

Landscapes: the Arts, Aesthetics, and Education 16

Don Lebler
Gemma Carey
Scott D. Harrison *Editors*

Assessment in Music Education: from Policy to Practice

 Springer

Assessment in Music Education: from Policy to Practice

Landscapes: the Arts, Aesthetics, and Education

Volume 16

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Editors

Don Lebler trained as a drummer in his youth and began working professionally in music while still at high school. Memberships of pop groups including the Avengers, Axiom and the Mixtures took him to Europe in the late 1960s where he was based until 1974. A desire to be part of the developing local recording industry brought him back to Brisbane where his career included teaching, performing and a major focus on work in recording and television studios. He started teaching at the Queensland Conservatorium in 1995 and accepted a full-time position in 2001. His work in the Bachelor of Popular Music programme led to an interest in research, completing a Doctor of Education in 2007. He is an ISME CEPROM Commissioner and leads the OLT Assessment in Music project. His research into assessment has produced frequent international speaking invitations and a number of international research collaborations.

Scott D. Harrison is currently the Director of the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, where he lectures in music, research methods and musical theatre. In 2010 he was the recipient of an Australian award for university teaching, and in 2012 he was made a National Teaching Fellow. Scott has experience in teaching singing and music in primary, secondary and tertiary environments. Performance interests include opera and musical theatre as both singer and musical director. His major research areas are music and well-being, vocal education, research training and masculinities. Scott's most recent publications include *Perspectives on Teaching Singing* (2010), *Perspectives on Males and Singing* (Springer, 2012) and *Research and Research Education in Music Performance and Pedagogy* (Springer, 2013). Scott is co-editor of the *International Journal of Music Education*.

Gemma Carey studied at Queensland Conservatorium, specializing in keyboard. While performing initially drew her to music, teaching has become her passion. Gemma has developed innovative techniques in learning and teaching and has established pedagogy at both undergraduate and graduate levels and for community teachers. She completed her Doctor of Education in 2004 and has since established a reputation as one of Australia's foremost authorities in keyboard pedagogy. Gemma is Deputy Director (Learning and Teaching) at QCGU and a well-known author in the areas of performance pedagogy, curriculum, and learning and teaching. Her recent articles have appeared in *Music Education Research*, *British Journal of Music Education* and *International Journal of Music Education*.

Contributors

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Melissa Cain is a flautist and educator with a passion for Asian and Pacific musics. She has qualifications in music, education and Indonesian and ethnomusicology and studied Javanese and Sundanese gamelan while a resident in Singapore for 20 years. Melissa's doctoral work explored the ways that philosophy, policy, teacher training and curriculum documents effect practice in the music classroom. Her current research interests include culturally diverse musics education, music and health intersections, and assessment in music in conservatoire settings. Melissa is a researcher and lecturer and project manager for the OLT-funded Assessment in Music project at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

Jim Chapman is a composer, musician, lecturer and researcher whose recent work has been focused in African fusion music. He obtained a BA and a Dip Psych from the University of Queensland in the 1980s, a BMus from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in the 1990s and a PhD in African Cross-Cultural Composition from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in 2007. He lived in South Africa from 1994 to 2000 where he wrote and recorded a six-part radio documentary series in 1999 for ABC Radio National, entitled ‘When the West Met the South, the Music of South African History’. He also has deep roots in the use of music technologies and has managed research projects into the innovative uses of mobile technologies in team collaborations and online learning systems. His current album *Afro No-Clash* contains 11 compositions performed by a variety of groups including Kabombo Kombo, The Esplanados, Topology, The String Quartet of the Southern Hemisphere and Quinte Bentos. He has lectured at university since 1986 in psychology, organizational studies, communication and music and is currently a Senior Lecturer in the School of Creative Arts at the University of Newcastle. His research interests include African music, music education and intercultural syncretism.

Ryan Daniel holds a Bachelor of Music (Honours) degree (Class I and University Medal), a Master of Music degree in chamber music performance and research and a PhD in piano pedagogy. He also holds the FTCL (Trinity) and LMusA (AMEB) performance diplomas. Professor Daniel was formally appointed as “Foundation Head of School of Creative Arts” at James Cook University from 2007 to 2011, leading to the establishment of new undergraduate programmes as well as the design and development of a specialist arts faculty. In 2011 he was awarded the Career Development Association of Australia ‘Research Award’ for the best article by an Australian author published in the *Australian Journal of Career Development* in 2010. He maintains an active performance, teaching and publishing profile, the latter in leading international publications including the *British Journal of Music Education*, *CoDesign, Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* and *Music Education Research*. Professor Daniel has achieved significant awards for his teaching, including the JCU Vice Chancellor’s Citation for teaching excellence (2004, 2006) as well as a national ALTC Citation (2010).

Gerardo Dirie is Senior Lecturer in Music Theory and Composition at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, Brisbane. He is a composer born in Cordoba, Argentina, where he studied at the National University. He is a founding member of the Collegium Center for Music Education and Research in Cordoba and worked in this institution until 1987. Later on, as a Fulbright Scholar he obtained master’s and doctorate degrees in Composition at the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. He has served as Assistant Director of that university’s Latin American Music Center until 2003, when he moved to Brisbane. His works for electroacoustic media, chamber ensembles, choir and the theatre have been presented in broadcasts and stages internationally, such as Carnegie Hall and Town

Hall in New York, the National Theatre in Taipei, the Indiana Repertory Theatre in Taiwan, the International Music Festival of Istanbul in Turkey, the Colon Theatre in Buenos Aires in Argentina, the Nezahualcoyotl Hall in Mexico and the Quito Cathedral in Ecuador, among many others. His music appears in recordings from Crystal Records, Melos, Indiana University, Doblemoon, Eroica Classical Recordings, Aqua and his own Retamas Music Editions label. Besides his career as a composer, Dr Dirié has been an active clarinet player, bass player, conductor, percussionist and Early Music performer.

