

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/12
Written Exam

Key messages

Candidates should ensure they read the paper carefully, looking at the key words, in order to answer the questions set. This applied in all questions, for example in **Question 2** where some candidates evaluated the argument, rather than the evidence, as required in the question. Some did not respond to the idea of how convincing the arguments were in **Question 3**.

There was a very good balance between the time taken on each of the questions, so reflecting the number of marks available. There was no evidence of candidates running out of time.

To gain higher marks in **Questions 2** and **3** there should be clear development of the points made. This may relate to the impact of material in the documents on the arguments. It may also show consideration of, not just **what** a strength or weakness may be, but also **how** or **why** it is a strength or weakness. There should also be explicit reference to the documents in **Question 3** and reflection on the impact of the evidence in **Question 2**.

So, candidates should provide brief and relevant references from the documents to support their evaluation of evidence and argument otherwise the answer is generalised, containing only assertions or claims. They should also explain what impact this has on the argument or chosen evidence which goes beyond a generic statement like 'weakens/strengthens'. They need to explain how the assessment does this.

Question 3 required candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison and description of the content. The candidates need to focus on an evaluation of the provenance, perspectives, evidence and argument to reach an overall judgement as to whether one of the documents was more convincing than the other.

Candidates will not gain credit for using material from their own knowledge that is not mentioned in the documents. Equally, copying sections from the documents, without reference, except when asked to identify in **Question 1(a)** will not gain credit

General comments

There was little evidence of candidates misunderstanding the documents and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. Some candidates did not pay careful enough attention to the key words in the questions. For example, 'evidence' in **Question 2** and 'convincing' in **Question 3**.

It was encouraging to see some candidates applying a higher-level skill by comparing the arguments put forward in the documents in **Question 3**, but some only gave a general judgement.

The length of answers was appropriate for the number of marks available and no candidate ran out of time. This was an improvement on last year. There was no clear evidence of planning for the longer questions. If it had been included the key words may have been addressed more fully and structure of assessment and judgement better structured.

Some answers to **Question 3** were not fully developed or supported by precise references to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents and evaluated their significance and impact on the argument. This demonstrated that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being presented.

The rubric of the paper requires candidates to write in continuous prose. While concise answers in **Question 1** are acceptable, in **Questions 2** and **3** full paragraphing in an essay format, rather than bullet points, should be used.

Many candidates appeared to be well-prepared with clear understanding of the aspects of evidence and argument that they were looking for in the documents.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) As an 'identify' question the best answers simply and concisely stated the words of the author without paraphrasing or expanding. **Question 1** provides an encouragement for the candidate to fully read and digest the detail of Document 1. The key words in the question refer to how Ghana supports Ghanaian Industry [so, not the role of individuals]

Many candidates scored full marks and, indeed, included more than four measures.

For example, listing:

- 1 Providing incentives
- 2 Reducing export tax
- 3 Controlling imports by increasing import tax.
- 4 Promoting sales of Ghanaian products by advertising.

- (b) The question required candidates to explain one of the measures identified in **Question 1(a)**.

Candidates scored one mark for a basic, correct explanation and two marks for a correct, developed explanation. There is a need to reflect the author's thoughts and meaning without introducing the candidate's only knowledge. It is also expected that the answer should be in the candidate's own words or a paraphrase of those of the author – not direct copying from the document.

This example shows information taken from paragraphs 4 and 5 and then interpreted and rephrased by the candidate.

'Import taxes will support Ghanaian industry reducing the quantity demanded for imports and hence [will] provide local Ghanaian industry with greater demand for the products that will allow them to grow business and eventually compete with foreign manufacturers.'

Another example of a two-mark answer is:

'The provision of government support for private companies in the form of subsidies and promotion increase their sales. According to the author of Document 2, subsidizing the price of goods like cars from a local community (Sarfo Kantanka) will allow teachers, nurses and lawyers to buy them thereby increasing the sales of the native company.'

