Rehearsing Popular Music In A Band

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Conference: STEPPING OUT OF THE SHADOWS
Guildhall School of Music & Drama  5th April 2011

Rehearsing popular music in a band

Dr Mark Pulman
University of Huddersfield
Rehearsing Popular Music in a Band

This presentation is about…

• the research process, individual, collaborative, institutional and development

• the outcomes for individual and institution, rather than research findings
Tutor As a Band Member

- Band rehearsing and performance modules
- Invitations to join bands
- Supporting learning
- Tutor as equal band member rather than MD
- Entering their life-world
- Ethnographic experience stimulates research
An ‘Interpersonal Underworld’

Willingness to help others?  Verbal contribution?  Creative input?

Personal responsibility?

Interpersonal skills?

Able to listen to the others?

Give and take?

Patience?  Able to accept feedback appropriately?

Effective leadership - an Alpha Male?

Open to ideas?

Gives constructive feedback?
Module Evaluation

*Performance Management* – a year one module includes rehearsing and performing for 3 gigs:

‘*Christmas Party’* (for a club)
‘*Venues and Audiences’* (at schools)    ‘*Tribute evening’* (in a pub)

Thoughts/ideas for improving practice?

Informed by practitioner research?
Thoughts and Ideas

Involve students in the ownership of the assessment
Employ a peer learning and assessment system for the rehearsals
Use third year student peer panels to assess band performances
Improve my practice and build confidence in these techniques

Performance Management

A year one module
The Performance Management ‘Rehearsing and Performing’ Cycle

1. Introduction and training activities
2. Devising assessment criteria
3. Rehearsing
4. Assessing rehearsing
5. Assessing performances
6. Feedback
7. Performances
An Action Research Cycle

1. Planning the activities
2. Action (rehearsing and performing)
3. Collecting data (assessments, observations, interviews, etc)
4. Reflecting (evaluating learning and tutor practice)
My Action Research Cycle

The assignment:
- Class discussion
- Peer assessment training
- Criteria setting

Bands rehearsing

Peer assessment of rehearsals

Interventions

Bands performing

Assessing performances

Interventions

Analysis of data

Assessment feedback

Reflection

Revision and re-application of the cycle
Interventions

Examples of interventions

• changing the method of assessment and assessment criteria
• altering the sequence or timing of the peer assessment
• altering how the senior student peer panels assess the performances

Considerations

• does the intervention disadvantage any bands/members?
• are there occasions where no interventions should be made, in order to clarify, compare, or corroborate any effects?
Interventions:
Method of assessment
Formulation of the peer assessment criteria
Did everyone contribute equally? If so, each member of the group should be given 25% if the band is a four-piece (or 20% if the band is a five-piece, etc). If two members of the group contributed significantly more than their colleagues the distribution of % weighting might reflect this in the following allocation: 15+15+35+35. Allocate a mark for each member of the group. Ensure that marks together total 100%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band member</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Band member</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Band member</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (self)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Peer Feedback Form

Comment on your mark that you awarded to yourself:
................................................................................................................................................

Which two personal qualities or attributes in rehearsals do you think you could improve?
(i)..............................................................................................................................................
(ii)..............................................................................................................................................

Which personal quality or attribute do you think was your strength?
................................................................................................................................................

Comment on the mark that you awarded to band member 2:
................................................................................................................................................

Which two personal qualities or attributes in rehearsals do you think they could improve?
(i)..............................................................................................................................................
(ii)..............................................................................................................................................

Which personal quality/attribute do you think was their strength?
................................................................................................................................................
Please name **three personal attributes or qualities** (‘personal weaknesses’) that you believe can be **developed/improved** in your rehearsing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Patience with others in Take That!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>More focus and concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Learning my part at home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list two personal attributes or qualities (‘personal weaknesses’) for each of your previous band members that you believe they can develop/improve:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lady Gaga</th>
<th>Being a team member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for learning lyrics ahead of rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Clapton</td>
<td>Being more open to feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing more ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bono</td>
<td>More willing to help band mates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening to others’ views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad Smith</td>
<td>Being enthusiastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please name **three personal attributes or qualities**, which, in your rehearsing, you think you **can improve or develop** in yourself over the next few weeks. Describe what is the opposite/negative of each.

1. .................................................................................. ....................  
   Opposite.................................................................................. ....................

2. .................................................................................. ....................  
   Opposite.................................................................................. ....................

3. .................................................................................. ....................  
   Opposite.................................................................................. ....................
# Example of a Completed Peer Feedback Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark out of 5</th>
<th>‘Personal weaknesses’ that you wish to improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 = poor</td>
<td>Open to feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 = below average</td>
<td>Willing to help others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 = neutral</td>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 = above average</td>
<td>Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 = excellent</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blinkered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn’t help others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lacking enthusiasm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control freak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lacking confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leaves it until last minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ignores others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contributing ideas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L Gaga</th>
<th>E Clapton</th>
<th>Bono</th>
<th>C Smith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open to feedback</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blinkered</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1/5</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking enthusiasm</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control freak</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking confidence</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control freak</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>3/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing ideas</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please describe three group qualities/attributes that you as a band agree are important to you and on which you will try to improve or develop in rehearsing and be used as peer assessment criteria:

1. ........................................................................................................
2. ........................................................................................................
3. ........................................................................................................

Describe the opposite/negative of each of these:

1. ..............................................................................................
2. ..............................................................................................
3. ..............................................................................................

I agree to these personal attributes being used as peer assessment criteria.

Name .......................................................... Date........
Please name three qualities/attributes or ‘personal weaknesses’ that as a band you all agree ________________ should try to develop/improve in rehearsing:

1. ..............................................................................................................................
2. ..............................................................................................................................
3. ..............................................................................................................................

Describe the opposite/negative of each of these three:

1. ..............................................................................................................................
2. ..............................................................................................................................
3. ..............................................................................................................................

I agree to these personal attributes to be used as assessment criteria for rehearsing with my next band.

Signed……………………………………………       Date………………….
Other interventions:
Altering the place in the cycle where band members carry out their peer assessments

- after the final rehearsal, before the gig?
- after the performance, before receiving feedback about it?
- after the performance, after receiving feedback about it?
**Further interventions:**
Changing the assessment methods with which the peer panels assess the band performances

- assess collaboratively as a panel?
- assess individually and then try to reach agreement as a panel?
- assess using category weighted criteria?
- assess using holistic criteria?
Rehearsing and Performing Cycles

- 32 cycles between 2000-2011
- Year one undergraduate popular music students
- *Performance Management* group module
- University of Huddersfield
Spirals of Cycles

Cycles 1-3 (2000-2001)
Cycles 4-6 (2001-2002)
Cycles 16-32 (2006-2011)

Rehearsing and performing cycle 3
Rehearsing and performing cycle 2
Rehearsing and performing cycle 1
## Data Collection and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection methods</th>
<th>Analysis procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative peer assessment data</td>
<td>Correlation analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with band members</td>
<td>Grounded Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct tutor participant observation</td>
<td>Thematic Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barriers and Problems

- Peer assessment is a time consuming process
- Occasional student absence in peer assessment activities leading to incomplete data
- Learning process for tutor
- Balancing and integrating **Tutor** and **Researcher** roles
Outcomes for Institution

- Module evaluation
- Peer learning process model
Outcomes for My Practice

- Student ownership
- Transparency
- Agreement
- Trust
- A Moral Dimension
- Honesty
- Belief in peer learning/assessment
Outcomes for My Research

- Practice based research
- Appropriating course/module cycles
- Action Research
- Interventions
- Mixed methods
- Publication of findings
End of Presentation

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