John Encarnacao is a performer, composer and educator and has taught music analysis, performance and composition at the University of Western Sydney since 2004. His first book, *Punk Aesthetics and New Folk: Way Down the Old Plank Road*, was published by Ashgate in late 2013. Notable recent projects include the composition of the score for Alana Valentine's play *Tinderbox*, recorded by his trio Espadrille, and *Spider and Lamb* (2011), the third album by his song-oriented project, Warmer. April 2013 saw the release of the debut album of his new rock group The Nature Strip, *Stars Turned Inside Out*. John has also recently completed *Tarantula Variations* for viola and piano.

Helen English brings to tertiary teaching considerable experience and expertise from working in a wide range of music environments at diverse levels of the profession. From 2003 to 2008, she was Executive Officer for NACTMUS (National Council of Tertiary Music Schools), where she gained considerable insight into teaching and learning across the tertiary music sector. Helen's first appointment as lecturer was at the University of Tasmania in 1997. She is currently at the University of Newcastle where she is Programme Convenor for the BMUS degree and where she has been closely involved in the design of a new BMUS programme, including a more inclusive and diverse syllabus for performance courses and new ways of assessing Principal Study students. In 2009 she trialled new modes of teaching and assessing keyboard skills for incoming students, for which she received a faculty teaching award in the same year. She is currently working on a project (in collaboration with ANU) to enable students from low socio-economic backgrounds to study music at the tertiary level.

Jonathan Holmes studied at Monash University and the University of Tasmania. He was appointed to the Tasmanian School of Art at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education in 1973 and remained a member of staff when the school became a faculty of the University of Tasmania. He was a member of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council from 1978 to 1982 and was a Trustee of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery from 1990 until the end of 1993. Jonathan has been Deputy Head of the Tasmanian School of Art for several terms and is concluding a five-year term as Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning with the Faculty of Arts, UTAS. His chief research interest is the history and curating of contemporary Australian art, and much of the writing he does is published in exhibition catalogues that are associated with the University of Tasmania's Plimsoll

Gallery. He also has a research interest in wilderness and natural environment issues, particularly in relation to the visual arts, and continues to undertake research in the field of nineteenth-century French art and criticism.

Diane Hughes is Senior Lecturer in Vocal Studies at Macquarie University and is the Director of Learning and Teaching for the Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies. In 2013, Diane received a Vice Chancellor's Citation for an outstanding contribution to facilitating student engagement and learning through the design of contemporary and innovative music curricula. Diane has an extensive background in contemporary popular singing pedagogy and has been an invited speaker at conferences and seminars. Her work within the industry has involved artist development and recording. Diane's research interests include vocal artistry, vocal pedagogy, vocal recording, vocal performance and singing in schools; current research projects include career pathways in the new music industries, emotion and voice, and collaborative producing in recording. Research on singing in schools led her to become an advocate for the development of cross-curricula voice studies in school education. Diane is currently the President of the Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing (ANATS).

Sarah Keith graduated from Macquarie University with a BA (Hons I) majoring in Contemporary Music and in 2010 completed a PhD titled 'Standards for Deviation: developing laptop performance of generative contemporary electronic music'. This doctoral research comprised an investigation of technologically mediated performance and a creative component involving the design of a laptop improvisation and performance system using Max/MSP. Research since then comprises music production technology, computer-mediated composition and popular music. Sarah currently convenes the Music Technology suite of units and also teaches in media production.

Mary Lennon is a Senior Lecturer in Music at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama in Dublin, Ireland, where she teaches piano and music education. A former Head of Keyboard Studies at the conservatory, her research interests include piano pedagogy, instrumental teacher education and practice-based research. She is a founder member and former President of EPTA Ireland (European Piano Teachers' Association) and a founder member of the ISME (International Society for Music Education) Forum for Instrumental and Vocal Teaching. She was a member of the AEC (European Association of Conservatoires) Polifonia INVITE Working Group on Instrumental/Vocal Teacher Education (2007–2010) and is currently a member of the AEC Polifonia Working Group on Assessment and Standards.

Annie Mitchell has a PhD in Music (Third Stream Composition), Master's Degree in Education (Adult Education in Music), Bachelor of Arts (Music) and Diploma in Education (Music/History). Her doctorate included the composition of two jazz

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Heather Monkhouse is a Senior Lecturer at the Tasmanian College of the Arts, Conservatorium of Music, where she lectures in clarinet performance, chamber music, music history and music theory. From 2005 to 2012, she was the course coordinator for undergraduate degrees at the conservatorium and the Director of its academic programmes. In 2006 she was the recipient of the Vice Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Award and, in 2008, was awarded a University of Tasmania Teaching Fellowship. Heather has completed an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Fellowship (2008–2010) in which she investigated performance assessment in tertiary music schools and is currently Deputy Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching) for the Faculty of Arts at the University of Tasmania.

Eve Newsome has had a versatile and exciting career as an orchestral, chamber and solo player of oboe, oboe d'amore and cor anglais. Several awards allowed her to undertake advanced oboe study in Europe and improvisation studies in London. She has been appointed to orchestral positions in the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony and Orchestra Victoria and guested with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Singapore Symphony and the Sydney, Adelaide and Queensland Symphony Orchestras. She is a founding member of a range of ensembles including the recently formed Brisbane-based ensemble The Lunaire Collective, an ensemble in residence at the Queensland Conservatorium in 2013. Eve's specialty lies in the area of 'flow' or optimal experience in music performance, and she is currently completing her PhD at Griffith University in this area. Eve's guest appearances have been both in Australia and overseas, including both teaching and lecturing at the Sibelius Academy in Finland.

Duncan Nulty is an Associate Professor in the Griffith Institute for Educational Research at Griffith University. He is nationally and internationally recognized for his expertise on institutional policy and practice in the assessment of student learning and academic standards. He also has expertise in curriculum design and the evaluation of educational programmes including student evaluation of teaching. Over the last three years, he has provided strategic leadership on these matters through three large projects (two national) and through ongoing consultancy to several institutions across the sector. His leadership focusses on assessment practice

and policy and the development of consensus moderation practices which support comprehensive quality assurance of assessment standards.