Question 2

This question was generally well answered with most candidates correctly assessing the evidence rather than simply the argument. It was pleasing to see in **Question 2** that candidates had generally read the requirements of the question carefully. The question required an assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the evidence used by the author.

The highest achieving candidates recognised that the author used a range of supporting evidence including historical and recent examples. Higher scoring candidates recognised this, named suitable examples and explained why they showed evidence as a strength. This three stage approach tends to lead to higher marks.

For weaknesses, higher scoring candidates saw that there was a lack of use of supporting statistics and that evidence was largely unsourced. Again, higher scoring candidates explained how both of these limitations had a negative impact on the reliability of the evidence.

The difference between higher and moderately scoring candidates was usually defined by the appropriate explanation of the strengths and weaknesses, not just identifying them, or not referencing the document. Several candidates made basic statements without explaining or developing them.

In an 'evidence' question the provenance of the document and the credibility of the author is only relevant when it shows the author's ability to research and select appropriate evidence.

An example is:

'The document is from "Buy Made in Ghana, Support What is Ghanaian" and is written by Emmanuel Quarshie who is a Ghanaian journalist and holder of a BA Hons Economics with Linguistics from Ghana University...Hence due to his expertise we can say that he has the ability to recognise and select appropriate and reliable sources of evidence to support his claims.'

For strengths of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

'Quarshie uses historical examples to strengthen the evidence of the document, He recalls the "Akosombo Textiles and the 'Wenchi Tomato Factory' and 'Bolgatanga Rice Mills" [are] used to promote local food harvest and consumption...He clearly shows a cause and effect that documented in history, proved that such a sequence of events can happen in present day as well. This strong evidence backs up his argument on growing local industries.'

For weaknesses of the evidence the highest achieving candidates used examples such as:

'A main weakness of the evidence used in this document is that they are all unsourced. For example, Quarshie talks about a "rise in GDP of the country" but does not mention when, how and who calculated this rise. Later he says wearing local fabrics every Friday, "has promoted our fabrics abroad" but, again does not source this piece of information. Throughout the document, thee unsourced evidences act as a detriment because they do not tell us how credible the evidence is. Knowing the source helps the reader assess the credibility of the evidence and this whether it substantiates the corresponding argument or not.'

Question 3

The most frequent approach is to directly compare the relative strengths and weaknesses of the two documents throughout the answer looking at their different perspectives. The strongest candidates achieved this well with analysis and clear evaluation of the relative strengths of each document. There was no correct answer and candidates were free to argue that Document 2 was more convincing than Document 1 or the opposite. It was possible to argue that neither was more convincing. In all cases justification for the final judgement was required.

Some candidates tended to directly compare the content of the documents without evaluating their relative strengths. This simplistic/undeveloped approach which describes a few points comparing the two documents was rarely marked higher than level 1.

Many candidates were able to pick out the aspects that reflect a strong argument e.g. the credibility of the authors and the amount of supporting evidence provided. Candidates achieving the highest marks gave clear examples from the documents and their impact on the overall assessment, while lower scoring answers simply relied on a formulaic approach of what should constitute a strong argument without using supporting examples. Such answers were consequently superficial and relied, at best, on undeveloped quotes from the text.

The strongest responses adopted a structured response to answering the question: methodically evaluating the relative strengths of the argument (with intermediate judgements), using appropriate examples and analysis of impact, before coming to a reasoned judgment at the end.

Examples of strong evaluation of the arguments are:

Provenance:

'The author in Document 2 is a "former chief economist of the Asian Development Bank" and a Professor at Colombia University. This gives the author the ability to observe the effects of policies like the "Belt and Road" initiative. As an economist at the Asian Development Bank, the author would have had access to

primary data regarding the scheme. Moreover, the author has expertise and in the field of economics being a Professor of Economics. This makes the author's opinions and claims uniquely reliable.'

Judgement – although not entirely accurate this gives a good final judgement relating to the convincing nature of Document 2.

