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Functional Language & Literacy in Practice: A Higher Education Music Context

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Abstract

Currently most Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses do not specifically address functional literacy skills. A student could potentially pass the course, yet still be functionally illiterate. This paper is an attempt to consider what language and literacy issues might mean in practice in the context of Australian music higher education through investigating the role of reflective practice in music performance. A graduating music performance class at the Australian Institute of Music is employed as a case study to unpack the role of functional literacy in this context. Here, aligning cognitive processes with course development may avail opportunities for literacy skills to develop, but it still remains a question as to where such opportunities could exist within the broader education field. Regardless, the aim is to support content understanding by focusing on the nature and practices of academic reading and writing in all education environments.

1. Structure and purpose

The purpose of this paper is to broaden an understanding of literacy in music education beyond notions of music notation and musicianship [17, 2]. Here music literacy is aligned to more recent ideas of 'decision making in musical practice and rehearsals' [14]. First, a functional literacy context is introduced to consider the concerns regarding literacy standards in Australian higher education. Second, literacy is unpacked within a higher music education case study. In doing so attention is drawn to:

- the wide range of literacy skills that are associated with music performance;
- the need to identify and address these skills in music education;
- and the importance of these (non musical) literacy skills to life long learning and career longevity.

Third, the discussion and comments sections examine the important relationship between cognitive development, course structure and literacy outcomes (as a graduate attribute).

2. Introduction

The term 'functional literacy' can be traced back to 1956 [8]. It was later embedded in music education [4], though here we are suggesting its place in the total undergraduate music experience as part of the scholarship of integration [6]. Current media claims about low levels of literacy and numeracy, such as university graduates being unable to read the label on a medicine bottle [5], may be hard to swallow, but there are deeper issues at stake. Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) are complex notions that

pervade all levels of education from primary school to doctoral theses. They are complicated by what we mean by them, how we manage them, and how we measure them (or the lack of them).

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the Commonwealth regulator of higher education in Australia, rightly expects that LLN issues be addressed, though it rightly too does not try to define them too narrowly. This paper is an attempt to consider what they might mean in practice.

3. Examples of functional 'illiteracy'
It is easy for academics to dismiss LLN as something that applies to the primary school or tertiary pathway colleges, but it is the background icing on the cake in mentoring young professionals. There are many examples of functional illiteracy, such as

- the research degree candidate whose literature review is a superficial skim across a chronological narrative with no critical depth to connect deep issues,
- the music students who cannot appreciate the historical influences on musical fashions,
- the engineering students who cannot appreciate the conceptual framework which mathematics contributes to their engineering insights,
- the academic who is happily ignorant of the higher education regulatory framework [*cf.* 4,6].

4. Information Literacy
According to the Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy (ANZIIL) standards [7] an information literate person:

   i. recognises the need for information literacy and determines the nature and extent of the information needed,
   ii. finds needed information effectively and efficiently,
   iii. critically evaluates information and the information seeking process,
   iv. manages information collected or generated,
   v. applies prior and new information to construct new concepts or create new understandings,
   vi. uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information

The NCVER report [19] utilises the ANZIIL standards to investigate information literacy (IL) challenges in both the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) sectors in order to better understand the articulating student experience (from VET to HE), and inform the proposed transitional framework. Participants were current VET diploma students and current HE students. Three key findings featured in the NCVER report:

   a) There were common information literacy challenges experienced by both current VET students and current HE students.
   b) Current HE students reported a shift in expectations related to the types of sources utilised and the referencing styles.
   c) Students from both VET and HE commented on the need for collaboration between VET and HE providers in order to make the transition successful.

Common challenges were experienced by both VET and HE students when completing assessment tasks and relate to ANZIIL standards I, v and vi. In context, this translates to students experiencing challenges understanding the assessment task, bringing together and preparing assessment and adhering to the required writing and referencing styles. Important here is that these aspects are challenging throughout VET, but there is also an increase in expectations when articulating to HE. These aspects of information literacy need consideration regardless of the tertiary education sector (ELICOS, VET or HE), as the challenges experienced will only be magnified if the issues are ignored.