Jessica O'Bryan is currently a PhD student in the School of Music at the University of Queensland. Her interests lie in the unique characteristics that constitute the one-to-one singing lesson, and her research focuses on the values, beliefs and practices of the participants of these unique settings. Her study will explore the experiences of tertiary singing students and their 'eminent teachers' through a medium-term remote observation of this setting, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. A singer and experienced teacher in singing, Jessica has performed with the Victorian Opera and Opera Queensland and maintains a busy teaching schedule in addition to her studies.

Kelly Parkes is a tenured Associate Professor of Education specializing in Music Education. She earned a PhD in Music Education/Instrumental Pedagogy from the University of Miami, Florida. Her current areas of research are focused in higher education pedagogy, assessment in music and music teacher education. Her publications can be found with journals such as the *Journal for Research in Music Education*, *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *International Journal of Music Education* and *British Journal of Music Education*. She is currently the Chair of the Assessment Special Research Interest Group of the National Association for Music Education's Society for Research, and she is the permanent Chair of all competitions, as well as the Research Room, for the International Trumpet Guild. Dr Parkes has been recognized by her university for her teaching and research; she was awarded the XCaliber Award for teaching with technology, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award for her research about pedagogy within higher education and the Exemplary Program Award for her work impacting student learning with ePortfolios.

Paul Sabey was the Director of the Musical Theatre Programme and Associate Principal at the Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, London for 23 years (one of the premiere courses for musical theatre training in the world). While studying, his musical *First Time* was published by Samuel French Ltd, and he made his European conducting debut in 'Dido and Aeneas' at the Nantes Opera House, France, with the European Chamber Orchestra and the English National Opera.

Paul is in constant demand as a musical director, vocal coach and vocal arranger and regularly gives master classes in musical theatre. His work has taken him around the world working with singers and musicians as an academic and artistic programme advisor and as a musical director, including Thailand, USA, New Zealand, Denmark, Sweden, Amsterdam, Singapore, France, Germany, Malaysia, Italy and Russia. As a musical director, he has directed and vocally arranged over 60 London West End Showcases and countless shows and produced and conducted eight annual Christmas concerts at St. Pauls, Covent Garden, London. Graduates who have trained under Paul can be found performing in musical theatre and drama in all media throughout the world.

D Royce Sadler is currently Senior Assessment Scholar in the Teaching and Educational Development Institute at the University of Queensland and Professor Emeritus in Higher Education, Griffith University. His teaching and research interests on the formative and summative assessment of student learning began in 1973. Since 2000, his work has focused on assessment-related issues exclusively in higher education, particularly criteria, grading, academic achievement standards and the role of assessment in improving learning and capability. Formerly a member of the Editorial Advisory Boards of two international assessment journals, his publications are widely cited.

Ian Stevenson is coordinator of Sound Technologies in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at the University of Western Sydney. He is currently studying for a PhD at the University of Sydney. His research interests are in the philosophy of sound, sonic communication and sound design. In recent years, he has produced and engineered a number of CDs of contemporary chamber music for Australian labels Wirripang and Tall Poppies and completed a series of collaborative projects with choreographer/dancer Tess De Quincey and author/academic Jane Goodall. Prior to joining UWS in 2004, he held a variety of positions in product and information management for leading Australian technology companies and worked in theatre sound design and system engineering in Australia and the UK. He has worked as an artist, engineer, sound designer and production supervisor in galleries, theatre, live music, broadcast and post-production in Australia and Europe.

Diana Tolmie has been awarded both a Churchill Fellowship and a Queen Elizabeth Trust Award. She has worked in national and international touring musicals as well as internationally recognized orchestras, playing clarinet, saxophone and flute. Diana is currently an Associate Lecturer of Music Studies and Professional Practice as well as teaching clarinet and saxophone at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University. She has designed and implemented a unique vocational preparation strand of courses entitled 'My Life as a Musician', which is the topic of her higher degree research. Her current activities include her role as Artistic Director of the Queensland Conservatorium Saxophone Orchestra, where she has led the group on a number of exciting national and international tours and performances. Diana has released many recordings through CD Baby and iTunes with her group Collusion – a nationally recognized new music chamber group based in Brisbane.

Richard Vella is Chair and Professor of Music and Head of School (Creative Arts) at the University of Newcastle. As a composer, Vella's diverse output includes works for orchestra, large ensemble, choir, film, chamber music, burlesque cabaret, music theatre, site-specific performances and popular music genres. His film credits include 'Light Years', 'Parklands', 'Renzo Piano: Piece by Piece' (for which he won the 1999 Australian Screen Composer's Award for best music for a documentary) and 'Mr. Strehlow's Films'. His feature film music score 'Travelling Light'

(2003) received the nomination 'Best Music for a Feature Film' by the Australian Film Institute.

Publications discussing his performance work are *Arias: Recent Australian Music Theatre*, Redhouse Editions, 1997; *The Oxford Dictionary of Australian Music*, Oxford University Press, 1998; and *The Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, Currency House, 2003. His book *Musical Environments: A Manual for Listening, Improvising and Composing*, originally published by Currency Press (2000), has become a recognized text for secondary and tertiary music courses throughout Australia. In 2003, an international edition of this book entitled *Sounds in Space, Sounds in Time* was published by Boosey and Hawkes, UK. Between 1992 and 1996, Vella devised and implemented a pioneering interdisciplinary postgraduate and undergraduate music programme within the School of Mathematics, Physics, Computing and Electronics at Macquarie University. This laid a foundation for the later established Department of Media, Music, Communication and Cultural Studies within the Faculty of Arts.

