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Paper presented by Mark Pulman
Assessing Musical Performance **Conference**
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This presentation concerns aspects of peer assessment involving undergraduate students following the BA (Hons) Popular Music Studies at Barnsley College. The background of this is twofold:

- it examines the introduction of a peer learning and assessment programme onto group performance modules;

- it describes some research into which processes may assist peer assessment and improve student learning.

Why peer assessment?
There are a number of reasons for implementing peer assessment onto our group performance modules:

(i) involving students in the ownership of the assessment process;

(ii) the medium of popular music can be thought of as being particularly amenable to peer assessment in view the part that it has historically has played in shaping the cultural and sociological experiences of young people;

(iii) peer assessment could assist in evaluating an individual's contribution towards the collaborative group performance;

(iv) it has the potential for improving students' learning behaviour for example SEDA paper 63(1991);

(v) the reliability of the assessment of performance itself would increase given the greater number of trained markers and that opportunities whereby students can be involved in assessment should be welcomed;

(vi) students often work harder when knowing that their achievements are going to judged by their peers!

Inter-Peer and Intra-Peer Assessment
Two assessment methods are being used: students assess other students, a process described by Brown (1999) as Inter-Peer assessment and secondly, students assess other students with whom they have been working, which she describes as Intra-Peer assessment.

Inter-Peer assessment
Year 3 performance students act as assessors for the year 1 group performances. By involving year 3 performance students as inter-peer assessors we believe that the performances benefit from receiving assessment and feedback from students having greater experience in terms of performance ability and knowledge of performance standards.

Inter-Peer Assessments processes
Students are initially placed into four- or five-piece bands by the tutor. The project brief is discussed and it is explained that year 3 performance students will assess the group performances and tutors will moderate the students' marks should this become necessary. In order to promote transparency and ownership students are invited to generate their own assessment criteria. This is via brainstorming and an extensive list is typically generated. A vote is taken whether to retain or discard each criterion (because of duplication or being inappropriate). They then consider whether any criterion should be given a different weighting. . Voting by a show of hands occurs at every step of this process. For a performance assignment in December 2000 the following assessment criteria was generated:

Audience communication
Entertainment value
Enthusiasm
Flow and continuity
Musicality
Presentation
Professionalism
Tightness

Year 3 Assessment Panel
The tutor on the basis of providing a balance of individual expertise - vocals, guitar, bass, drums and keyboard, puts year 3 assessment panels together. Occasionally students themselves are invited to put together their own assessment panel. Usually performances take place in a pub or club and run as a live evening gig, with between 4 and 8 bands performing.

At the end of the performances the student panel meet the tutors with their feedback and assessments. Student panels regularly impress tutors with the professionalism in which they approach their task of reaching agreements. They also supply written feedback for each band. This is sometimes written up on the night of the performances, but more usually they arrange to meet again to produce a more considered (and legible!) write up.

Out of the 100+ band performances that have been peer assessed over the last four years, only a few instances have required tutor moderation. There has been a remarkable consistency of agreement between peer- and tutor-marking, which in turn has provided confidence for the student assessors and encouragement for tutors in observing students increasing their knowledge of making judgements based upon assessment criteria.

Intra-Peer Assessments of the performances
In order to identify the individual contributions of each band member to the rehearsing it was decided base intra-peer assessment upon a technique adopted by Hunter (1999). An individual evaluation form is given to each student asking them to rate each band members' contribution of to the assignment. If students believe that there was an uneven contribution within their group then there should be a comment that explains why a particular student was allocated more than or less than the average. Occasionally bands are asked to complete these, without consultation and in effect under examination conditions when it is desirable to minimise collusion. Usually however, groups are encouraged to collaborate to decide upon a fair distribution. (The accompanying comments are not returned for reasons of confidentiality although their marks may indicate the nature of these). The intra-peer assessment is then factored into the summative band mark.

It is interesting to compare intra-peer assessments with the mark that the band received as a whole. There is a relationship between bands that feel that they had performed well (before receiving their band mark) and a tendency to distribute their intra-peer marks evenly (meaning everyone had contributed equally to rehearsals). Conversely bands that perform less well are more likely to allocate a varied distribution representing an unequal contribution to the rehearsing.

Group cohesion and intra-peer assessment
There is some concern regarding the effect upon group cohesion that requiring a student to assess his fellow band members might have. If so, it seems desirable to evaluate, in advance, the desirability of maintaining group cohesion against the risks caused by employing intra-peer assessment.

It is of interest to examine whether a relationship exists between the effects of the inter- and intra-peer assessments band personnel changes. For example following an assignment in March 2001 the personnel changes following performances that were both intra- and inter-peer assessed were compared with the mark that each band received as a whole (the inter-peer assessment). The average mark for the bands that did not wish to change their line up was higher than those bands that did wish to change. The suggestion is (but typical of group cohesion comparisons elsewhere) that the higher the mark, the more probable the band will remain

together and, the lower the band mark is, the more probable that they will wish to split-up.

Assessment criteria

Recent assignments have introduced ways in which students may generate assessment criteria that go beyond the production of the single criterion 'contribution to rehearsals' This approach is based upon both group and individual ownership of the assessment criteria. Students are invited to produce any number of qualities that are deemed to be important to the rehearsal cycle and worthy to be considered as an assessment criterion. . They each produce a list of five of these qualities that they regard as being the most important qualities for them in terms of group work rehearsing. For the assignment in December 2001 the class produced the following qualities, ranked in terms of frequency.

Because students rehearse in groups, it was thought appropriate that this should be reflected in a number of criteria - typically three - generated collaboratively by each group as mutually agreeable qualities by which each student is assessed. In order for a student's **individual** involvement to be reflected, each student generates a further set of three criteria through which they themselves are uniquely assessed by the rest of their group. Many of these tend to be single word personal qualities such as Enthusiasm, Organisation and Attendance, or short phrases such as Contributing to ideas – all qualities that are highly appropriate to the formative rehearsing stage of the activity. Finally, for each of these students were asked to produce the opposite, eg: Patience-Irritability

Example of a student's list of qualities:

It is then possible to produce a matrix in which each could rate each other in terms of both their individual and group qualities.

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|Band D |Group Qualities       |Individual Qualities                         |
Rate each person/ quality using  4,3,2 or 1  Attendance (lack of  attendance) Listening skills (ignorar
---------------------------
|Attendance        |18  |
|Enthusiasm        |12  |
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Organisation	12
Patience	10
Team working	10
Musicianship	8
Social skills	8
Compromise	8
Musical Versatility	7
Leadership	6
Experience	5
Contribution to ideas	4
Listening skills	4
13 other qualities	< 4

Agree on the THREE most important factors that identify the quality of each member's individual contribution to YOUR group? Identify THREE more that are individual to you.

1 Attendance (lack of attendance) – **band** quality

2 Listening skills (ignorance) – band **quality**

3 Enthusiasm (apathy) – band **quality**

4 Organisation (disorganised) - **individual** quality

5 Social skills (unsociable) – **individual** quality

6 Patience (intolerance) - **individua**l quality

NAME: Eric Clapton