GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

| Paper 9777/01 |
| Written Paper |

Key Messages

- Candidates should ensure they read the question carefully and answer the actual question set.

- The length of the answer does reflect the number of marks available. Many candidates spend too long on **Question 1** and leave insufficient time for the demands of **Question 3**.

- The key skill, particularly in **Question 3**, needed to score high marks is that of comparative evaluation, supported by precise reference to the documents in relation to the actual question set.

- **Question 3** requires candidates to consider both documents and go beyond a simple comparison of the content in order to evaluate the provenance, content *and* perspectives to reach an overall judgement. This question brings together the skills that have been tested individually in the previous questions.

- Brief and relevant quotations from the documents should be used to support arguments otherwise the answer risks being generalised or no more than a series of assertions or claims and will not reach the higher levels. This is crucial in **Questions 2** and **3**.

- Candidates will not gain credit by bringing in material from outside the documents.

- The strongest responses reached a supported judgement about the issue under consideration.

General Comments

The overall standard of the responses was encouraging. There was no evidence of candidates misunderstanding the documents and most showed a good understanding of the demands of the questions. There were a number who did not pay careful attention to either the marks available or the command words in the questions and this limited the level achieved, particularly when it came to **Questions 2** and **3**. However, it is encouraging to see that an increasing number of candidates are able to apply the higher level skill of comparative evaluation on the final question, although there are still a number who rely on solely comparing the content of the two documents. Stronger answers often showed evidence of clear planning for the higher mark questions and this certainly helped candidates structure their answers in a coherent and logical manner.

There were very few candidates who ran out of time, although the allocation of time relative to the number of marks available is an important issue. There were a significant number of candidates who wrote over one side for **Question 1a**, whereas a few lines or even four bullet points would have been sufficient. As a result, some answers to the final question were brief and ideas were not fully developed or supported by precise reference to the documents. Stronger responses selected relevant and appropriate quotes from the documents demonstrating that they had a secure grasp of the arguments being considered and reached a supported judgement about the issue in the question.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

(a) Candidates who read the question carefully were usually able to score well but some did not address the impact of rising food prices and wrote more generally about Westhoff's views. This was especially in relation to the biofuel argument which was tangential to the question as it relates to reasons not impacts. The question carried only four marks and did not require lengthy answers, looking only for clear identification of the points Westhoff made. Four concise sentences or bullet points were sufficient for this question. It was also possible to score up to two marks for developing a point further. Those candidates who wrote extensively on this question tended to leave less time for the more valuable **Questions 2** and **3**. An example of a full mark response is:

Firstly, the rise in food prices led to 'concern in the US' with many families finding it hard to "make ends meet". Secondly, the rise in food prices led to hunger and malnutrition on a global scale - it became a "crisis in much of the developing world".

(b) This question related to strengths and weaknesses of the **evidence** used to show there was a rise in food prices. The strongest responses showed clear understanding of the concept of evidence, whereas many looked in a less focused way at the document; some extending into analysis of the argument – an approach more appropriate for **Question 2**. It is important for candidates to be able to understand the key command words. Many candidates did not appreciate that the question required assessment of the evidence rather than an explanation for the impact of the price rise or the reasons for it which was a feature of weaker responses.

The strongest candidates identified the evidence, for example, the figure an average family spends, ($8671), but recognised that in itself this did not reflect an increase without evidence of previous years' statistics. The lack of sources for some of the statistics was generally recognised as a weakness but some candidates routinely applied this to all evidence showing the detail of the document had not been fully appreciated. This formulaic approach, whilst providing structure, led to statements that were not always relevant to this specific document or question.