Having made the transition to HE from secondary education, there are notable shifts in expectations around the types of sources utilised and the formal referencing style. For instance, HE staff need to build on existing search strategies and ensure transparency in the preference for scholarly peer-reviewed sources.

5. Case Study – Australian Institute of Music (AIM) Contemporary Performance Unit 6 Masterclass

A notion of 'literacy' for music students transcends its traditional understanding as interpreting music from a recording or score. The contemporary model of a vertically integrated musician in today's technology driven industry demands functionality and higher order thinking to manage a broad portfolio of potential income streams. As well as being competent on his or her own instrument, a career musician must negotiate teaching, performance, composition, recording, production and distribution streams to ensure that a sustainable career can be maintained [11]. The laptop computer has not only usurped the guitar as a 'primary instrument for expression' [13], but also has afforded the musician access to music creation, production and distribution avenues. 'Illiteracy' in this context could be a career-ending trait. A degree course focused upon music performance may or may not be able to address these wider issues of managing a diverse music industry portfolio through the offering of specialist electives from different departments (arts management, audio, production etc.), but planning within unit structures to produce outcomes that develop higher order thinking will help students to manage artistic, aesthetic, and industry aspects of their careers.

The *Bachelor of Music* (Contemporary) program at the Australian Institute of Music is in a position where both vertical integration (within subject/department) and horizontal integration (across subjects and departments) can support literacy objectives that contribute to lifelong learning and industry relevance. The cross pollination of elective choices in stages 3-6 delivered by the Entertainment and Arts Management, Classical, Composition and Music Production, and Audio Engineering departments [1] encourage diversity in the knowledge base of graduates.

To address literacy issues that surround the field of music performance the Contemporary Department has moulded its Performance Studies stream upon a revised notion of Bloom's Taxonomy where 'Creativity' usurps 'Evaluation' as 'the highest level of cognitive complexity' [9]. Utilising Bloom's revised language to scaffold the learning outcomes in the six units of Performance Studies sets up an expectation of cognitive development when learning to perform the diverse styles of music repertoire that is unpacked under the term 'contemporary' [3].

Unit level	Learning Outcomes	Bloom's Revised Taxonomy
1 & 2	a) Identify and describe musical characteristics and devices of style. b) Identify and describe structure and form of musical works. c) Emulate style in ensemble performance. d) Demonstrate performance of style on own instrument.	Remember/ Understand
3 & 4	a) Articulate an informed understanding of style. b) Analyse and transcribe musical characteristics and devices of style. c) Demonstrate the synthesis of stylistic elements in ensemble performance. d) Demonstrate authoritative performance of style on own instrument.	Apply/ Analyse
5 & 6	a) Articulate the evolution of style in musical works. b) Evaluate and synthesise musical evidence. c) Demonstrate originality in the ensemble performance of musical works d) Demonstrate individual stylistic character through the interpretation of contemporary repertoire.	Evaluate/ Create

Table 1. AIM Performance Studies Learning Outcomes mapped against Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

The latter stage (Units 5 and 6) learning outcomes related to evaluation, synthesis and creativity bear a direct relationship to functional literacy for the contemporary performer - even when narrowing the musician's skill set to just performance concerns. Decades of cross-stylistic music and performance convention come into play when deciding how to interpret standard repertoire, especially during

performance where in the moment decisions are made due to context (with variables including skill set of other players, technological constraints of venue, purpose of performance, size of ensemble, aesthetic of the musical director, etc.). Unpacking the idea of 'create' as a process that 'is composed of three discrete areas: generate, plan, and produce' [9] is of paramount importance to the performance student navigating their craft both pre, during and post event.