'In conclusion, Document 2 has a more convincing argument since its author has greater expertise and a better ability to observe. Document 2 also strengthens his argument by providing counter-narrative and making multiple strands of analysis. The evidence in Document 2 is varied and well-sourced and the author utilises a number of global examples. In comparison, Document 1's author lacks in expertise and the structure of the argument is weak. The evidence is little and selective – all of which makes it less convincing and reliable.'

Scope – Although the candidate uses the term perspective they are referencing the scope of the supporting evidence.

'Document 2 gives both a global and local/national perspective. The examples used are of the countries with slow development such as Bangladesh and Kyrgyzstan and economically developed countries such as US and its comparison to China. This provides a richer and clearer picture to the reader of global and local perspectives. Whereas, Document 2 does not provide any global perspective and only local (Ghana) reducing the range of evidence [to support the argument].'

Some candidates followed a formulaic approach to the answer by looking for particular aspects of the argument to consider. Generally, this was well done with higher scoring candidates linking aspects to examples in the text and with explanation of why this supported the argument. A small number made assumptions based on preconceived ideas about what makes a good argument, rather than reading and evaluating the documents clearly. Candidates are required to engage critically with the documents, rather than make generalised comments that could apply to any document.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/02
Essay

Key messages

- Careful consideration must be given to the choice of question. The question should focus on a topic of global significance from which candidates can develop a debate between contrasting perspectives.
- Through research, candidates should locate a range of appropriate and relevant source material. The source material should be globally diverse and contain arguments and evidence that support contrasting perspectives.
- Source material used to support contrasting perspectives should be critically evaluated. Candidates must consider what makes the selected source appropriate and relevant, candidates must also recognise the weaknesses and limitations of the source material.

General comments

Much of the work seen by Examiners was of good quality and demonstrated real engagement with a range of global topics. Popular topics that enabled candidates to develop contrasting perspectives included; Artificial Intelligence, Genetic engineering, Global economic activity and Migration and work, amongst others. There is a list of topics published on page 18 of the syllabus.

There are seven different assessment criteria each carrying equal weighting. Planning is particularly important because the essay is constrained by a strict word limit of 2000 words. There were many candidates that submitted essays that did not address all of the assessment criteria. Some key omissions were critical evaluation of source material and reflection in the conclusion. Each criterion will be addressed in turn in the next section (Comments on the assessment criteria) of the Principle Examiner's Report for Teachers.

A successful essay starts with an appropriate question, for example '*Can tax systems help resolve the problem of income disparity?*' This question has a clear focus and arises from the global topic of Standard of living/quality of life. The question offered the candidate the opportunity to research a variety of different national taxation systems. From there the candidate was able to develop contrasting perspectives. By contrasting Scandinavian high tax systems with US low tax systems, the candidate could successfully develop a global dimension to the contrasting perspectives.

Some questions lack focus and lead to descriptive responses without developing clearly contrasting perspectives, for example '*Will sustainability increase affordability and accessibility along with an effective stand against harming the world?*' Such a question provided very little focus or opportunity to develop contrasting perspectives.

An introduction that clearly defines any key terms and sets up the debate between contrasting perspectives is much more likely to lead to a successful essay:

'Social media was first used for communication purposes to connect people across large distances and today "social media platforms are used by one-in-three people in the world, and more than two-thirds of all internet users." It is a major source for news and in the modern day it is also being used as a tool to create awareness and express opinions. As social media has been used to spread awareness about causes, it also became a tool to combat harassment. In today's social media era the use of hashtags to create awareness

has gone viral exemplified by hashtags like #MeToo (“4.7 million people in the first 24 hours”), #BlackLivesMatter (“used almost 30 million times”) and #BringBackOurGirls (“more than four million times”). The question to be answered now is whether social media has been successful in bringing about change in combatting harassment beyond just raising awareness.

The first perspective is that social media is an effective tool to combat harassment because creating awareness on an issue can put pressure on the government to take action against the offenders. Hashtags help by changing the behavior of the offenders due to the fear of consequences. However not everyone agrees with this perspective and another way to look at it- and this is my second perspective- is that Social Media is a platform which raises awareness on an issue but it doesn't solve the problem. Many hashtags, for example, #BringBackOurGirls just became a trending hashtag, but had no follow-up action which rendered the hashtag ineffective.”

