



The Scottish Baccalaureate in Social Sciences

EV Commentary — Exemplar

‘Inequality in Dundee: A Spatial Analysis’

Grade: A

Introduction

This project evidence was submitted with evidence for all five stages clearly presented using SQA templates, along with an assessor report. The centre had supported the candidate using a social sciences teacher as a mentor, with additional support and internal verification from another subject teacher. The project made creative use of several social sciences, especially Modern Studies and Geography. It aimed to look at inequalities in the city of Dundee, especially as regards health and wealth of the population.

Proposal

The proposal showed a clear focus and a practical application. The key idea was that inequality maps would be drawn up, and linked to an anticipated presentation to key stakeholders including council and government officials. This was logically argued and showed clear thought and planning at this early stage.

The link to citizenship was strongly argued. It was impressive to see the candidate not only considering the worthwhile aims of the project, but also anticipate the effect it may have in its immediate audience in terms of broadening their world view.

The way in which knowledge of social sciences would be used was exemplary in this section. It was very helpfully laid out subject by subject, explaining the contribution that each would make, rather than just listing the relevant subjects.

Skills development was also thorough and well thought out. It was great to see the candidate consider the contexts in which he would need to use the skills in future — for example his university studies, and overall the analysis showed a balance and considered view of his current strengths as well as priorities for improvement.

This section met all Grade C and Grade A criteria. The proposal set challenging but realistic goals, was robustly argued, and made substantial links across the relevant social sciences.

Plan

The plan included a timeline which divided tasks mainly over the first school term. This was fairly simplistic, but was backed up by an impressively detailed explanation of the key tasks and how they would be achieved. Research methods had been well thought out, for example the choice of telephone rather than face-to-face interviews on the basis of practicality and convenience. Likewise, the presentation methods had been carefully considered; the use of Prezi having been chosen over more obvious alternatives because 'this style of presentation gives the project a legacy...as it does not require [the candidate] to present it every time'.

The dependencies showed a mature consideration of the potential threats of not getting enough data, and of the need for willing co-operation from a number of people including officials and interviewees.

The contingencies listed were detailed and specific to the project. The candidate had clearly given some thought to the impact of various potential problems, and included realistic potential solutions.

A good method for identifying and logging skills development was identified, with the candidate again showing good insight in noting that bi-weekly entries in a reflective diary would be best.

Presentation of project findings/product

The candidate described how the project had been presented at a seminar to fellow students, using Prezi slides, and the further editing and collation of materials that followed. It was clear that this presentation was worthwhile and well-conceived; the development of the materials into a sustainable resource was clearly explained and very impressive.

Throughout, the candidate showed careful consideration of the needs and interests of his audience. Rather than simply presenting the material in a one-directional manner, the candidate created opportunities to stimulate discussion and gain feedback from the group. In addition, the key product of the project was the development of a unique inequality map, a very interesting and worthwhile endeavour in itself. Clearly this was an excellent presentation phase, which featured critical thinking and analysis, and creative use of resources. It therefore met all grade A criteria here.

Evaluation of project

The candidate's evaluation of the project is short but very insightful and meets all the Grade C and A criteria. He recognised that changes and adjustments had been necessary and/or desirable at various points, at times in response to findings of the early research.

The candidate evaluated the communication methods very clearly. All of the main aspects of communication in the project are covered, and the candidate shows mature consideration of the feedback gained from his research participants. He continued to show his passion for the subject by suggesting a coherent and interesting follow-up project which could be undertaken.

Self-evaluation

The candidate showed a real flair for evaluating his own skills. He makes a valid and reasoned explanation of how his subject knowledge was applied in the process of undertaking his Interdisciplinary Project, and emphasised the importance of citizenship. He clearly enjoyed and responded well to the independent nature of the project, describing it as 'extremely liberating', and has learned a lot from the experience in terms of his own academic strengths and preferences. He also notes how his independent learning has improved.

The self-evaluation of the research process is detailed and reasoned. He identifies certain failings, and shows good awareness of how such pitfalls could be avoided in future, for example reiterating key details at the start of interviews rather than relying on interviewees' memories.

His analysis of interpersonal skill is honest and justified, and he shows a good awareness of how much valuable support he was given — this was clearly not taken for granted. The candidate was satisfied with his time management, noting that there was an element of fluidity in his timescales but that he achieved his main aim of completing the project by Christmas, allowing him to focus on his examined subjects later in the school year.

This section also identified areas for improvement — noting for example that the presentation, while very successful, could have benefited from the use of a microphone.

Overall this is a very strong section which clearly meets all assessment criteria including the Grade A criteria.

Overview

This is a highly impressive piece of independent work which met all of the Grade A criteria. The candidate has identified a specific product — inequality maps — and used a range of skills to develop them. In doing so, he drew on and developed his subject area knowledge from numerous areas of social science, as well as his IT skills. He accessed a range of learning environments, and researched the topic in a creative and challenging way, which sticking to a fairly tight schedule.

The work was then presented to fellow pupils of Modern Studies, with the aim of both developing their awareness of inequalities as young citizens and developing a reusable education resource. The candidate then insightfully evaluated the project, and conducted a detailed self-evaluation. His passion for the topic shone through in all sections.