Question 2

This question, like **Question 1 (b)** referred to strengths and weaknesses. However, in this question, the requirement to evaluate the argument in relation to biofuels was the differentiator. Generally candidates found it easier to deal with weaknesses than strengths but it was pleasing to see that the coverage of strengths is improving. Almost all candidates managed at least partial balance with recognition of the counter-argument. Stronger responses quoted briefly from the document to focus their evaluation, while weaker responses often made valid points that were not linked clearly enough to the document to be credited as evaluation. Some candidates followed a formulaic approach, which, although providing structure, led to assumptions about strengths and weaknesses in the argument. The use of specific terms like, "straw man", "slippery slope" etc. can be used when applied accurately and in a relevant way, but knowledge and understanding of these concepts alone will not gain direct credit. Candidates should ensure that the argument used has substance within the document. Candidates should avoid lengthy description or summaries of the document as this will confine their answer to the lowest mark band, but should focus on the key skill for this paper, evaluation.

Some candidates did not evaluate Westhoff's argument but gave their own opinion as to the relevance of biofuels. It is the evaluation of the author's argument that is relevant to the question. There is no credit for bringing in material, including their own opinion, from outside the documents.

Most candidates recognised the strengths of the argument; the balance supported by the credibility of the author. Some identified the strength of presentation of the argument in relation to its logical structure and use of non-emotional language. Most recognised the main weaknesses; lack of evidence and identification of sources. The weaknesses were frequently given as generic statements with only the strongest candidates clearly referencing the assertions made which were particularly clear in paragraph 5.

An example of an approach to answering the question and getting into Level 3 is:

Westhoff presents well balanced evidence to support his argument...in the third and fourth paragraph he presents two balancing views about biofuels strengthening his argument by reaching his neutral standpoint.

On the other hand he uses little evidence to support his argument…most evidence is from the US and ignores global aspects...

In relation to the assertions made in paragraph 5 the following example illustrates a strong response:

…though his logic and chain of reasoning may be strong, such as how he suggests that "more grain and vegetable oil" is used of biofuels, the less there is for people, the majority of his assertions and statements are completely unsupported. In the fifth paragraph of Document 1, the author makes multiple claims ranging from how expanding biofuel production has increased the demand for grain to how government policies affected world food prices. This severely weakens his argument as there is no evidence to support the claims he makes and thus he is making assumptions. Whilst specific case studies are mentioned such as "poor weather in 2006 and 2007", there is no source for this information.

Question 3

Candidates continue to find this the most demanding question. It brings together the skills that have been tested in earlier questions; however, these are often ignored when tackling this question. Despite this, it was pleasing to see that a significant number of candidates did make an attempt to evaluate the two documents and not simply summarise the content in a comparative way. As this is the most demanding question, candidates would be well advised to allow a significant amount of time to address it. It might help candidates if they produced a plan, which indicated how the points and evaluation relate to the actual question. Candidates should also check to ensure that they have reasonably balanced coverage to the two documents as there were a number, who having evaluated Document 1 in the previous question, chose to either ignore it or treat it in a superficial manner. Once again, candidates would be well advised to support their arguments by precise reference to the documents, but need to avoid lengthy quotations that detract from the overall argument. An example that does this well is:

Document 2 supports its argument with evidence such as: "the calorific value of US wheat is only twice the amount of calories expended to produce it" This supports his argument that too much energy is spent importing food which could be grown locally. This is more convincing than Document 1 as Baker's argument is logically supported by evidence. In comparison, Document 1 makes unsupported statements such as "poor weather in 2006 and 2007 did reduce grain production" thus weakening the argument.

The strongest answers considered an evaluation of the provenance of the two authors. Many recognised that they had similar academic pedigree but the strongest responses saw that Baker contributed to a not-for-profit organisation compared to Westhoff who was selling a book although the expression "vested interest" was frequently misused. Most also recognised the wider global perspective that Baker offered and compared the type of language used. Some felt that the more emotive language and rhetorical questions used by Baker were strengths of the argument but others held the opposite view. It is important to realise there is no required answer and it is up to the candidate to evaluate and put forward an argument to support their point of view when answering the question.

The strongest responses reached a supported judgement about which document was more convincing. The strongest responses often used intermediate judgements after a point had been discussed, which then fed into an overall judgement. Candidates should be encouraged to reach an overall judgement, but it does need to be based on the argument that has been pursued throughout the response and must be more than assertion.

