**Outline and evaluate the use of the cognitive interview.** *(12 marks)*

The cognitive interview has four main parts. The first is to ‘report everything’. Here the witness to a crime is encouraged to recall everything they can remember about an incident. Some things (e.g. a phone ringing) might be considered unimportant by the witness and so not mentioned, but they are encouraged to report everything they can remember, just in case it is a vital piece of evidence.

The second part is ‘cognitive reinstatement’ where the interviewer tries to take the witness back (in their mind) to the scene of the crime. This helps them to recreate the original context, which may jog their memory. The third part is changing the order of recall. For example, they may be asked to recall things in reverse order or to start in the middle. This is an efficient way of getting them to remember details because it stops them thinking in just one way (e.g. assuming that something follows something else because it usually does). The fourth part is to change perspective, trying to seeing things from the perspective of other witnesses.

Research evidence has generally supported the effectiveness of the cognitive interview (CI) over the standard police interview. A meta-analysis of studies comparing the CI to the standard police interview found that the CI produced a significant increase in the amount of accurate information recalled (Kohnken et al., 1999). This shows that the CI is clearly a more efficient way of recalling accurate information.

Research with police forces has also supported the superiority of the cognitive interview. In Brazil, research testing the effectiveness of the CI (Stein and Memon, 2006) has shown that it produces more forensically rich information than the standard police interview. Fisher et al. (1989) carried out a study in a Chicago police department. Much more information was recalled by witnesses interviewed by detectives trained in the use of the cognitive interview. These studies demonstrate the effectiveness of the cognitive interview compared to the standard police interview.

However, despite the advantages of the CI, its use in UK police departments is not widespread. Research by Kebbell et al. (1999) found that many officers trained in the use of the CI reported that they rarely have the time to conduct what they thought was a good CI, mostly because they were unable to conduct all four aspects of the cognitive interview necessary for effective witness recall.

Overall, despite the overwhelming scientific evidence substantiating the effectiveness of the CI, it is evident that the use of the CI in practice may be limited due to time constraints.