edison listened to all of the negative comments he wouldn’t be able to create the lightbulb because it would have caused him to think inside the box. Lateral thinking allowed him to think outside the box. This story connects to our real-life situation because Valeria also thought outside of the box when she completely transformed her image. This claim will help us view a wider range of aspects when taking into consideration which factors determine the standards of being “normal” or “accepted” by society.

***Linking Question: (Teresa)***

How is art used by society to persuade people to follow society’s standards of normal?

***Claims/Contrasting Claims/Different Perspectives on First Secondary Knowledge Question:***

1. Art can be used by society for educational purposes.
2. Art can be seen as a form of manipulation.

***How is each Claim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?***

1. Art as education (T.O.K Connection): "…The arts have a moral and educative role... art challenges us to question our assumptions by giving us a different perspective on things... [Like] how we ought to see things... think about things or live our lives" (348).

In the T.O.K textbook it states that art can serve as an educational purpose.

***Own Words:***

Art is meant to broaden people's perspectives by introducing them to a wider range of aspects.

It can also help people develop into their own person so that they have their own opinions. For example, I asked four kids around the ages of 11-14 to draw me a sad picture. I made sure that the kids were in separate rooms, so that they wouldn't be able see anyone else's picture and be influenced by what others were drawing. I did this so that the pictures fully represented the kid’s perspectives about sadness. Once the kids were done drawing the pictures, I found that even though the kids were given the same task, which was to draw a sad picture, they all drew it in different forms. For example, subject one added words to the picture while the other subjects did not. Also while looking at the results, I found that subject one, two and three drew their sad pictures as a scenario while subject four did not because they see sadness as a symbolic figure. Another example of how art can be used as a way to broaden people’s perspective is through abstract art. I showed the same group of kids this picture, and asked them what they see. Subject one said she sees a broken glass. Subject two said he sees a big shoe with puppies on them. Subject three said she sees a pyramid with lighting coming out of it. And finally, subject four said he sees a hallway with people and a tree. This may suggest that people see many different things in a simple picture made up of just shapes.

Therefore, through art like this, people are able to develop their own perspectives. This claim and the stories, connect to this first linking question because if we are more educated through art it allows us to be more cautious when society tries to persuade us to follow their standards of what’s normal. It also allows us the opportunity to consider art as a factor that determines the standards of what’s normal when responding to our main knowledge question.

1. Intentions of the artist(T.O.K Connection): "If something is to count as a work of art, then it should not be made with a practical end in mind, but simply with the intention of pleasing or provoking people"(331).

Intentions of the artist, in the T.O.K textbook, states that if something is to be considered art it must be made with the intention of pleasing or provoking people.

***Own Words:***

Society uses art to persuade others into doing something by making it a priority.

For example, propaganda is a form of art that publicizes many biased views in a persuasive way to make other people believe or do something. For instance, these pictures persuade people into joining the U.S army. During the war, this form of art was seen as the most effective way to make people join the army. Society often portrays people in the army as real men, meaning if you weren't in the army or wasn’t in any relation to the army, you weren't considered a real man. This factor alone is enough to persuade people to join the army because they felt like they needed to prove their self-worth and prove that they were cable of being a man. If they declined the opportunity to join the army, they would be looked down upon by those within the social order, because society made joining the war a priority instead of an option due to the usage of propaganda.

Therefore, through art like this, society has the opportunity to manipulate others into doing things that they may not want to do. This claim, and the story, connects to this first linking question because we develop a better understanding of the ways society may manipulate us with the usage of various art forms like propaganda. Knowing this, also allows us to decode factors that determine society’s standards when responding to our main knowledge question.

***What are examples that can illustrate the claims and different perspectives you discuss for this secondary knowledge question?***

\*included in with the ‘Own Words’

***How does learning about this secondary knowledge question help contribute to your understanding of the main knowledge question and a possible response to it?***

By understanding how society may use art as a form of education and manipulation, we are able to grasp a better understanding of what determines society's standards of normality as they often advertise their standards visually through works of art.