An example of a justified conclusion is:

To conclude, Document 1 is more convincing than Document 2 as it explains counterarguments and does not use emotive language. Despite the use of evidence and global impacts in Document 2 it fails to cite sources or fully explain its argument stating instead, "we are intervening in complex systems".

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

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Paper 9777/02
Essay
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Key Messages

- The title must always be in the form of a question.

- There is a need to show awareness of further research.

- An excellent way to evaluate a source is to research its provenance and content.

- To succeed, an essay must show an ability to empathise with widely differing global perspectives.

- Examiners enforce the word limit rigorously. If an essay it too long, its reflection and conclusion are often not credited, as they usually form the last part of the essay, and therefore fall outside the word limit.

- A descriptive approach cannot meet most of the criteria of assessment.

- A perspective is not the same thing as a source.

- Candidates need to make a decision: in the final analysis what do *you* think? Where do *you* stand?

General Comments

Length continues to be an issue for some candidates. Candidates are reminded that any work exceeding the word limit will not be marked. This includes comments in footnotes where the text is already 2000 words long. Similarly, diagrams and charts will only be considered if doing so does not take the considered text over 2000 words. Conversely, some essays were 200 or more words short, often there was room for a short paragraph of reflection or ideas for further research.

Comments on Specific Questions: examples of effective and less effective practice from this series

Effective questions

It is very important that essay titles are in question form. It is recommended that questions are kept simple as simple question frequently generate complex answers without the need for lengthy description of key terms and concepts. Questions beginning "Should" were often the most successful:

- Should drones be used in war?
- Should governments of developing countries fund space research?
- Should the personal income taxes be progressive, flat or regressive?
- Should we be concerned about the effects of globalization on indigenous people?
- Should certain vaccines be mandatory?
- Should child labour in developing countries be banned?
- Should governments subsidize religious education?

All of these questions set up an argument between differing moral, ethical or geographical views – between global perspectives. Of course "should" is not mandatory. Other title worked well:

- How ethical is human cloning?
- Is it ever ethical to spy on allies?
- To what extent can capital punishment be seen as a justifiable alternative to life imprisonment in modern society?

In the last example the candidate was able to present a variety of perspectives and tackle the question from different and productive angles. However, the phrase "to what extent" was redundant in the answer and was interestingly a common feature of less successful responses.

Less effective questions

Less effective questions included those where many terms in the title needed to be defined (but often were not defined by the candidate). Examples include:

- Is it possible to have religion infused into government, without conflicting with the society as a whole?

Then there were questions which did not lead clearly to a comparison of perspectives:

- To what extent is it true that the UN contributed to the cause of the 1975 East Timor invasion?
- To what extent will UN mandated military intervention be useful to ending the Syrian Civil War?
- To what extent is it true that the UN is guilty of 'selling out' the people of West Papua?
- Were the floods in Jakarta caused by human behaviour?

Some other questions did not lend themselves to debate:

- Should forced marriage be criminalised?

This question very hard to oppose, therefore encouraging a one-sided essay.

Performance across the Assessment Criteria

Many candidates scored their highest marks on the first two criteria. The quality of written expression was often excellent. Clear ideas expressed in simple style invariably earned higher marks than over-ambitious attempts to display the vocabulary of argument and Critical Thinking. There was a small minority of essays of high quality which did not address the AOs.

Evaluation of sources is not easy, and was often seen to be done simplistically. Too many candidates seem to feel the success of their argument rested on insisting that their sources were fully robust, reliable and defensible. In fact the mark scheme rewards an acknowledgment of sources' limitations. These can and should be explained. If the candidate succeeds in entirely discrediting a source the question of why the source was used to support the perspective must be asked. An alternative source should probably have been chosen. Some candidates adopted an unsuccessful approach to evaluating sources by identifying (but not fully understanding) logical and rhetorical fallacies (e.g. "Hamilton creates an ad hominem attack on the progress of China's greenhouse gas emissions prevention in the statement, 'China's efforts to constrain the growth of its emissions have been substantial, and certainly put to shame those of many developed nations.'"). This fallacy-spotting approach was seldom seen to be effective. Many others argued, unconvincingly, that sources that did not declare full details of their authors' educational backgrounds were inherently suspect. In doing so they raised the possibility that they themselves had not fully researched the source.