The introduction above was successful because it set the issue in context and offered relevant examples for illustration. The candidate clearly set out the two contrasting perspectives that were explicitly linked to the question. This offered a structure for the essay and helped to engage the reader in the debate. There were still some essays submitted that did not have contrasting perspectives, by establishing them in the introduction it will ensure candidates are on the right path.

Comments on the assessment criteria

Criterion 1: Communication

This criterion has two areas of assessment. The first is communication. The essays must be understandable and the arguments presented should be coherent. In addition to these fundamental requirements the essay needs a logical structure that allows for two contrasting perspectives to be presented. Much of the work submitted for the March series was well structured and it was clear that candidates were recognising that structure provides the foundation for a successful essay.

Increasingly candidates are beginning to use discursive markers and argument indicators in the essays. Discursive markers such as; *first, second, additionally*, help to order the essay and support a sound structure. Argument indicators such as; *however, alternatively*, help to introduce a contrasting perspective. The use of discursive markers and argument indicators will help the essay flow and make it more engaging. The following example from the March series demonstrates the how effective these can be in making the essay clear:

‘On the other hand, gender quotas, though lauded for their ability to increase women’s representation, might actually hinder efforts to achieve gender equality and bring into question the meritocracy of those appointed through them. Additionally, they neither provide substantial, long-term results, nor result in the outcomes that proponents of quotas claim that they do, and may in fact emphasise stereotypes about women.’

The second area of assessment in criterion 1 is concerned with citation and referencing. Most candidates used citations though they sometimes lacked consistency across the essay. In order to be effective citations should be consistent in their application and relate to the bibliography in a logical way. This example shows a candidate using an appropriate style of citation:

‘...all of which could be in one form or other be passed on to multiple generations, of which some may be harder to reverse than DNA change (Skerrett, 2015).’

The full details of the citation could be found in an alphabetical bibliography at the end:

He, B. (2019, march 8). Fast work to regulate gene editing a good example. Retrieved february 11, 2020, from chinadaily.com.cn: <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201903/08/WS5c8163e5a3106c65c34ed686.html>

Skerrett, P. (2015, november 15). A debate: Should we edit the human germline? Retrieved february 13, 2020, from Stat: <https://www.statnews.com/2015/11/30/gene-editing-crispr-germline/>

Smith, K. (2019, november 15). Time to start intervening in the human germline? A utilitarian perspective. Retrieved february 13, 2020, from Wiley online library: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/bioe.12691>

Criterion 2: Source selection

This criterion assesses the credibility and range of the sources selected by the candidate. The contrasting perspectives developed by the candidate need to be informed by evidence and argument from source material that candidates have located during their research. The source material should be relevant and credible and needs to be globally diverse in range. Many candidates were not drawing upon a globally diverse range of source material. The bibliography above has a global range. *Stat* is a Boston, US based online medical journal and the *China Daily* is an online newspaper based in Beijing, China. Both sources are relevant to the debate about gene editing and are credible.

There has been a tendency in this series for some candidates to offer huge bibliographies detailing 20 or more sources. Six good sources for a 2000-word essay is plenty. For a candidate to achieve well in this assessment area they must explicitly use the source within the essay, not just reference it in the bibliography.

Criterion 3: Analysis of sources

This criterion has two areas of assessment. The first is analysis and understanding. The candidate needs to analyse their source material and then present the author's arguments and evidence. In doing this the candidate demonstrates their level of understanding of their selected sources. This series provided many examples of candidates showing very good understanding of their material and presenting arguments and evidence in a controlled manner.

