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Facilitated Self-assessment and peer- assessment of performance

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Assessment & Feedback Use Cases

FACILITATED SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PEER-ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE

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Date: 2014

This use case describes how one assessment method was designed and implemented by a lecturer or a group of lecturers in DIT. The use case was compiled from an interview conducted as part of **DIT's RAFT project (2013-14)**, the aim of which was to provide a database of assessment practices designed and implemented by academic staff across DIT.



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Lecturer

Mary Lennon

Programme and year on which assessment was offered

Bachelor of Music, Years 1-2

Description

The lecturer's role in this module is one of facilitator and the module is designed to promote self-assessment and peer-assessment amongst principal study pianists on the BMus programme. Students perform for their peers, give an assessment (critique) of their own performance and discuss the challenges involved in practising and preparing the piece for performance. This individual contribution by the performer is followed by group discussion focusing on the performer's peers' assessment of the performance. The lecturer participates in the discussion and provides input on technical/interpretative issues where appropriate.

Why did you use this Assessment?

It promotes reflective practice, helps students develop their powers of musical criticism, encourages analysis and discussion, exposes students to the 'language of practice' associated with performance and, in encouraging students to articulate their views, develops verbal communication skills. It also provides a platform for performance and constructive feedback from peers in a non-threatening environment. The concept of peer-learning is central to the process.

Why did you change to this form of assessment?

This approach has been adopted from the beginning.

How do you give feedback to students?

Oral feedback.

What have you found are the advantages of using this form of assessment?

It promotes reflective practice, helps students develop their powers of musical criticism, encourages analysis and discussion, exposes students to the 'language of practice' associated with performance and, in encouraging students to articulate their views, develops verbal communication skills. It also

provides a platform for performance and constructive feedback from peers in a non-threatening environment. The concept of peer-learning is central to the process.

If another lecturer was using this assessment method would you have any tips for them?

- Respect each student's contribution and encourage students to respect each other.
- Try to create an environment which is 'non-threatening'.
- Be conscious of the impact of peer assessment on the student and ensure that the feedback is always presented in a constructive way.
- Be aware of students who may be less confident, more retiring or lacking in confidence and encourage them to contribute and to have confidence in their assessment.
- Avoid 'taking over'/ interfering too much and turning the session into a 'masterclass' focusing on lecturer assessment.
- Encourage dialogue and discussion as much as possible giving students the opportunity to respond to the assessment of their peers.
- Focus on encouraging students to assess the 'process' of performance and encourage them to bring 'work in progress'.

Do you have any feedback from students about this assessment?

Student feedback is positive and included comments such as the following:

- I found it a relaxed environment where we could play for each other knowing we were not being judged etc. Therefore the idea of performance in other situations became less daunting.
- I learned how to control nerves better and how to keep calm. For me this was the most important thing I learned. Also, ways to practise, different interpretations from the class, especially in years 1 and 2.
- Learning new ways to fix problems and learning how to cope with performing for a class.
- Knowing what was wrong with something and how to fix it was the most important thing I think. Also, learning how people cope with nerves and memory. Also, I think, as painful as it was to say something in first year, I definitely think that it made us more aware of what the performer was doing right and how things could be improved.
- When a comment was made on one particular feature of the playing I found it very helpful as it would focus my attention on that and make me listen e.g. pedalling.
- After the class we would always practise, so I think that speaks for itself!
- It was something we could aim towards as a chance to play pieces we were in the middle of learning (to see how things were going) or nearly ready (to see if they were ready). It also took

most of the fear out of performance by showing us how important it is to be fully on top of things and practise performing.

Additional Comments

While there is no formal assessment attached to this module, self-assessment and peer-assessment are central to the learning environment. It could perhaps be described in terms of 'assessment for learning....'.

It is possible that if the student contributions were to be formalised in the context of formal self-assessment and peer-assessment contributing to a 'mark' or grade, it could perhaps inhibit the quality of the learning that takes place.