

Assessment highlights insights

from Kylie Wilson, Principal Education Officer for English as an Additional Language

Q Why was this student response selected for Assessment highlights?

A Jenny delivered an engaging and perceptive response using Garth Davis's film *Lion*, a text based on Saroo Brierly's autobiography *A long way home*. Jenny used aspects of the film *Lion* as a springboard to develop Saroo's character to challenge the perspectives represented in the film through the creation of a eulogy for one of the main characters, Susan Brierly. The response was insightful, moving and used key stylistic features of the genre. The response demonstrates high-level descriptors for all three criteria.

Q How has the student effectively responded to the school's assessment instrument and demonstrated the qualities of the top performance-level descriptors (PLDs) of the instrument-specific marking guide?

A In the role of Saroo's character, Jenny delivered a eulogy for his mother Susan, remaining faithful to the springboard text while exploiting the genre patterns and conventions of a memorial service honouring her life. The student demonstrated maturity and sensitivity towards personal experiences around Susan's journey to become a mother and her advocacy for overseas adoption programs. Jenny opened the response using the words of British poet Robert Browning to describe Susan's approach to parenting — 'Motherhood: All love begins and ends there'. This encapsulates the mood and tone of the eulogy and the respect he had for the mother who gave Saroo opportunity and a new life in Australia. Jenny's approach to this assessment was purposeful and showed a deep knowledge and understanding of the studied text in terms of the ways cultural assumptions, attitudes, values and belief underpin texts and invite audiences to take up positions.

Q What were the qualities or features of the student's response that made it stand out from other student responses?

A For the Knowledge application criterion, Jenny demonstrated subtle and complex creation of perspectives and representations of concepts, identities, times and places, and discerning use of aesthetic features and stylistic features to shape meaning for particular purposes and contexts. This is evident in the manipulation of first-person narrative perspective to create a new insight into the character of Saroo and his relationship with Susan, and juxtaposition between the safety of life in Tasmania and harsh streets of Calcutta, and imagery of memories and nostalgia. The use of metaphor prompts critical and emotional responses from the audience, as does the use of anecdotes, such as his mother baking Saroo his first birthday cake and visiting India to meet his biological mother after his extensive search using Google Earth.

For the Organisation and development criterion, Jenny illustrated discerning use of the patterns and conventions of an imaginative text and the role of the speaker/signer/designer to achieve a particular purpose and relationship with audiences. The context of a memorial service to commemorate his adopted mother revealed the high level of respect and admiration that Saroo's character had toward his adopted mother Susan. The final line ended with a wish for Susan's 'compassionate flame that continues to burn'.

In Textual features, Jenny demonstrated discerning use of spoken/signed and non-verbal features to engage and move the audience in the context of a memorial service. The deliberate use of language choices was emotive and reflective to engage viewers, and drew on the memories and recounts of Saroo's mother and her contributions to their family using words of praise and personal anecdotes. For example, describing his mother's unconditional love for him and stating that 'she didn't just give me a home; she gave me a life'.

It is important to note that students in English as an Additional Language can still achieve top performance-level descriptors with minor errors in delivery. There is no expectation to memorise their response. Reading from palm cards or a script is acceptable.

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