'...in her article 'No Hay Mujeres: Latin America women and gender equality' author Kristen Sample argues that there are a number of things that quotas cannot guarantee for women, including higher positions in government like presidency, women's presence in politics in the long-term, and their effectiveness as politicians. She also reasons that in order for gender quotas to adequately achieve gender equality they would have to be accompanied by changes in the government, political parties, other female party members, media, and civil society'

The second area of assessment in criterion 3 is concerned with critical evaluation of sources. As highlighted in the key messages this is an important area of the essay and the wider syllabus. Too many candidates were not offering any critical evaluation of source material. The candidates should present in their essay an evaluation of the source material in terms of why it is credible and relevant as well as acknowledging any weaknesses. Critical evaluation should be applied to the key source material used and not necessarily all the source material used. However, in order to demonstrate balance at least one source used to support each contrasting perspective should be evaluated. The March series did provide examples of excellent critical evaluation. In the extract below the candidate has evaluated the author's credibility, expertise and some of the evidence used to support their argument. The candidate has then acknowledged weaknesses in the author's argument.

'Walter is a professor of Political Science at the School of Global Policy and Strategy at the University of California San Diego, and is a member of multiple journals of politics. Her extensive involvement in the subject of political science indicates that she has a clear understanding of the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions. One study that she discusses, for example, comes to the conclusion that "peacekeeping is an important means by which contagion processes can be contained". The citation of this study supports her argument that peacekeeping is effective at reducing violence. In her discussion of the studies, she explains that peacekeeping has proven to be significant in containing civil war. However, her usage of ambiguous vocabulary, "using different datasets... leveraging slightly different time periods... measuring peacekeeping in somewhat different ways", makes it difficult to evaluate how accurate these studies are.'

Criterion 4: Empathy for perspectives

This criterion assesses empathy and balance. It is essential that the essay has globally contrasting perspectives. The building of perspectives will be addressed in more detail in criterion 6. The March series continued to show candidates engaging with both sides of an argument. To show empathy candidates should present each contrasting perspective objectively. To show balance candidates should give equal consideration to each contrasting perspective. Empathy and balance are also likely to be evidenced in the candidate's conclusion. When reaching a final judgement the candidate must have fairly considered both perspectives. Most candidates in this series were able to present two sides of a debate but there were too many essays that do not have a global dimension.

Criterion 5: Globality of perspectives

This criterion assesses the quality and global range of the contrasting perspectives. Whilst too many candidates neglected to develop a global dimension to their research essays, the March series did provide some excellent examples of globally contrasting perspective that were used to support the candidate's judgment. The extracts below are taken from an essay titled '*Should Indigenous Art Be Returned To Its Country Of Origin?*' which arises from the topic area, Arts in an International Context.

The candidate offered support to the perspective that Art should be returned and supported their global perspective with a reference to Angola that was supported by a Belgian art historian. In the second section the candidate supported the contrasting global perspective with argument from a British expert who used evidence in the form of an Ethiopian example.

'Sindika Dokolo , created the Sindika Dokolo Foundation to launch a pioneering project to recover classical works of African art" and support young African artists by allowing museums to borrow and display their collections as long as they put up the same exhibition in any African country. As evidence of the need for restitution, he mentions that Belgian art historian Marie Louise Bastin, and Brussels-based gallerist Didier Claes helped the author repatriate ten works of art back to Angola to show western support for repatriation.'

'Furthermore, his colleague in The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), Tristram Hunt explains "Under the National Heritage Act 1983, the trustees of the V&A are specifically prevented from de-accessioning objects that are the property of the museum, unless they are exact replicas or damaged beyond repair" , illustrating the legal constraints of giving away these artefacts to the countries requesting for them. He offers an alternate solution by offering to display the circumstances of the artefact's acquisition instead of restitution, as they did with the crown of Maqdala on the 150th anniversary of the British invasion of Abyssinia.'

Criterion 6: Analysis of perspectives

This criterion has two areas of assessment. The understanding and analysis of perspectives is the first area. For the purposes of this syllabus a perspective is defined as a coherent worldview. When the candidates analyse their source material they need to make links between different arguments and synthesise these into a coherent view; a perspective. The use of discursive markers can help candidates link separate arguments together into a unified perspective. Discursive markers such as; accordingly, similarly, just as, will signpost to the Examiner that the candidate is making links between different sources. Candidates should try to find argument and evidence from one source to corroborate with other sources from the same perspective. This is often the most difficult area for candidates and many did not manage to make links between sources. The March series did provide some high-level synthesis and perspective building, the edited example below makes the link between source materials explicit.