Katie Zhukov is a master's graduate from the Juilliard School of Music, New York, and has a PhD from the University of New South Wales, Australia. She has been investigating teaching of sight-reading to pianists at the University of Queensland and previously taught at the Sydney, Queensland, and Western Australian Conservatoriums. Dr Zhukov has published on instrumental music teaching in *Psychology of Music*, *International Journal of Music Education (Research and Practice)*, *Music Education Research*, *Research Studies in Music Education*, *British Journal of Music Education* and *Australian Journal of Music Education* and presented papers at World Conferences of the International Society for Music Education, International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition, International Research in Music Education Conference, Reflective Conservatoire Conference, Performer's Voice Symposium, National Conferences of the Australian Society for Music Education and Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conferences. She has recorded three solo CDs of Australian piano music and edited three books of the *Wirripang Australian Piano Anthology*.

Chapter 1

Future Directions for Assessment in Music

Don Lebler

Abstract After drawing attention to some of the key literature on the importance of assessment for learning, this chapter provides a brief outline of some of the topics and approaches that are included in this publication. The role of self-assessment and peer assessment is discussed, along with the common practice in higher music education of assessment by juries or panels of experts. The importance of external factors such as national, professional and institutional regulations is discussed in both the European and Australian contexts. Holistic assessment is discussed, including the established practice of relying on predetermined criteria as well as using the specific strengths and weaknesses of each assessment activity as the basis for grading and feedback. A range of practices are introduced that provide examples of assessment in music that will be of interest to all those working in higher music education and assessment in the creative and performing arts more broadly.

Keywords Assessment criteria • Assessment rubrics • Criteria and standards • Higher music education • Music • Teacher feedback

1.1 The Importance of Assessment

A publication such as this book provides a sound platform on which to consider the future of assessment in music. The broader education literature includes strong support for the notion that assessment has a substantial influence on what and how students learn. As David Boud and Associates put it:

Assessment is a central feature of teaching and the curriculum. It powerfully frames how students learn and what students achieve. It is one of the most significant influences on students' experience of higher education and all that they gain from it. The reason for an explicit focus on improving assessment practice is the huge impact it has on the quality of learning. (Boud & Associates, 2010, p. 1)

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Getting assessment right is therefore vital if students are to develop the attributes and skills an educational experience is intended to develop: we must ensure that assessment practices align well with the learning objectives of a program of study. This provides particular challenges for the assessment of complex creative tasks such as music performance, where musical excellence is the primary goal for students graduating from music programs.

However, the development of the ability in students to assess their own work while it is under development is also important because “students themselves need to develop the capacity to make judgements about both their own work and that of others in order to become effective continuing learners and practitioners” (Boud & Associates, 2010, p. 1). Self-assessment is not unusual in music students, particularly performers who do much of their practice alone, monitoring their own progress towards goals set by their teachers and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their work in progress (see for example, Monkhouse, Chap. 6), so it is surprising that self-assessment and peer assessment are comparatively uncommon in higher music education.

Self-assessment is used to a greater or lesser degree in a number of instances reported in this book: the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) requirements for graduates of bachelors degrees could be seen as an encouragement for such participatory assessment practices as self-assessment and peer assessment, requiring graduates to be able to demonstrate “cognitive and creative skills to exercise critical thinking and judgement in identifying and solving problems with intellectual independence” (Australian Qualifications Framework, 2013, p. 16) and to be responsible and accountable for their own learning.

1.2 Assessing Music

As higher music education has moved increasingly into the broader higher education context and conservatoires have become regulated independent degree-conferring institutions or colleges of established universities, a range of assessment methods can be found in courses that support the central study which in most bachelor of music programs is music performance: these assessments would typically include exams, tests, quizzes, assignments and projects, all of which are mentioned in this book. But it is the assessment of music performance that is characteristic of higher music education, and the future of this form of assessment is in the hands of higher music education institutions which will need to respond to all kinds of pressures including increasing interest in comparability of standards between countries and institutions, various national requirements for structures and standards of education programs, the institutional policies of host universities, the established practices within institutions, the need to induct students into assessment to enhance their abilities as self-directed learners, and the core requirement of valid and reliable assessment.

Assessment by juries or panels of experts is the dominant method for assessing music performance in higher music education. The use of external examiners is common for graduating or post-graduate performances, and this could be seen as a process by which standards could be shared between institutions. For those institutions that are part of universities, benchmarking between institutions or among groups of institutions is a common practice, and benchmarking of some music assessment has taken place in this context, certainly in Australia. In Chap. 6, Heather Monkhouse situates Australian Bachelor of Music programs in the context of similar programs in America and Europe, in terms of their content and duration, but importantly, in terms of their assessment practices through a summary of international guidelines for such degree programs. Her analysis demonstrated that Australian requirements aligned with international expectations, though the collection of additional evidence to support international comparability is needed.

1.3 Sharing Standards

At the international level, the ICON project conducts international seminars regularly, and assessment is a recurring theme (ICON – Innovative Conservatoire, 2014): some of these sessions have included assessment exercises using a variety of assessment methods including holistic assessment as well as criteria-referenced assessment at various levels of specificity. While limited in scope, these seminars serve to develop shared understandings of standards as well as appreciation of the variety of practices included in the jury or panel system. One of the variables in this system is the degree to which examiners work collaboratively, how much discussion takes place and at what stage that occurs. There are also several methods for calculating marks including presenting individual examiner's marks but averaging them to calculate a grade, negotiating among examiners to agree on a marks range, or to agree on a collective mark taking all examiners' views into account.

The European Polifonia Working Group on Assessment and Standards has also conducted workshops on assessment of music performance for participants from a range of European conservatoires. These have included exercises in assessment as described by Mary Lennon in Chap. 3, which describes the activities of the Working Group, highlighting the challenges of developing a shared understanding of standards across the diverse range of policies and practices to be found in the European Community, where each country cherishes its individuality but also strives to simplify the complexities student mobility within the European Higher Education Area through enhancing transparency and comparability of standards between institutions and countries. Their work has indicated that there is a wide variety in assessment practices, including variations in the composition of panels or juries, though the use of panels to assess at least graduating students' performance seems ubiquitous. These kinds of activities that develop international and inter-institutional sharing of standards will be an important aspect of quality assurance compliance for those institutions who are required to be able to demonstrate comparability with international equivalent programs.

