

National Certificate of Educational Achievement

2011 Assessment Report

Media Studies Level 2

- 90276 Describe the relationship between a media product and its target audience**
- 90278 Demonstrate understanding of messages and/or values, and representations within media texts**
- 90279 Demonstrate understanding of a media genre**

COMMENTARY

This was the final year for examinations to assess these achievement standards.

Across all three standards, the candidates who achieved were those who clearly addressed the question and used appropriate examples from texts or other relevant evidence. However, many relied on using generalisations and unsubstantiated assertions, especially when trying to discuss implications or effects. These candidates were often unable to demonstrate that they had an understanding to achieve to Merit or Excellence level. Candidates also struggled to achieve when they wrote about a number of different elements or features at a very superficial level, and provided limited or irrelevant supporting evidence.

Some candidates answered a question that they had prepared for, rather than directly answer the question that was posed in the paper. In some cases, virtually the same essay was presented by candidates from one school, with little or no reference to the question in the paper. Generally, these candidates did not achieve.

Candidates who referred to historical events or ideas often used inaccurate material or made generalisations of which the evidence did not support the arguments or analysis they were attempting to make.

Choice of appropriate texts to illustrate the features or aspects was a key to success for many candidates. Candidates who did not clearly identify relevant details from the texts or draw links to the effects or implications of such features were often disadvantaged by their poor choice of text. In some cases, these were inappropriate for their age group. Candidates' lack of understanding of the meaning of the material they were discussing was also evident. Sometimes, the link between the feature and the example was very tenuous and did not provide enough evidence to go beyond an Achievement level of understanding.

STANDARD REPORTS

90276 Describe the relationship between a media product and its target audience

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- identified an appropriate media product and target audience
- described a feature of the relationship between a media product and its target audience
- described in detail how either a technique was used to make a media product appeal to a target audience, or how information gathered about a target audience, or another factor creates a relationship between a media product and the target audience
- used appropriate supporting evidence from a media text and/or other sources when discussing the relationship between the media product and the target audience.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- did not identify a specific media product or specific target audience
- did not discuss the relationship between the media product and the target audience
- made vague, generalised, and/or emotive responses about the relationship without sufficient evidence
- did not address the specifics of the question, e.g. presented a close reading of a media text (particularly magazines/print texts) with no reference to the relationship created
- wrote brief answers that did not provide enough specific detail to achieve.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- explained the relationship between the media product and its target audience
- provided valid reasons how and/or why the technique used to make the media product appealed to a target audience, or information gathered about a target audience, or another factor created a relationship between a media product and the target audience
- provided specific and often detailed evidence from a media text and/or other sources to support their explanation of the relationship.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- analysed the relationship between a media product and its target audience
- provided clear analysis of how and why identification/measurement or a technique to make a media product appeal or other factor(s) creates a relationship
- provided valid observations, with relevant and specific discussion of at least one major implication and/or effect(s) for the relationship
- used specific, supporting evidence from the relationship and linked this to implication(s) in wider society – such as economic/commercial considerations, social/political climate, cultural considerations, etc
- often made comparisons between similar media products in order to highlight the significance and effects on the overall relationship
- often referred to information from a range of specific sources to support their argument, i.e. media commentators/professionals, and/or academic theories, and/or articles, websites, etc
- discussed the possible effects on the overall relationship.

OTHER COMMENTS

The first feature (appeal technique) was by far the most popular option. Overall, students wrote better responses on this feature than students who chose identification/measurement or other factors.

Candidates who chose recent New Zealand media products were better able to support their answers with valid evidence than candidates who struggled with international products or historical case studies. Products that worked well were New Zealand Television programmes including *Reservoir Hill*, *Go Girls*, *Outrageous Fortune*, *Shortland*

Street, Breakfast (TVNZ & TV3), What Now; local radio stations *The Edge, The Rock, More FM*, etc; and local magazines *Metro, The Listener, Tearaway, Wild Tomato*, etc.

The use of outdated material or referencing products that were no longer available made it difficult for candidates to realistically talk about the relationship between the product and audience.

Candidates who used media products (such as a film) that were clearly more suited to other areas of analysis (such as genre) found it difficult to identify a relevant feature or show understanding of the relationship between a media product and its audience.

The use of generic media products such as radio stations and magazines, selected and specific products such as television and print advertisements (e.g. *Lynx, McDonald's* and beer advertising campaigns), video games, one-off films, sporting events, and media products that appealed to a very broad and generic target audience were often not a successful choice.