'Céline Nahory also discusses the Rwandan genocide, and mentions that Paris and Washington not only blocked UN action, but also used their "hidden veto" to weaken the definition of the crisis under international law...This supports Walter's argument that peacekeeping as a tool is still effective when independent of external factors.'

The second area of assessment in criterion 6 is concerned with evaluation of perspectives. Candidates may approach this in different ways but generally the evaluation of perspectives is presented in summative paragraph at the end of the essay just before the candidates make their final judgement. The evaluation in criterion 6 moves beyond the level of the individual source and seeks to evaluate the unified perspective that has been presented. This remains an area that candidates find problematic. However, the March series did provide some strong examples of evaluation at a perspective level:

'After deliberating the merits of both perspectives, I came to the conclusion that gender quotas are key to taking the first steps to achieve gender equality. As evidenced, if designed and implemented correctly they have the potential to bring parity between the genders in all spheres of influence. The countries that failed to adequately increase women's representation through quotas, implemented quotas that were badly designed in accordance to their electoral system. However, arguments regarding stereotypes are used in both perspectives and there is no conclusive evidence as to which perspective is stronger in this case.'

Criterion 7: Conclusion and reflection

This criterion has two areas of assessment. The first area assesses the candidates' ability to offer a supported and reflective judgement. Many candidates have begun to recognise the importance of the reflective element and there were some very strong examples in the March series. Reflection is an area that many candidates omitted and this impacted the marks achieved. Candidates should consider what they thought at the outset of their research and then reflect on how engaging with contrasting perspectives has shaped their thinking. The extract below is a strong example of reflection:

I had initially thought that quotas were a one-size-fits-all solution that would be effective in bringing women into positions of power without much variation in its design from one situation to another. Instead, I was exposed to facets of the argument that I had not considered before. I learnt that well intended tools, like quotas, can often unintentionally result in negative repercussions and violate existing notions of fairness like free electoral choice, and that the effectiveness of a particular quota heavily depended on its design and implementation. It also made me question the feasibility of quotas in the long-run. Would they be able to lay the groundwork for further strides in gender equality? Was an increase in representation a satisfactory goal to achieve? I was able to ponder and consider questions that had not crossed my mind before.

The second area of assessment in this criterion is the outlining of further research. Candidates should consider where further research should or could be focused. Despite many candidates omitting this element there were some strong examples outlining further research:

'Possibilities for further research include surveys from people living in conflicted regions, to help us understand the benefits and drawbacks of peacekeeping. An index that accounts for multiple factors regarding peace should be created, and peacekeeping missions could be graded by this index to give us further insight into their missions. Further research could also be conducted on possible reforms to peacekeeping missions, as many sources fail to discuss ways in which peacekeeping can be improved.'

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/03
Team Project: Presentation and Reflective Paper

Key messages

Issues were most effectively developed with the support of detailed research findings. More successful candidates clearly explained their own perspective and showed how this differed from other approaches taken. Solutions are best developed alongside conclusions and are best developed using careful detail. Good presentations linked presentational materials closely to the argument. Reflective papers score most highly when they both evaluate collaboration and reflect on learning.

General comments

This session saw a variety of different topics and some effective work. This report highlights some key aspects of both the presentations and reflective papers, giving examples of how candidates showed effective achievement in these.

Individual presentation

Definition of the Issue

There were a number of examples of presentations which opened with a clear definition of their issue, and then developed this with detailed research. In the best presentations, the issue was named, its definition is explored and then the definition is supported and developed with specific, sourced evidence.

Differentiation of Perspectives

Presentations were able to define issues and develop solutions most effectively where they were clear about their own perspective, how it differed from other perspectives and why they have chosen their own approach as being the most effective. The following presentation does this by focusing on how endangered traditional crafts could be supported by the actions of governments and other institutions:

'One of my teammates focused on the issue using primarily a business perspective. But the business exists as part of the legal context which shows the need for my perspective. Another team member looked at the issue through a social perspective, as endangered crafts are a social problem, and social and institutional perspectives are both part of the broader context of this issue. This is why have focused on institutional perspectives as being the most effective approach.'