1.4 Criteria

Like many in the higher education field, the Working Group has been influenced by the work of Royce Sadler who writes eloquently in Chap. 2 about the customising of criteria in response to the work submitted for assessment, so that appropriate weight is given to those aspects of the submission that are particularly noteworthy. This process bears striking similarity to the holistic assessment of music performance, which is more common in practice than criteria-referenced assessment of music performance. He also drew attention to the desirability of inducting students into this way of assessing, developing their ability to monitor the quality of their own work while it is under production. In Chap. 11, Eve Newsome describes holistic assessment as traditionally applied in the assessment of music performance along with criteria referenced methods in common use elsewhere in academic life, and some located in the field of higher music education. She proposes a combination of these methods, with the holistic assessment being explained by the selection of points on a scale for each of a number of criteria statements.

Elsewhere (see for example, Sadler, 2009, 2010) Sadler has written convincingly about the positive aspects of holistic assessment, and provides support for much existing practice in the assessment of music performance from the point of view of an eminent assessment scholar who is not from the music discipline. Holistic assessment is not uncommon in music: it is a firmly established norm for the assessment of performances, and often takes place in parallel with more structured criteria referenced assessments when the latter processes are required, as described by Newsome in Chap. 11. In Chap. 9, Diana Blom, Ian Stevenson, and John Encarnacao describe their experiences of using rubrics to enhance the transparency of assessment, finding substantial positive aspects including benefits for the provision of feedback.

1.5 Some Possibilities

In Chap. 5, Katie Zhukov draws attention to the range of types of assessment possible in the music performance, and to the apparently low uptake of alternatives to the established assessment of performance by panels of experts. Possibilities include engaging in a broader range of evaluation tasks, engaging students in the development of assessment criteria, using technology and recording for self- and peer evaluation, and helping students to develop graduate attributes appropriate for the twenty-first century, and in at least some locations, required by regulations.

It would seem that holistic assessment of music performance has support in current practice as well as from the assessment literature (see for example, Lebler, Harrison, Carey, & Cain, 2013). The challenge for the future of this form of assessment will be the need to demonstrate rigour, reliability and validity, as well as a degree of comparability of standards within and between institutions and

countries. The Assessment in Music project has developed a collection of recordings of assessment performances for internal use in consensus moderation exercises as well as for sharing with other institutions, and other organisations and institutions maintain similar collections. Being exposed to the standards that apply in other places contextualises our local standards in a broader field: while it is not necessary that standards are identical in all locations, practitioners should be aware of any differences and these differences should be transparent and acknowledged. This project is described in Chap. 4.

In Chap. 3, Lennon describes the overarching goals and challenges for European higher music education institutions in the post-Bologna era, with an emphasis on internationalisation and leadership for the sector being provided largely through projects associated with the European Association of Conservatoires. Jonathan Holmes led the process of developing the Threshold Learning Outcome statements for the Creative and Performing Arts, and together with colleagues, he describes the Australian context in Chap. 4, highlighting the role of recent regulatory changes relating to the assessment of program learning outcomes.

These changes have generated responses from institutions including those mentioned in Chap. 13, where Annie Mitchell describes her process for embedding the teaching and learning of many traditional skills in new contexts, and the manner in which their assessment aligns with a variety of learning outcome statements. In Chap. 17, Diane Hughes describes assessment processes in vocal studies units of a contemporary music program that use reflective writing to enhance abilities to be self-monitoring and formative feedback produced using a levels of achievement rubric. Similarly, in Chap. 12, Hughes and Sarah Keith describe an assessment process that is designed for a varied student cohort in a non-auditioned program and the alignment between course assessment items and various learning outcome statements as developed over time as learning outcome requirements have changed. This process demonstrates the extent to which institutions must be able to report the demonstration of learning outcomes in the current Australian context. In these cases—and others—new regulations have provided a focus on program level learning outcomes and discipline threshold standards, and mapping course learning objectives and assessment activities in this context has become a necessary aspect of the design of learning and assessment in some locations.

The Assessment in Music project team describe their process for mapping assessment to a range of learning outcome statements including program learning outcome statements for Australian bachelor degrees in Chap. 4. In Chap. 7, Melissa Cain reports on participants' perceptions of assessment through focus group discussions. The student participants had strong views and were interested and informed about assessment: though they relied heavily on micro instruction from teachers as part of their learning, they acknowledged the importance of holistic self-assessments for their future development. Their preference was for holistic assessment elaborated on through reference to criteria. In Chap. 18, Jessica O'Bryan, Scott D. Harrison and Paul Sabey report on teacher participants' perceptions of a continuous assessment process used in a Musical Theatre program. Teachers award marks for up to 20 sub-categories of activities, and students are given access to

these results three times each semester, along with other routine formative feedback. As is often the case with complex assessment processes, teachers drew attention to increased workload while acknowledging that the benefits for students justify the additional work. The reporting of such activities as these in the academic literature is an important aspect of the continuing development of assessment practices: by sharing evolving practices, we can avoid reinventing the innovations of others.

1.6 Sound Practices

The assessment literature provides strong support for the development of learning ability in students: eminent scholars including Boud and Sadler argue convincingly for an increased focus on the development of the ability to be self-monitoring. A number of assessment practices are included in this book that address this issue. In Chap. 8, Ryan Daniel and Kelly Parkes describe the nature of assessment in the routine (usually weekly) performance lesson, which typically includes frequent formative assessment by the teacher. They proposed a shift from the teacher as primary or sole provider towards a focus on developing the student as a self-directing and monitoring professional. In Chap. 10, Richard Vella and Helen English describe processes by which creative and critical thinking has been included in a variety of courses and how it has been assessed. The critical reflections included as assessment items develop self-assessment abilities and will therefore have a lasting benefit. In Chap. 14, Gerardo Dirié gives an account of three variations he has used in the assessment of music theory courses to enhance student learning. Self- and peer assessment are included, and music analysis portfolios include works chosen by the students, demonstrating the intent to develop autonomy in students. The development of the ability to be self-assessing is common to the learning objectives of all of these activities.