International media products were sometimes used well by candidates, particularly television dramas/sitcoms (*Glee, Family Guy, Modern Family, and Jersey Shore*) and magazines (*Girlfriend, Cleo, and Dolly*). However, some candidates still discussed inappropriate material or subjects. This was particularly evident from *Family Guy* and aspects of *Outrageous Fortune*.

Some candidates unsuccessfully used speculative assertions, especially when trying to show the appeal of characters in television to a particular demographic.

Candidates who chose to write on the third feature ('other factors/societal implications'), often lacked the ability to analyse these implications beyond basic identification and explanation. Speculation, generalisation, and a lack of historical knowledge or evidence of the complexity of the relationship were problems for this feature.

90278 Demonstrate understanding of messages and/or values, and representations within media texts

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- identified and described an appropriate group/idea/issue/event or place
- described an aspect of the representation
- gave specific and relevant examples from at least two different media texts.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- did not demonstrate understanding of a representation in the media through lack of evidence
- described superficial details from media texts that did not support their description of the representation
- discussed only one media text

- did not describe an aspect of the representation.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- provided explanations for at least one of the following
 - why the representation exists
 - the reasons for the difference between the representation and reality
 - why the omission and/or selection of material reinforced or subverted stereotypes/messages and/or values
 - the effect the producer of the representation had on the representation
- demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the connection between the representation and the society in which it was created. This was often done by contrasting the historical representation with the modern-day representation.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- discussed the effect of the representation on the development of media products using valid evidence that referred to academic discourse and/or research
- discussed the implications of the stereotypes/messages/values using valid evidence, often referring to the theory of communication models
- discussed the effect of changing societal values and the implications of these changes on representations within the media
- referred to a number of media texts.

OTHER COMMENTS

Candidates who used opinion, generalisations and/or conjecture as a basis for discussing the implications of representations in the media did not present the analysis required for Achievement with Excellence.

Candidates who used fictional groups or individuals as a basis for their discussion on representations largely failed to demonstrate an understanding of how representations operate within the media.

90279 Demonstrate understanding of a media genre

ACHIEVEMENT

Candidates who were awarded Achievement for this standard demonstrated the required skills and knowledge. They typically:

- answered the question carefully, often using terminology from the question
- described the genre
- defined the chosen aspect
- provided specific examples from two texts for the chosen convention
- showed a clear understanding of how the chosen aspect affected the genre.

NOT ACHIEVED

Candidates who were assessed as Not Achieved for this standard lacked some or all of the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement. They typically:

- did not define the genre
- did not provide clear examples from two texts
- wrote briefly on many conventions without providing specific detail
- wrote about one convention with an example and then another convention with an example
- provided poor or irrelevant examples
- attributed historical attitudes to current films
- wrote about links between genre and society that was appropriate for Level 3 but did not answer the question for Level 2
- did not describe how their chosen feature/aspect was an integral part of the genre
- chose poor or irrelevant changes/conventions in relation to their genre
- discussed the aspect in terms of representation rather than genre.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH MERIT

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Merit typically:

- used specific and clear examples from texts to support their points
- focused on one aspect with appropriate examples
- showed a clear understanding of why the chosen aspect was important to the genre.

ACHIEVEMENT WITH EXCELLENCE

In addition to the skills and knowledge required for the award of Achievement with Merit, candidates who were awarded Achievement with Excellence typically:

- demonstrated a clear understanding of the genre and their chosen aspect was supported with relevant examples
- remained focussed on their aspect throughout the essay
- were able to show a clear understanding of the implications of their aspect as far as the genre and/or society were concerned
- used detailed, empirical evidence
- were able to analyse the aspect's function/importance to the genre at the beginning of the essay, supported with specific details from texts.

OTHER COMMENTS

Many candidates demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of their genre that went beyond just one or two texts. This allowed them to talk more holistically about the feature within the genre, rather than just in two texts. In the weaker answers, it appeared that candidates were close reading individual films that had something in common, rather than showing an understanding of features that defined or were significant for the genre as a whole.

Inappropriate texts were being used by some candidates, e.g. R18 Horror films.

Some candidates had little idea of what 'significant features' were for their genre. For example, the changing role of women in film/society was discussed, without connecting to the specific impact on the chosen genre.

Many candidates who tried to support their ideas with historical issues or details provided inaccurate information or generalisations. These did not readily support answers. Few candidates used reference to specific experts or critics to give support to generalisations.