***How is this secondary knowledge question connected to your real life situation?***

This secondary knowledge question connects to our real life situation because Valeria was persuaded to change her image through the influences of art, which in this case is Barbie.

***Linking Question: (Nathan)***

How is natural sciences used to prove what is sexually “normal”?

***Claims/Contrasting Claims/Different Perspectives on First Secondary Knowledge Question:***

1. Natural Sciences can help verify our observations with the use of inductivism.

2. Natural Sciences can cause us to make generalizations.

***How is each Claim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?***

1. Inductivism (T.O.K Connection): “Traditional picture of the scientific method…science consists of five key steps…1.observation 2.hypothesis 3.experiment 4.law 5.theory” (226).

Inductivism from the T.O.K textbook, allows us to have a structure to verify our observations.

***Own Words:***

We are able to go through a process that determines the validity of our observations.

Inductivism is one of the common scientific methods which consists of observation, hypothesis, experimentation, law, and theory. Many scientists use inductivism to test their ways of observations during their experiments. For example, in the Giant X-Ray Screen Experiment, held in Santa Monica, California people preformed a scientific experiment with an objective of convincing people that “Love has no Labels”. Through this experiment, people were able to observe things in a different way than the normal pessimistic view. In the experiment, they had people go behind the giant x-ray screen. The people behind the screen either kissed, danced, hugged or held hands. From the front view of the screen the audience could only see their skeletons preforming these types of acts. The audience was moved with passion, but when the people behind the screen revealed themselves they were astonished because they didn’t expect to see gay couples, interracial couples, people who were apart of different religions, mental disabilities, and old couples. Majority of the audience didn’t expect to see these types of couples because they have been raised to only view straight couples as normal within the public eye.

Therefore, through this experiment, we can see that when people are given a chance to really see things for what they truly are, people realize that love is equal and open to all despite their physical appearances. This claim and story connects to our second linking question because with our un-biased views, we are able to fully determine how natural sciences prove what is sexually normal. With this information we are able to connect it to our main knowledge question because sexual orientation is a primary factor that determines society’s standards of normality.

2. Background Assumptions (T.O.K Connection): “Whenever we test a hypothesis, we make various background assumptions…” (232).

In the T.O.K textbook, when looking at any aspect in society, we may make many background assumptions.

***Own Words:***

Making background assumptions can cause us to make many generalizations.

Since the beginning of mankind, people have often made background assumptions. We can still see this happen within our daily lives. For example, if a man dresses more feminine and hangs around with a lot of girls, society immediately thinks that he is gay but when in reality he is straight. Society made background assumptions on this man which can create the generalization that if all men hang around with a lot of girls and dress feminine then they are gay.

Therefore, through this example, we can see that society will judge you by your background and immediately make accusations which leads them to make misleading generalizations that could be far from the truth. This claim and story connects to our second linking question because we realize that not all of the generalizations that society makes are true. Knowing this, we are able to eliminate factors that could be used to determine the standards of normality that society sets.

***What are examples that can illustrate the claims and different perspectives you discuss for this secondary knowledge question?***

\*included with the our own words\*

***How does learning about this secondary knowledge question help contribute to your understanding of the main knowledge question and a possible response to it?***

By learning about this secondary knowledge question, we are able to factor out a lot of possibilities that could be portrayed as standards of normality.

***How is this secondary knowledge question connected to your real life situation?***

By understanding how natural sciences are used to prove what is sexually normal, we are able to decipher people’s opinions, which connects to our real life situation because society was able to decode Valeria’s intentions of transforming her image.

***Linking Question: (Kyra)***

How does perception modify the roles people play in society?

***Claims/Contrasting claims/Different perspective on first secondary knowledge question***:

1. Perception can help you see all aspects of a problem.

2. Our perception on a situation is dependent on how we experience it.

***How is each Claim/Contrasting Claim/Different Perspective Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?***

1. Common Sense Realism (T.O.K. Connection): “According to this, perception is a passive and relatively straightforward process which gives us an accurate picture of reality” (87)

Perception, in the T.O.K textbook, is a straightforward process that gives an accurate picture of reality.

***OWN WORDS:***

Perception can be useful when looking at an issue.