In Chap. 15, I describe an assessment process in a popular music degree which combines the development of creative and technical skills with the study of the history and analysis of popular music, along with opportunities to undertake broadening courses as part of the degree. This complex assessment process is central to learning in this program, and includes self-assessment, peer assessment and assessment by teachers: it is accommodated in a bespoke online application that has automated many of the submission processes in a context that emulates the design of popular social media applications. In Chap. 16, Jim Chapman describes what he calls his marking machine, a process in which two or more markers are able to assess a number of students simultaneously as they perform various roles in a musical ensemble. Assessment includes a range of four roles required in professional music performance: playing a melody, soloing, accompanying and band leading. Each student performs all roles at various times during a performance before an audience of peers. He also describes the development of spreadsheets that have enabled efficient presentation of information to markers as well as quick delivery of results to students. Both of these instances of assessment in music

have embraced technological solutions to the challenges of scaling-up effective practices: rapidly developing interactivity and sophistication of processes in technologies of all kinds will continue to provide solutions to existing and developing problems, and in future, they will enable practices we have not yet imagined.

1.7 Looking to the Future

In Chap. 19, Diana Tolmie and Duncan Nulty describe assessments used in a sequence of courses called “My Life as a Musician” in which students are prepared for their university studies as well as their professional lives after graduation. These courses responded to an emerging awareness that there was insufficient connection between Conservatoire studies and the demands of professional careers after graduation. This alerts us to the need to remain relevant to our communities, to prepare our graduates for their likely futures, which are increasingly going to involve a need for well-developed abilities to act as a self-monitoring professional in a rapidly changing environment.

As stated at the beginning of this introductory chapter, assessment has a major impact on learning and the nature and quality of students’ assessment experiences will influence their development as self-monitoring professionals. This book provides stimulus for thinking about assessment in music and examples of how practices have accommodated new contexts, including the changing demands of community and student expectations as well as regulations. To serve our future students well, their experience of assessment should include a range of methods and practices in which they can justifiably have confidence, and it certainly should include the development of self- and peer assessment abilities. This experience is likely to be technologically enhanced in some way, and it is likely to be highly targeted for learning, while providing appropriate certification of achievement.

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Chapter 2

Backwards Assessment Explanations: Implications for Teaching and Assessment Practice

D. Royce Sadler

Abstract A common approach in assessing student achievement is to advise students before the event of the criteria that will be used in judging their levels of performance. There are strong grounds for being wary about that approach. The main reason is the impossibility of accurately anticipating all the criteria that will turn out to be important in arriving at a sound judgment before actually scrutinising individual student works, which are all more or less different from one another. If, instead, a judgment is made first, taking on board whatever aspects of the work or performance seem to be relevant to the judgment being made, the intellectual processes involved in scrutinising the work are radically changed. Not only that, but the explanations for the judgments will not only differ from one another but also be more tailored to each student work or performance. If students can themselves be inducted into this type of thinking and practice, they will become better able to monitor the quality of their own work while it is under preparation and production.

Keywords Assessment criteria • Creative and performing arts • Assessment rubrics • Criteria and standards • Criteria based assessment • Teacher feedback

2.1 Introduction

The title of this chapter may initially seem curious and perhaps a little awkward, so some explaining is in order. The three key words are *backwards*, *assessment* and *explanations*. Starting with the middle one, this chapter is about assessment, predominantly as it is practiced in many taught courses in higher education institutions across a number of countries. Some of the material is applicable to other levels of education as well, but they are not the first priority. As in all areas of education,

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assessment practice has been steadily transformed over recent decades, sometimes with insufficient scrutiny of the conceptual or philosophical bases of developments and a lack of sensitivity to side effects. The same could be said of older ways of doing things as well. It is now possible to look back at some of the newer practices with the benefit of hindsight, reflect on what is happening and see whether and why some rethinking might be necessary. That is what this chapter is about.

However, the “backwards” in the title does not refer to retrospectivity alone—looking back, say, at the changes in assessment practice over the last years. Backwards also refers to two particular aspects of assessment practice which, if a key characteristic is reversed from the orthodox direction, can lead to improved learning. These two aspects have been identified by a close examination of certain pedagogical processes and authority relationships evident in interactions between teachers and learners. The third term, explanations, is in the title because constructing explanations for why certain decisions or judgments have been made or why certain events occurred requires focused thinking. The act of formulating and expressing an explanation in words changes the thought patterns of the communicator, usually by way of increased precision. It also produces a communication which can be analysed, challenged (if necessary) and refined so that it leads to changes in the ways other people think about things. Articulation provides a tool for consolidating understanding and learning.

2.2 Terminology

Some common terms used in discussions about educational assessment have a variety of meanings (or just nuances), so a few of these are now clarified for purposes of this chapter. The first of these is learning. A person will be said to have learned something when they can do, or now know, something they were unable to do or did not know before. In general, the person should be capable of demonstrating their learning by being able to perform a relevant task on demand (that is, whenever called for), independently of particular others, and to a satisfactory level. Learning results in a person’s increased or improved capability, and their learning is something they “possess” and carry around with them. Capability normally decays over time—sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly—but if circumstances are conducive, it may be regenerated or restored to the full level previously held without huge cost or effort. “Independently of particular others” means that a person’s performance can be demonstrated without support, coaching, scaffolding, prompting or editing by the teacher or another student. The person can operate in a self-determining way. Of course, in many real-life activities, people actually perform in their field of expertise in the company of and with the contributions of others, as in bands, ensembles, orchestras, film and screen productions, sporting teams and industry work groups. The term *achievement* follows on from and expands the third element in the definition of learning—“to a satisfactory level”. Achievement denotes a certain level reached, accomplished or attained

successfully, or a task brought to a successful end. High-level achievement is usually attained through exertion, effort, skill, perseverance and practice.