Criterion six of the mark scheme expects candidates to consider the limitations of the research and comment on any further research that would be useful on that particular topic/issue. Too many candidates adopted a generic approach to this criterion and did not take the opportunity to fully develop their thinking in this area. It is not sufficient to "bolt on" a comment to the effect that it would be good to carry out more research on the topic/question. The comment needs to be fitted to the question being addressed. The essay has attempted to address a question of global importance in 2000 words. Candidates should be encouraged to think about how the argument *could* be developed and *further* researched to enrich the understanding of the perspectives and improve the answer.

Successful essays were characterised by the following:

- A clear question of global relevance, simply expressed and to which different people have clearly differing answers.
- Effective selection of several exemplar sources to support the differing perspectives embodied in those answers.
- Effective evaluation of those sources – content and provenance.

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- The ability to empathise with the differing perspectives raised by the question, and a balanced and even-handed treatment of them.
- Personal reflection to a conclusion, showing where the candidate stands and why. This does not need to be a central position, but one which acknowledges the counter-arguments.

The candidate who does this will have achieved good marks, learned some valuable research and argument skills, and, more importantly, gained an enriched understanding of at least one issue dividing people in the world.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

> **Paper 9777/03**
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> **Presentation**

Key Messages

- More successful presentations use their question to locate a sharp focus within a topic based on the pre-release materials.

- Candidates should be able to differentiate issues, arguments and perspectives in their presentations.

- Reflection and empathy are useful characteristics in deepening and broadening the engagement of a presentation with its topic.

- Supported arguments remain at the heart of successful achievement on this paper.

General Comments

Responses to the Pre-Release Material

The pre-release material for this session consisted of two topics: a main focus on e-readers and books in Documents 1-6, and a subsidiary one on open access to scientific data in Documents 7 and 8. The intention here was to give candidates a broad range of starting points for further research, both between topics and within each individual topic. The vast majority of candidates produced presentations on e-readers, although these varied in the success of their approach. A very large number of candidates formulated questions which were variants of 'are e-books better than printed books?' These did allow for a focus on the resource material and a general debate between opposing arguments, but offered less scope for identifying and organising broader perspectives. Another consequence was that the arguments which were selected, despite often responding directly to the source material, tended to be personal rather than academically conceptualised. An example of this is the candidate who set themselves the question: 'Traditional books vs e-books: which is better for the 21st century reader?' and made the following comment in response:

> *One of the main advantages of eBooks over physical books is their ability to hold a huge amount of books and still weigh no more than your average paperback. As stated in Document 6, they grant you the ability to carry hundreds of books – without having to lug them all around separately and give yourself crippling back ache!*

This approach to organising advantages and disadvantages has a tendency to limit the opportunity for engagement with sources and evidence as well as arguments and perspectives at a level which is challengingly evaluative. More successful candidates took the same debate and source materials, but identified more focused themes, topics and concepts within this. The question, 'is the e-book inherently democratic?' uses this political concept to respond to Document 1 as a starting point in a highly sophisticated but also engaged manner:

> *…upon reading document 1 of the booklet I was most struck by the "radical contingency" claim made by the author Jonathan Franzen, who essentially argued that e-books were not all that "compatible" with democracy or justice. This sharply contrasts with the popular and often accepted beliefs and claims of the technophiles or 'digiterati' as they have come to be known who argue precisely the opposite, that e-books and all new information technology are working to advance mankind to 'ideals' like democracy.*

This candidate uses the introduction of their presentation to sharpen its focus in no uncertain terms, moving beyond a reductive contrast between physical and electronic books to one which reads the debate in terms of a struggle over the definition of 'democracy' between opposing ideological perspectives.

The subsidiary topic, on open access to scientific data, in general produced a larger proportion of higher level responses, largely because they took up the invitation to focus on key ideas such as openness, or the nature of scientific research. Candidates were often able to use this as a starting point for precisely opposed configurations of ideas, as in the question, 'Do the positive effects of open data sharing outweigh the threats to personal privacy?'