For example, when the government makes important decisions for the public, they have to think about what the majority of the people need and want. Throughout history the government helped the public by making their lives easier and safer due to the decisions they made on laws. One law that kept the public safe was the Clean Water Act of 1972. This act was first introduced as a way to help create the standards for water purity. Through the 80’s and 90’s the act had evolved to incorporate toxic pollution and oil spillage.

Therefore, we can see through this example that the government used their common sense realism to make the final decision on the law because they needed to take the community’s opinions into consideration. This claim and story connects to our third linking question because if you use common sense realism then you can be aware of how people’s perceptions change when they view different aspects of society’s standards. Knowing this piece of information, allows us to use perception as a factor that can determine the standards of normality in our main knowledge question.

1. Empiricism (T.O.K Connection): “…all knowledge is based on our perceptual experience” (86).

Empiricism, in the T.O.K textbook, states that our views may differ from what actually happened do to our experience we had with that event.

***Own Words:***

Our own perceptions of a situation may change due to how we experienced it.

In the south after slavery ended, southerners created the Black codes to suppress the former slaves which effected many people’s lives. For instance, Mr. Bow, a former plantation owner, needs another worker for his farm. Mr. Bow lives next door to an African American family which consisted of a girl named Violet Garnish and her younger brother. In Mr. Bow’s perception he believes that the boy next door looks like the perfect person to work for him and he believes that the boy is too stupid to know anything other than farming. Mr. Bow claims to be just helping him out. He is going to find a way to make the boy next door his worker. Now, in Violet Garnish’s perception we can see that she has a completely different view. Violet Garnish perceives this situation as Mr. Bow trying to make her brother a “worker”. She feels that Mr. Bow is an untrustworthy man who will “help” anyone, but only when it benefits him.

Therefore, in this example, we can see that Mr. Bow and Violet have different perceptions because they both experienced the situation in different ways. Mr. Bow perceived it as him trying to be helpful while Violet perceived it as Mr. Bow trying to use her brother. This claim and story connects to our third linking question because our experience of a situation can determine how we perceive the roles that certain people play in society. Knowing this can help contribute to our main knowledge question because society perceives their standards in a certain way compared to other people within the social order.

***What are examples that can illustrate the claims and different perspectives you discuss for this secondary knowledge question?***

\*included with own words\*

***How does learning about this secondary knowledge question help contribute to your understanding of the main knowledge question and a possible response to it?***

By learning about this secondary knowledge question, it contributes to our main knowledge question because we have a better understanding of how perception plays a role in the way people view certain aspects of society’s standards.

***How is this secondary knowledge question connected to your real life situation?***

People seen Barbie as the “perfect person” meaning that she could do anything and everything. Valeria wanted to be Barbie because she felt the need to be accepted by society, but when she changed her image people thought that she was abnormal and crazy. Common sense realism and empiricism both show that society purposely avoids the “abnormal” and follows what’s in style or trending.

***Conclusion:***

(Teresa)When answering our main knowledge question, what determines the standards of being “normal” or “accepted” by society? We believe that society determines these standards based upon the actions of those who are highly praised, or popular, and when taking reason into consideration people are more likely to be influenced by others opinions, or society’s, to shape their idea of normality. Therefore people can be easily persuaded or manipulated. This can relate back to our real-life situation because Valeria was easily persuaded to change her entire self-image to be a perfect duplicate of Barbie. The amount of pressure inflicted upon people from society, and their peers in general, is what causes people to feel the burden of trying to fit in within the social order. (Nathan)This can take a toll on people’s perspectives of who they are as a person, and the person they want to become, as they can be easily persuaded by the decisions others make around them. When things aren’t fitting in with society standards, society will take all necessary precautions to eliminate the factors that are disturbing their “perfect” utopia. A way that society will eliminate these factors is through disapproving looks, rumors, rude remarks, physical and emotional abuse, from people within the social order around them to make them feel like an outlaw and that their not accepted. To sum up all the accusations made, we believe that when society says one thing, they mean another because they often have many double standards when it comes to beauty, and the roles that men and women play.