Conclusion and Solution

Conclusions and solutions had the greatest impact when they were developed together, with the solution proposed being informed by the conclusion of the entire presentation's argument. One presentation, on the problem of water scarcity, did this by unfolding several different benefits of the solution of rainwater harvesting, each with evidence given. It is shown to have environmental benefits 'in reducing soil erosion', to be low-maintenance and also to be 'cost effective' by reducing utility bills. After specifying these, it recommends changes in laws and government policies as the best means of implementing the solution, and checking that it is effective. The presentation ends by summarising why this is 'sustainable, viable and cost

effective and the best way to solve our current problem'. It is this careful and detailed unfolding of solutions, and the support for solutions, that makes for the highest achieving presentations.

Presentational Skills

Higher level presentations continued to make good use of presentational skills, and in particular audio and visual materials, to enhance their arguments. This happened when the visual information on slides, for example, closely matched what the candidate said and they were able to point to visual elements (often literally) that supported their points. These argumentative links naturally supported gaze, gesture and positioning which was focused both on the audience being addressed and the argument being made, including its supporting materials.

Reflective Paper

The reflective paper assesses two distinct aspects: the candidate's evaluation of the collaborative process and their reflection on their learning during the project. These two skills, although both reflective, are different and it was often the case that not all reflective papers accomplished them equally well. Here, for example, is a candidate who offered clear evaluation of the collaboration they had undertaken:

'My teammates were extremely supportive and were receptive to all the negotiations and opinions which gave me an opportunity to be able to put forward my thoughts in the process. Each one of them had put their utmost effort in making this team project a success. There were some difficulties that we had faced. For instance, my team mates were in a different country so it was not possible for us to be able to work together most of the time. But the existence of Social Media helped us to connect with each other at anytime, anywhere and this is how we could finalize our group solution.'

Here clear strengths and weaknesses of their work together are listed and linked to their purpose as a team in finding a group solution. On the other hand, here is a different reflective paper which shows strengths in reflecting upon learning:

'The more I read, and the more discussions I had with my team mates, my personal views kept on changing on the issue. The more I read, mainly using research sources, the more I realized that I didn't know much. This really made me to change my personal views quite frequently. By reading, I was gaining more and more knowledge which helped me to change my views and get a better understanding. The first source of learning was therefore based on established research sources. A second source of learning came from discussions with my team mates, and they also changed my personal views. As they were looking through different perspectives, my understanding to the situation changed, and I was able to understand and see through their perspectives also.'

Here, the different sources of learning are clearly identified and listed. Following this, the candidate was also able to link them to specific ways in which their view of their issue had changed and how this impacted upon the solution they chose.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

Paper 9239/04
Research Report

Key messages

- Reports should be fully annotated by centres
- The wording of the question must guide the content and direction of the report
- Evidence used in reports must be referenced and assessed

General comments

Though the entry was relatively small there was a range of topics and quite a wide variation in the way that research was approached and essential skills demonstrated. The most successful reports made a determined effort to answer the research question by identifying evidence for different perspectives and weighing evidence and arguments to produce a well-supported judgement. The accompanying logs showed an engagement with the issued arising from the specific question and how the research progress had developed and were certainly more than just a record of reading. The best reflections were based on the specific research undertaken. Evidence was appropriate to the topic, carefully referenced and its validity assessed, so that the critical skills which lie at the heart of this qualification were demonstrated. It was helpful when centre marking drew attention to the skills being shown by marginal comments linked to the assessment objectives. This assists moderation but more importantly ensures that credit is being given appropriately, that is for the requirements of the mark scheme.