Perspectives and sources

A key aspect which differentiates candidates is their understanding of what a 'perspective' is and the extent to which they can identify and organise sources within perspectives. For the purposes of clarity, the definition of 'perspective' with which this paper works is a coherent world view which responds to an issue, made up of argument, evidence, assumptions, and/or from a particular context. An 'issue' here is a topic (e.g. reading) or a concept (e.g. literacy). An argument on the other hand is a line of reasoning leading to a specific conclusion. Successful candidates need to integrate arguments within larger perspectives as they respond to their chosen issues. It is important that these terms do not become confused, as they have done in the case of this candidate's presentation:

> In this presentation I hope to highlight 3 perspectives surrounding my question which is "Do the benefits of reading E-Books outweigh the disadvantages?" Perspective 1 is an interview given by Jonathan Franzen, a novelist, who feels that E- Books are damaging society because of its "lack of permanence". Juxtaposing this to Perspective 2, an article by Suzie Boss…

Here, the idea of a 'perspective' has become blurred with the notion of a source, and individual sources are identified as perspectives in their own right. This can be compared to the following candidate who does distinguish the two:

> But I want to start with discussing the opinions of the proponents of sending e- readers to developing countries. In the article ''Curling Up with E-Readers'', published in the winter of 2011 by Suzie Boss, it is said by Worldreader founder, David Risher, that e-books have solved the lack of access to books…

There is a clear sense that the 'proponents of sending e-readers' constitute a 'coherent world view' or perspective, and then the candidate can go on to evaluating individual articles (i.e. arguments) which exemplify that perspective.

Reflection and empathy

The candidate's degree of reflection and empathy are assessed by the third and fifth bullet points on each level of the mark scheme, so together constitute a significant dimension of the overall achievement. By 'reflection' we broadly mean the degree of thoughtfulness with which the issue and the perspectives on it have been approached; 'empathy' is concerned with the space given to each overall perspective and the arguments within it. One successful candidate demonstrated sympathetic reflection on the issue of 'gratification' in their question, 'have technological advances resulted in a society that demands instant gratification?' They note Jonathan Franzen's belief that

> capitalist society has convinced the general population that they need to have the latest technology, which has resulted in people purchasing e-book readers, as well as electronic copies of the books that they already own. He uses Marxist analysis to infer that capitalism has blurred the distinction between needs – the things that human require in order to survive – and wants – the things people believe they need, usually in the form of material things. … This made me think that advances in technology are leading to consumers demanding instant gratification

Franzen's argument is placed into a larger ideological perspective – that of Marxism – which is used in turn to enrich the issue of 'gratification' by reflecting on it more deeply. It is harder to produce focused quotations of genuine empathy with other arguments and perspectives as this is necessarily a cumulative process over the course of the presentation. However, one can cite here a presentation on whether e-books have 'negatively affected how we process information?' Leah Tether's arguments from Document 6 are first used as the framework for exploring a number of studies which do seem to show – in various ways – that the use of e-books does have a negative impact on information-processing, before turning to 'the other side of the debate' and the perspective that it is 'not just about whether e-books do negatively affect how we process information, but whether it is entirely their own fault and whether we should isolate different purposes for the

different mediums.' This counter-perspective is then patiently explored through a number of individual arguments as a challenge to and interrogation of the assumptions of the first perspective.

Structure

Candidates for this paper are assessed on the quality of their argumentative structure in response to the question they have posed. 'Lines of reasoning', well-argued and supported, are central to this, so candidates should work to make coherent connections between stages of their argument. A number of candidates chose to structure their presentations by briefly identifying a source, assessing its credibility then evaluating strengths and flaws in its argument before moving on to the next source and following exactly the same sequence. This approach produces some structure but is not 'well-structured' as this quality requires fluent and purposeful connections between stages of the claims it makes. Well-structured and logically structured presentations, on the other hand, made consistent use of discourse markers to coherently link lines of reasoning. Here, for example, are the openings of successive paragraphs in a Level 5 presentation: 'First of all … However … On the other hand … Also … After contrasting both sides … Despite …'.

