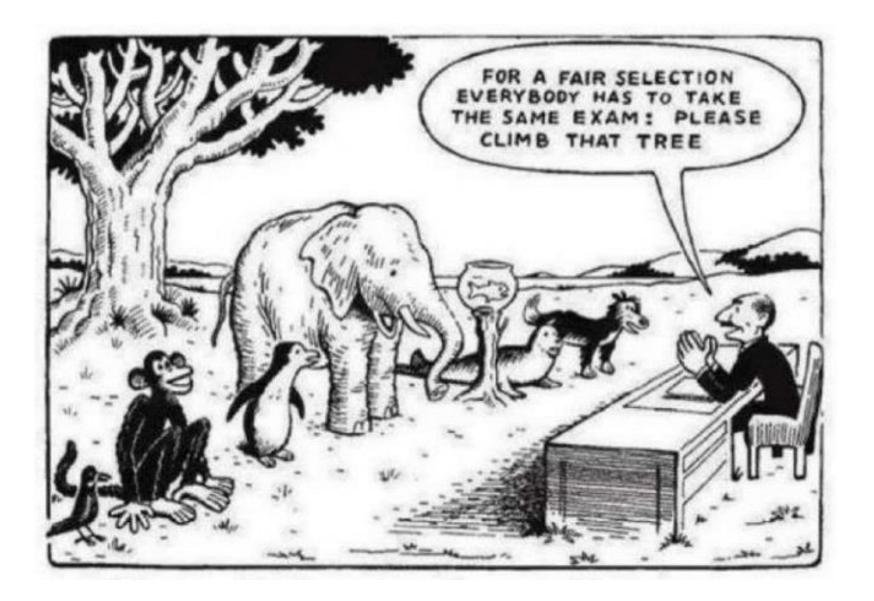# Negotiated Assessment Criteria

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Intro

This project was devised to address these areas of concern;

- a perception that assessment criteria in use for assessing popular music performance did not reflect the varied projects presented
- a desire to develop staff and students' skills in active learning, reflection and self-evaluation.
- a need for enhanced feedback/feed-forward and assessment for learning

Intro 2

In a Popular Music programme, we have students working in many different genres and styles– rock, funk, jazz, soul, punk, dance, metal, ultra-metal, reggae, traditional music, world music, etc. etc.

All these types are very different and have characteristic markers of value.

For Western Classical Music we have the Conservatoire system which is predicated on performance of established repertoire and 'virtuosic' technique.

Intro 3

While for Popular Music we tend to value other aspects;

Composition/songwriting
Improvisation/creativity/musicality
Excitement/performance/viscerality/sexuality
Authenticity/originality/culturality/anthropology

Instrumental technique is generally a means to an end rather than an end in itself

Theoretical underpinnings....

The project was informed by the key principles of the Re-engineering Assessment Practices (REAP) project www.reap.ac.uk
REAP project;

Good feedback practice should:
- Help clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards).
- Facilitate the development of self-assessment and reflection in learning
- Deliver high quality information to students: that helps them self-correct
- Encourage teacher-student and peer dialogue around learning
- Encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem
- Provide opportunities to act on feedback
- Provide information to teachers that can be used to help shape teaching

(Source:Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006)

Theoretical underpinnings 2

2. Kleiman,Paul, Negotiating Assessment, An Approach to Assessing Practical Work, Palatine, 2005.

Verse

At the beginning of the module student and supervisor agree on the key criteria for a given project. For example;

For a jazz project the key criteria might be;

- Improvisation skills
- Feel/groove
- Non-verbal communication

Verse 2

- But for a new Wave/Punk project…

- Cultural understanding/appropriateness
- Energy/attitude/stamina
- Political aspects

Chorus

With their supervisor, students select from two shopping lists their three priorities, for Instrumental Skills…

Instrumental skills	Priority (1-3)	Weighting	Mark	Feedback	Final grade
Technical ability	2	17			
Feel/groove	3	13			
Improvisation	1	20			
Accompaniment					
Authenticity (sound/equipment etc.)					

Chorus 2

- …And Performance Skills

Performance skills	Priority (1- 3)	Weighting	Mark	Feedback	Grade
Stagecraft/performance codes	3	13			
Idiomatic awareness	1	20			
Appearance/dress					
Communication					
Organisational	2	17			

Chorus 3

- These key criteria are given weightings again based on the analysis of the agreed outcomes of the project.

- After the project has been performed student and supervisor have a dialogue;

- Marks are discussed and defended/adjusted/explained/justified

- A final mark is agreed (supervisor has the final say, but should be prepared to explain and justify)

Outro

Advantages;

- The student understands exactly what they have to do to get a good grade.

- The assessment is a dialogue – 'what mark would you give yourself and why?'

- And it's genuinely two-way – 'why did you only give me that mark?'

- The dialogue is itself feedback of great depth and quality

- Both supervisor and student have to be able to clearly articulate their judgements

Coda

Thanks for listening ☺