In terms of the skills of AO1, some reports might well have made use of the evidence in the bibliography but it was not always clear where and in what ways. In an essay, reading and research can be absorbed and internalised and it can inform explanations and judgements. However, this is not an essay, but a report, and that requires specific acknowledgement of the evidence base for arguments, views, supporting information throughout. There were reports which did not refer to specific evidence for long stretches and it was not clear what the basis for the analysis was. It must be understood by all who undertake these reports that they must be demonstrably and not just implicitly based on referenced evidence.

It is also a requirement that there is evaluation of different perspectives and the evidence on which they are based. Evaluation making a clear judgement about differing ways of looking at a topic and the sources which support these different outlooks. In some cases, a mark was given for evaluation but there was no specific assessment of a general perspective or any particular piece of underpinning evidence. When there was no marginal comment it made it very difficult to understand why this was so or where the centre thought that the writing demonstrated critical judgement. Where this has been indicated in the report to centres, it is important that teachers look again at the supporting documentation provided by Cambridge International about this vital aspect or ask for help and guidance. Long passages of descriptive writing or transcripts of interviews or surveys without any attempt to assess their validity or significance cannot justify a higher-level mark for evaluation in the accepted meaning of the term: assigning value to evidence.

Another important element of AO1 is analysis of evidence. However, the evidence must be relevant to the actual issue and there should not be the assumption by any candidate that they are offering a general piece of writing about a topic rather than investigating a specific issue which they have identified in a proposal form and have had that proposal accepted. This would not be a report but a sort of general project which did not involve the exercise of skills developed in the earlier parts of the Global Perspectives. Indeed, such general writing would not meet the requirement of establish 'perspectives' at all. Perspectives are not just different aspects of a general topic such as 'social' or 'legal' or 'economic: these are aspects or themes. Perspectives

refer to different overall views, arguments and judgements about a distinct and debatable issue which requires a supported judgement from candidates who then have to reflect on the basis and validity of that judgement given the methodology employed to reach it. This is considerably different from gathering information about a topic, however interesting, and reporting on that information. Such a process may involve selecting relevant material and organising it. It may involve understanding and may be inherently valuable. However, it is not what is required in a report which aims to take learners further down the Critical Path begun in the earlier units of Global Perspectives.

On terms of evidence chosen, there was discrimination shown in selecting and using relevant material that showed a mature approach to the topics and some serious study appropriate to the age group of candidates. However, there were some examples of lengthy inclusion of surveys of classmates which did not seem helpful and occupied pages of the report. Simply asking fellow students their views on major issues is often of limited value unless the topic would benefit from a survey of this sort. Results should be summarised and not quoted at considerable length and any conclusions drawn should be informed by a critical analysis of the value of such evidence. If it is thought it has limited value, then the question is raised about the point of accumulating it.

Again with regards to AO1, the evidence and the analysis must relate to the actual question. There were instances where a relatively limited amount of a long report actually related to the precise issue in the question. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to frame a question which can lead to a sustained discussion and about which conflicting evidence is available. This is an important part of the process and should involve submitting a proposal form to Cambridge to ensure that the question is suitable. If after this, the report does not make the question absolutely central to the research and analysis, then this seriously weakens the whole process and will not lead to a successful outcome. In terms of assessing Communication, if the report has not addressed the question, then it is difficult to see that either written or oral communication has been very strong. The overall standard of written accuracy was sometimes stronger than the use of writing skills to convey a focused argument. Similarly, a general survey of a topic rather than a clear assessment of arguments often weakened the reflection as the conclusion about the specific issue was sometimes not clear enough to be assessed and reflected on. It should be stressed that the reflection should be offered under a separate heading to make it clear. Reflection must be in the body of the essay and not just in the log.

The above comments are offered to be helpful to future candidates in order that the strong points shown in the work can lead to the best possible outcomes. It was clear that the work had been taken seriously and that thought had gone into the whole research process, especially in finding research materials. The reports were often well expressed and showed obvious interest in the matters being considered. The logs were often well maintained and showed the candidates' commitment to the process. If these very strong and admirable qualities can be allied to the critical skills required then there is much to look forward in subsequent sessions. Teachers are thanked for giving their candidates the opportunity to undertake this very valuable independent research and for their support of the qualification.