Use of sources

Previous reports have commented on the degree of use of sources as being important to the success of presentations. At Level 3, individual sources need to be highlighted, or 'selected' and not simply 'used' in the course of making points. Beyond this, achievement at Levels 4 or 5 requires increasing consistency in 'synthesising' or combining sources to make supported claims. An excellent example of this comes in response to the question, 'Is modern technology having a harmful effect on the way we learn?'

> *Professor Patricia Greenfield, in Science Daily, again concurs that the brain is constantly developing according to use. She states that visual media use enhances data processing, in agreement with Dr Taylor, and also that visual media such as videogames can develop multitasking skills, in agreement with Dr Small. However, Professor Greenfield also expresses the idea that an emphasis on use of visual media may lead to those areas of the brain responsible for analysis, and critical and imaginative thinking…*

The arguments of Small and Taylor have already been developed in dialogue with one another, and now Greenfield's ideas are combined with these in order to enrich but also complicate the perspective which is being developed. Sustained synthesis of sources combines here with a developing line of coherent argument in order to reflect sympathetically on a perspective responding to a specific issue.

Comments on Specific Questions

The invitation for candidates to set their own questions is both an opportunity and a challenge. It is also expected that they receive support from their teachers in this task: although candidates should not be supported in the drafting of the work itself, they should have guidance in approaching the pre-release material and developing a question which responds to it.

The majority of candidates were able to create questions which identified some kind of debate between printed and electronic books. Less successful attempts in doing this were very general: 'are e-books better than printed books?' does not allow for the identification of an issue which could allow for a specific line of argument. Another category of less successful question was the speculative: 'will e-books become a thing of the past?' or 'will e-books replace paper books?' are equally resistant to evidence and conclusions as they rely on events which may or may not occur in the future.

On the other hand, questions such as 'is literacy the key to combating poverty?', 'are e-readers more environmentally friendly than books?' or 'does technology enhance literacy?' are all successful because they construct a debate around one or two key ideas within the topic (such as literacy, poverty or the environment) which produces a more controlled line of argument.

Most impressive were questions which appeared at first sight not to be relevant to the pre-release material but were made so by the sharpness and engagement of the candidate's argument. For example, 'should vandalism be considered self-expressive art?' takes as its starting point the artist Lisa Occhipinti, and her destruction of books to make works of art described in Document 5. Even less obviously promising is the question, 'To what extent should the private lives of politicians be opened up for public view?' Yet the candidate began by firmly identifying the presentation as a response to Documents 7 and 8, continuing 'instead of examining to what extent scientific data should be open for public view, I have decided, given the

huge interest and a great debate at the moment into MPs expenses and private lives of politicians in general, to extend this theme of openness to the necessity to publish and release data about the private lives of all political figures and to determine to what extent is this beneficial to the individual and society at large.' Candidates who do this, sharply defining terms and using them to develop supported lines of argument which engage empathetically with opposing views, continue to be successful.

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Paper 9777/04
Independent Research Report

Key Messages

- Candidates should look carefully at advice offered about questions by the CIE adviser and consider the implications of their questions carefully.

- When using case histories to deal with issues, candidates should be careful to ensure that examples are used as evidence and not simply described.

- Evaluation of evidence lies at the heart of the Independent Research Report (IRR).

General Comments

Though there was a wide range of both topics and approaches, often within the same centre, there was much care taken to ensure that marking standards were applied fairly. The quality of annotation was generally high and it was usually easy to see why marks were awarded. There were many Centres where no mark adjustments were made, or there was some 'fine tuning' and fewer major misapplications of the mark scheme this year. There was more realism in the marking and more awareness between reports which attempted modest evaluation and some supported argument and reports which displayed a much more developed and sustained critical sense.

Some Centres did not attempt to use marginal annotation or limited this to 'AO2', 'AO3'. This gave little indication to the Moderator as to why marks had been given and so the Centres lost a vital opportunity to explain their marking and point out the strengths of their candidate's reports. However, the majority of Centres did take the opportunity to explain the assessment and some of the final summaries were of a very high standard.

