

2014

Class Presentation

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Title: Class Presentation

Lecturer: Claire O'Connell

Programme and year on which assessment was offered

- Bachelor of Music, Year 1
- Bachelor of Music Education, Year 2

Description

Students prepare and deliver a presentation to their peers based on either a single journal article or a specific topic/issue within music education they have researched. Within some courses, this is done as a group project while in others it is an individual assignment.

Single article: In some courses the article is assigned by the lecturer, while in others, students choose the article they wish to present. After reading the article, students are expected to reflect on the content, identify what they believe to be the most important / relevant issues and to analyse and discuss these throughout their presentation(s). They are also encouraged to evaluate the article itself. In other words, it is not a mere summary of the article. Presentations are based on single articles in years 1, 2 and 3 of both programmes.

Topic: In 4th year, students are assigned a more general topic / issue for discussion. A list of three or four articles is recommended for each topic. Similar to above, students are expected to investigate the issue, highlight, reflect on, interpret and critically engage with what they believe to most important issues and to present these in an analytical and discursive manner.

With regard to both forms of this activity, students are expected to draw on their wider reading and research, prior knowledge and personal experiences as learners, teachers and musicians. In addition, group presentations should show evidence of group work and discussion.

At the end of each presentation, all students get an opportunity to raise an issue of interest, ask questions etc and this often generates good discussion and debate.

In most courses, the class presentation is accompanied by (and supplemented by) a written report. In cases where the presentation is a group one, students submit an individual report.

Why did you use this Assessment?

Already prescribed in the Module descriptors. However, I believe this to be a very valuable form of assessment as it allows students to engage with subject matter at a more analytical and personal level.

How do you give feedback to students?

Written report evaluating both the presentation and the written commentary. I also try to meet the students on an individual basis.

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

- Students are given the opportunity to develop their analytical thinking and reflective thinking skills
- Whilst, each student or group of students research and present just one article/topic, this activity allows for a broad range of interesting and relevant topics to be introduced to all students. In addition, students are introduced to the concept and world of research.
- Topics can be chosen with due regard to the composition of the group and current issues within the field of study (in this music education)
- Opportunity to develop and practise oral presentation skills and communication skills (key transferrable / employability skills)
- Allows the lecturer to get a greater and more immediate insight into students' thinking
- Group presentations gives students the opportunity to articulate and discuss their own thinking at an analytical level and to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of the others in the group. They can spark ideas in each other and where this works well the end product has the potential to be very creative and dynamic
- Students learn how to present ideas in a succinct and coherent manner

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

- Students do not always fully engage with the article/topic or do not understand what they are expected to do or have not developed the analytical and critical thinking skills required and as a result merely present a summary of the article. In such cases, students often become more discursive in the Q&A session immediately following their input.
- Researching and selecting articles/topics is time-consuming for the lecturer. (However, the advantages here are obvious – lecturer keeps abreast of recent developments within the field)

- Students do not always work as a group and it is obvious that they have merely split the contents of the article between them. In addition, all students in the group receive the same assessment mark, yet all students may not have put in the same effort
- Some students are very nervous in presenting to their peers which may hinder their delivery and performance.

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

Students need clear guidelines in how to approach such an activity. It is also useful to clearly articulate the assessment criteria in advance, stressing the importance of critical and analytical thinking and evaluation.

Do you have any feedback from students about this assessment?

On the whole, students report that they find this form of assessment interesting and in some cases 'enjoyable'