Learning and achievement are fundamental concepts in education, and it might be thought that there is little need to labour the point. That would be true except for the way achievement is being assessed in many higher education contexts. The pure concept of achievement has become corrupted by the practice of adding into a total mark, score or grade a variety of elements that are not part of achievement itself. This includes credits for participation in various learning activities (such as class discussions, contributions to online forums, and journals or logs of activities engaged in). These may all assist learning to occur, but they themselves are not the learning. Similarly, demerits or penalties for occurrences of non-achievements (such as late arrival or late submission of a piece of work) may reduce what purports to be a *measure* of learning, but do not reduce the learning itself. It is, of course, important for students to be punctual, cooperative and diligent, but adjusting the achievement score or grade is not the way to do it. Other incentives must be used. In any case, it is not uncommon for certain patterns of behaviour to change rapidly when the stakes are high. For example, a musician who misses out on a critical gig because of lateness quickly gets the message. Punctuality is simply a volitional behaviour which can be changed at will; it is not part of achievement. Assessments of achievement should reflect the “status” or “level” reached, regardless of the process, learning pathway, or time taken to acquire that level. The common practice of adding marks or scores during a learning period (such as a semester) distorts what should be an assessment purely of the level of achievement reached by the end of the learning period. This issue is explored thoroughly in Sadler (2010a). In passing, note that the concept of “achievement” may go by other names in different contexts, including attainment, accomplishment, capability, competence (but not competencies or competences), or performance (but not “a” performance). Finally, in this chapter, “appraisal” and “judgment” are used interchangeably.

2.3 Preset Criteria, Rubrics and Scoring Sheets

The first of the two aspects of assessment practice for which reversal is needed is the practice of specifying the criteria for appraisal at the same time students are given an assessment task. The special interest is in assessment tasks that require students to construct complex student works or performances. Appraising the quality of such responses typically involves multiple criteria, often interlocking or overlapping. The assessor’s brain is the main “instrument” for what is clearly a “qualitative” judgment, meaning that it involves no quantification—aspects that are counted or measured. There are no formal rules or routines which would allow a person new to a particular type of response to make consistently sound judgments. Judgments are also involved when criteria are specified in advance; the appraiser needs to have knowledge of what the criteria mean and imply, and how to apply them to works or performances of the relevant type and in a given context. Criteria

are usually formulated and presented in the form of rubrics (cross-tabulations of criteria and standards); grade descriptors; or detailed scoring schemes. The rationale for advising students before they begin working on their responses is quite straightforward. It is to achieve greater transparency for students (no surprises sprung on them after the event); improvements in the quality of works students submit (because they can be guided by the criteria during their production processes); and greater objectivity in marking. In short, the aim is to make the assessment experience fairer, more open and more ethical.

Few would disagree with the spirit of these intentions and what may appear to be persuasive logic. Yet despite those, there are strong grounds for being wary about deciding criteria and standards first and then applying them meticulously to arrive at a judgment. But if the order is to be changed, what happens to fairness and transparency, and what could substitute for using explicit criteria to guide production to create high quality works? Another initial concern could be that an alternative might be more labour intensive for teachers and markers, or that the change would precipitate appeals from students that their work was judged unfairly because they were in the dark about the criteria to be used. Criteria-based marking is not universal practice of course; holistic judgments are common in many areas of the creative and performing arts, but there has been a trend in recent years in a substantial number of institutions to require, as part of their assessment policies for all assessments, that explicit criteria and standards be stated in advance.

Mention has been made of improving the objectivity of appraisal. The issue of subjectivity-objectivity has been hotly debated in philosophical and academic circles for a very long time. It has an enormous literature, complicated by the fact that the terms do not have the same meanings in different fields. Technically, some would classify a judgment by an individual in relative isolation as “subjective” by definition. For some reason, it is often spuriously assumed that a judgment reached through quantifiable processes makes them objective. A particularly useful contribution to this issue is a chapter by Scriven (1972), even though it was not written specifically in relation to assessing student achievement. Scriven pointed out that the quality of a judgment made by a single assessor is not automatically suspect and deserving of dismissal merely because it was made without collaboration and without the help of formal algorithms or instrumentation. Many professionals in the practice of their professions constantly have to rely on their own professional judgments as well as those of others from time to time. Many of their decisions are not independently verified by accurate measurements using a standardised laboratory tests, even though it may be possible to carry out such tests. For some people, only actually carrying out formal tests would make the judgments “objective”. To say that subjective judgments can be soundly based and consistently trustworthy is to imply that they would be similar to those made by comparably qualified and experienced practitioners. Professionals who consistently arrive at sound judgments are effectively “calibrated” against their competent peers and also, in professional contexts, against any relevant socially constructed external norms. However, subjective judgments by individuals can also be poorly based, erratic and unreliable.

Another twist is that in some circumstances quite different judgments may be equally appropriate for different purposes.

In many educational contexts, including music and other creative and performing arts, the quality of a work or performance simply cannot be subjected to measurement, standardised analyses and tests. The sole appeal is to complex human judgments. Appraisals are treated as trustworthy when it is known (or has been verified) that several expert appraisers in the field making judgments about the same diverse collection of works or performances show relatively small variations in their decisions. It would surely then be reasonable to trust solo appraisals by one of those experts because their judgments would be known to have a validity extending beyond that of the individual judge. Another way of expressing that is to say that each judge's personal "decision space" has significant overlap with the personal decision spaces of other competent judges, even though the boundaries might differ slightly. When subjective judgments are treated with suspicion because they are inherently unreliable, it is often said that research proves that is so. However, a significant proportion of the research studies have treated the judges as if they were already well tuned to each other even when no attempt has been made to find out if that is the case or to bring consensus about through training, discussion and collaboration on judgments. In academic environments, a full range of attitudes and conventions exist in relation to consensus moderation processes. At one extreme, each academic is regarded as expert in their field, and on that ground alone is competent to make judgments about the quality of student works without further ado. Highly performing or highly qualified individuals have the "right" accorded to them to judge as they see fit. At the other extreme, professionals in many fields as part of their normal practice are constantly consulting about their judgments, and are more likely to be tuned to one another's values, aesthetic sensibilities and norms.