The work itself continued to be varied and a tribute to the intellectual curiosity of many candidates, their ability to work independently and to organise a demanding large scale piece of analytical writing. Even when the results were descriptive or inconsistent, the interest in the topic was often apparent and the range of independent research showed real commitment. What follows is advice on raising performance, but it should be read in the context of an overall improvement in key areas such as the use of evidence and the analysis of different perspectives.

Comments on Key Elements

Titles

Advice by CIE focuses on certain key elements. The topic should give rise to a debate. If a title cannot lead to the critical assessment of the evidence behind competing perspectives, then it is unlikely to succeed in terms of the assessment criteria. In general, the use of complex and convoluted wording does not help and candidates should consider whether the issue can be 'turned round' to establish a counter-argument. Thus 'Is pollution harmful?' cannot easily be turned into two perspectives –'yes, it is' and 'no, it is not' the very word 'pollution' has implications of harmfulness. Though some Centres did present titles which were not much more than indications of a general topic, most did frame a question. However, there is a distinction between questions which really need consideration of facts and questions which involve concepts.

To build on the experience of studying Global Perspectives (GP), questions which involve discussions of views, concepts and ideas give more scope than questions which attempt to ascertain situations. So the question 'What problems are faced by children in war zones?' does invite research, but not necessarily discussion or judgement. A strong answer may show strong use of sources and organization of material, but

the answer may really lead to description of problems illustrated by evidence. 'Does the suffering of children in war zones justify international intervention?' opens up considerably more possibilities and the chance to evaluate principles, policies and obligations.

Though the use of quotations are often appealing, candidates are usually better off making their questions as direct as possible and using the quotations in the report. Thus 'Lions led by Donkeys' How true is this view of British leadership on the Western Front 1914-18?' has a nice feel to it, but the more prosaic 'Assess the quality of military leadership on the Western Front' is probably better for the IRR task. The qualities can be broken down and different evidence collected and weighed, without the need for everything in the report to relate back to 'lions' and 'donkeys' – what this means is that 'brave soldiers were poorly led by unintelligent leaders'. However 'donkey' is a term of abuse, but following on from the sort of analysis done in GP it might be necessary to unpack the implications of 'donkeys' – what qualities do they have? Donkeys are often used; they rarely lead and so on. However in the essay the comment, from a German commander, can be analysed – were the British leaders simply lead? Did they have limited initiative and intelligence? Were the troops all 'lions', whatever that really means – brave? Merciless? Hunting in packs?

In addition, questions should offer some possibility for intellectual challenge. Some seem to, but are too complex for the candidate and so end up with description and explanation; some may seem not to but actually are used by candidates to explore very complex matters. Thus 'How valid are Freud's theories of Dreams?' seems on the face of it to be likely to lead to intellectual challenge. However if all that is used are simplified digests from web sites of Freud's views and alternative theories, then the challenge is only in presenting potentially complex material and not judging it. 'Could there be a super hero?' might seem likely to lead to a superficial survey of comics but in fact led to a sophisticated consideration of the physics behind superhero attributes with an extended critical use of evidence.

In the all-important planning stage it is important to consider the

- implications of the question and how it is going to be unpacked;
- perspectives on the issue;
- opportunities for intellectual challenge and the evaluation of at least some demanding evidence.

Evidence and Case Histories

Some topics do lend themselves to consideration of case histories; 'Is capital punishment justified?' for example often does involve the reference to individual cases as do many other sorts of question. However, one of the key elements in a report is the ability to absorb, use and synthesise material. Say a young businessman or woman is asked to do a survey into whether a particular product will sell and the report consists of 'We asked a man in Brighton whether he liked the product (ice cream). He had never tasted this sort of ice cream before and he liked it. He asked his wife if she liked it and she said she did. But his little boy preferred vanilla. Then we asked a lady from London etc.' The business career of the author of this report is not likely to be a long one.

If on the other hand there is a statistical breakdown by region, with the methodology of the survey clearly explained and the findings tested against other surveys and the reliability of the nature of the survey established, then an example may be helpful. 'Within a family, there may be consideration given to the more conservative tastes of younger members, as in the case of the respondent in Brighton whose child preferred the more 'normal' flavour' Thus the age profile of the survey may be significant here as marketing research shows that children often influence the purchase of ice cream. Long accounts of particular instances and examples will not score highly.

Evaluation of Evidence

This is at the heart of IRR as it follows on from the skills developed in GP. Without this, the report is simply an extended essay. The very title 'Independent Research Report' must be kept in mind. Simply cutting and pasting a series of views or running through a description of sources and what they say may show independence in that candidates have chosen the sources, but the real independent element is the ability to weigh up the evidence, to synthesise it and come up with an independent viewpoint which is in turn reflected on independently to check its validity and consider its implications. 'Independent' is seen in a narrow way if it only refers to choosing a title and finding some suitable sources. The true independence is the critical consideration of the sources and the use of the evidence to form a personal perspective.

Research is a matter of selection and discrimination. Long quotations from material which candidates have found are often an indication that the research materials themselves are taking charge, not the candidate. It

may be that the intrinsic interest of the research materials becomes over-dominant. A fascinating article on the music of Shostakovich, for instance may engage a thoughtful candidate, but the issue of whether political control or genuine artistic independence dominated the music may not be helped by an account of the composer meeting Stalin. The issue is the nature of the music and the evidence must relate to that.

All research needs to be evaluated, especially surveys. Can the existence of global warming be determined by asking a random selection of classmates, teachers and parents? Can attitudes to global warming be assessed? What specialist knowledge about framing survey questions might inform the methodology of such a survey? Does it make any difference how the question is framed? What decisions affected the wording of the survey and the target group? Were the findings set against other evidence? What use was made of the findings? Different types of evidence require different types of evaluation. Evaluation simply by provenance is not likely to be effective in terms of specialist literature. There is little point in saying that X is a distinguished scientist who has spent a lifetime studying global warming and has been published by a reputable peer-reviewed journal if in the next paragraph a counter-argument is also by a distinguished science. To move forward, the arguments themselves need to be assessed, the nature of the evidence on which they are based and the degree of corroboration from other sources need to be considered. In reports which gained higher level marks, the depth and sophistication of the evaluation of evidence is often a distinguishing factor and there is no 'short cut' by a simplistic consideration of the origin of the sources alone. Comments such as 'this is from a website which may be unreliable; this is from a newspaper and may be biased because the paper wants to sell copies' should be avoided.

To sum up:

- The evidence has to be worth considering. There is no point in selecting poor quality evidence from uniformed blogs.
- Evidence has to be relevant. It is still possible to see comments such as 'This is a textbook on world history generally so has little on the topic I have chosen' To go back to the word 'independent' – this is an independent report so an independent decision should be made to find a better source
- Evidence must be assessed and not just juxtaposed or explained sequentially in a list of sources
- The quality and nature of the evidence needs to be assessed both at the start of the process (is there really enough relevant and accessible evidence for the question to be answered? And at the end: did the evidence prove sufficient to offer a convincing view and what were the implications of accepting the evidence that determined by final view?

There were many answers which showed real awareness of the issues, which gives confidence that the skills developed in GP are being taken into IRR and that work of real depth, empathy and imagination is being produced. Where there was a genuine answer to the question, candidates with less developed critical use of evidence were able to benefit considerably from the whole experience of planning and carrying out a large scale research project. Where abilities and interests could be developed by a suitable question results were often creditable and the overall experience obviously worthwhile and rewarding.

Centres were aware of the need to justify rewarding the process as well as he product. Where there was sound internal moderation, this was helpful in linking the marking to the CIE criteria. This remains a challenging exercise for all concerned, but one that offers very real benefits in terms of preparing candidates for both further studying and making decisions in a variety of real-life situations. What continues to be apparent is the very real commitment of centres to this paper and Moderators were grateful for the care and thought devoted to marking and for the chance to read such a range of often thought-provoking and challenging work.