The debate between holistic versus criteria-based judgments (the latter have also been called "analytic" since the early 1900s) has similarly been a long-term issue, at least since Socrates tried to insist on being told the characteristics of piety, so that these characteristics could be converted into rules to determine whether or not a particular person was pious (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1984). Applying a fixed set of criteria is no doubt systematic, but to equate the resulting appraisal to being objective is a mistake. Subjective judgments are denigrated in many quarters as being basically matters of taste or preference, whereas the use of formal criteria has the appearance of being more objective, and perhaps more scientific. It is true that if a batch of essays is given to a group of markers who each mark each essay, disagreements are common, even radical disagreements. The results of such trials are then often generalised to attack subjective judgments in general. This then leads to the "conclusion" that standardising the criteria and then training appraisers in the meaning and use of the criteria leads to objectivity. However, as indicated in the preceding paragraph, many of the trials carried out have made no prior attempt to "tune" the judges to a common understanding of what high and low quality works are, and the grounds for appraising them as such. An underlying assumption seems to be that if a large-scale complex judgment is "decomposed" into a battery of

smaller-scale judgments, the judgments become more robust and reliable across judges. What in fact is happening is that a large-scale subjective judgment is being replaced by smaller judgments *which are also subjective*. Does combining these automatically make a less subjective judgment? If so, what is the logic behind this, and how could it be demonstrated in practice?

Holistic appraisal, on the other hand, leaves the set of criteria open. When a musical performance is being appraised, it is listened to as a whole. Particular aspects may be noticed as especially finely nuanced and performed whereas other aspects may jar and detract from the performance. Aspects that are routinely expected and present do not call for special noting or comment—they are implicitly regarded as within normal bounds, tolerances or variations and are, and safely can be, taken for granted. Only aspects that affect the quality of performance call attention to themselves. What have just been referred to as “aspects” match the appraisal criteria that are evoked—both are related to observed properties and in effect offer slightly different angles on the same process. The more expert the listener-critic is, the better their powers of detection and discrimination, which is to say, the greater their sensitivity to the cues that matter. This type of high-order appraisal capability does not come without a great deal of practice. Practice requires exposure to different levels of overall quality, and exposure to equivalently valued variations. A further characteristic of this sort of holistic appraisal is that the features or aspects can be meaningfully discussed, and discussion is possible only when the same terms are attached to the same cues. Learning the vocabulary of appraisal descriptions and explanations is a key necessity. In practical music-learning settings, so much of what has just been described is normal and accepted; openness to criteria, and appraisals using non-identical sets of criteria for different interpretations of the same musical composition are taken for granted.

That thinking needs to find its way into judgments of other types of works as well. Whenever a rubric is made up, a set of criteria is settled upon. In practice, this set always represents only a small sample of criteria out of all the possible criteria. This larger pool may be up to ten times greater than the number selected (Sadler, 1989). Most of the possible criteria are never collected together in one place, but they are there. To choose 10 even from a pool that is, for the sake of argument, only 20 in size makes it fairly likely that some student works of the same generic type and being evaluated at the same time for the same purpose will “need” to draw from the other 10 to properly assess their quality. Which ones they turn out to be cannot be decided in advance; they can be discovered only when appraisals are actually under way. The situation is quite different with mass-manufactured objects where strict conformity to the design is the mark of good quality control. Education in general, and music and the creative and performing arts in particular, are not like that. This is a major flaw in the policy of mandating fixed sets of criteria. Other flaws exist as well, but for these the reader is referred to Sadler (2009).

Holistic appraisals allow the person making the judgment to observe the whole performance through eyes that have a strong “appreciation” element to them. They can see or sense how the whole work is coming (if it is a live performance) or has come (if it is an artefact of some kind) together. If it fails to come together as

whole, or alternatively comes together brilliantly, astute judges know why and the proper way to remark on that. Aspects that are instrumental in reaching a decision about quality are noticed, experienced or felt. Most may well be identifiable, have labels, and be communicated in words to others who understand the context. In some cases, it may be impossible to say exactly why a particular judgment is made or a conclusion reached. Does that make it purely a figment of the judge's imagination? Competent judges tuned in to the context and tuned together on judgments simply may not be able to communicate the full extent of their appraisal knowledge, yet they may agree consistently. In that case, it can be deduced that the judges concerned evidently possess some subtle "knowledge" which they are not able to articulate. Sadler's (1980) exploration of the issue of the domain of a person's fullest knowledge and the domain bounded by their powers of articulation are not necessarily coextensive. This means that they do not necessarily have the same boundaries or map exactly on to each another. Sharing of capability in judgments is improved when judges share not only similar linguistic frameworks but also similar frameworks of experience.

What does all this have to say about assessment in higher education? It is this. It is unfair to give students the impression that a set of criteria, specified in advance, will do justice to appraisals of all student works which are responses to the same assessment task. Apart from the issue of justice, the practice also encourages students to focus on scoring well on all the nominated criteria, so that they score well overall. However, it can also inhibit their ability to see and appreciate their own work *as a whole*. That in turn slows down the rate at which they can learn to engage in continuous monitoring of the quality of their own works during production.

If experienced judges in any field can come to a point where their subjective judgments about quality and the reasons for those judgments are in broad agreement, they exhibit what is known as "intersubjectivity". This has two implications. First, there is no determination of quality, value or worth that can be based on anything more fundamental than that. If someone asks for proof that holistic judgments are fuller and more authentic than can be achieved with sets of criteria, or the reverse, the immediate question has to be: What is the true or accurate appraisal with which the result of applying the two approaches can be compared? In many fields, the definitive judgment is and can only be the collectively tuned subjective judgments of experts. There is no benchmark more fundamental than that. That might tempt some in music and the arts to simply proceed as normal, but instead, it should be seen as highlighting a clear obligation to engage in the tuning process among academics themselves, and to figure out how to induct students methodically and deliberately (as producers and budding practitioners) into the same capabilities.