Final semester performance majors registered in the P2IM6 Major Study 6 unit are tasked with presenting a 40-minute recital at the end of their semester of study, and it is here where the summation of their undergraduate learning (and performance literacy within and around the music performance event) is engaged to produce their recital performance. All aesthetic, production, personnel and rehearsal decisions are made by the student being assessed for the event (in consultation with their instrumental teacher), and the Masterclass component of this final Instrumental Major unit is specifically designed to support the recitalist in the making of these decisions (the revised taxonomy's notion of 'create - plan, generate, produce' - has particular resonance to this summative event). Replacing the traditional Masterclass (where students are grouped by instrument and investigate instrument specific concerns), with a seminar examining the processes and theoretical background behind the student's decision-making process[2] is an opportunity to support and unpack literacy objectives that relate directly to the performance environment.

In the Masterclass a 'Reflective Portfolio Presentation' is one of two assessment events in the unit (the other is the recital performance). The presentation is employed as a tool to evaluate how students have synthesised the information discussed in the Masterclass to their own recital preparation. In a reflective context Zwozdiak-Meyers (2012) posits the function of the 'reflective portfolio' to 'record evidence of your professional growth and development' [22]. Importantly

> 'The portfolio also provides a vehicle through which you can articulate and give voice to your personal philosophy and thoughts about factors that shape and influence teaching and learning' [22].

Although this reflective practice event occurs every semester (in the Masterclass) for performance majors, the outcome of a recital performance in semester 6 demands a greater level of critical thinking from the student, and more consideration by the department.

Using reflective practice as an assessment task can be problematic. Grading students on their thoughts can both bias their comments (towards pleasing the tutor) and encourage superficial/misleading (non personal) responses [10]. But framing the event to enable performance majors to *present* their reflection (a familiar performance format), on a *specific* non-personal task (musical preparation), in a *peer-supporting environment* (Masterclass), provides a platform conducive to informed responses (and outcomes) from participants [10]. Moreover, if the reflection is not graded then students are more inclined not to 'put in the work' [15], thus the Institute loses an opportunity to identify areas to support both student literacy and program improvement.

The Masterclass presentation allows students to focus upon whatever aspect of their recital preparation was problematic. In front of a panel of three assessors – the same circumstance as their recital performance – they are afforded the opportunity to unfold their process in dealing with a recital music production issue, relate it back to themes discussed in the Masterclass, and perform the segment of music to evidence the aspect or garner feedback to help resolve the issue. The music performance is ancillary and non-assessed; it is the process of synthesis, reflection and critical thinking – literacy in this performance context - that is of importance. 'Clarity of objectives assists students to move beyond descriptive accounts of their experiences' [10], and thus specific questions have been designed to direct students to reflect upon their processes.

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[2] See Appendix i for the Major Study 6 Extended Unit Outline detailing the Masterclass lecture series.

1. How does the work that you are presenting: a) fit into your recital program (order, dynamic, purpose, etc.); and b) relate to your overall recital aesthetic?
2. How do you intend to arrange the work for the recital event? For example are you arranging the song to feature yourself, to suit your ensemble lineup, to change the style of the work, etc.? What problem solving skills are you employing in this process?
3. What are you trying to achieve in this trial performance of the work today? For example, performing the work to rehearse a particularly difficult section to play on your instrument, demonstrating a particular arrangement idea, or obtain feedback for a certain issue.

Figure 1. Reflective practice questions from Assessment 1 in the Masterclass (See appendix for Extended Unit Outline)

Questions channelling students to produce this type of 'narrative reflection' is a strategy employed in the nursing profession, a similar context where specificity in episode necessitates a personalised and individual approach and response.

> Narrative reflection allows students to go well beyond a detailed description of an episode of their practice, to an in-depth analysis of, and reflection on, the meaning of the episode. The power of narrative reflection is its potential to enhance student's ability to critique and learn from practice, develop clinical competence, and articulate, appreciate and value their practice [12].

When quarantining reflective practice to a specific occurrence within a student's recital preparation analysis and reflection serves to not only promote best practice, but also to gauge (in a qualitative sense) how the student is coping with the ancillary responsibilities that come with the ownership of the recital performance. It can almost serve as a circuit breaker in the recital preparation semester, encouraging students to stop at least once to critically assess process before the event. The following figure illustrates how the presentation functions within in the context of the unit's overall (reflective) learning cycle (adapted from [12]).
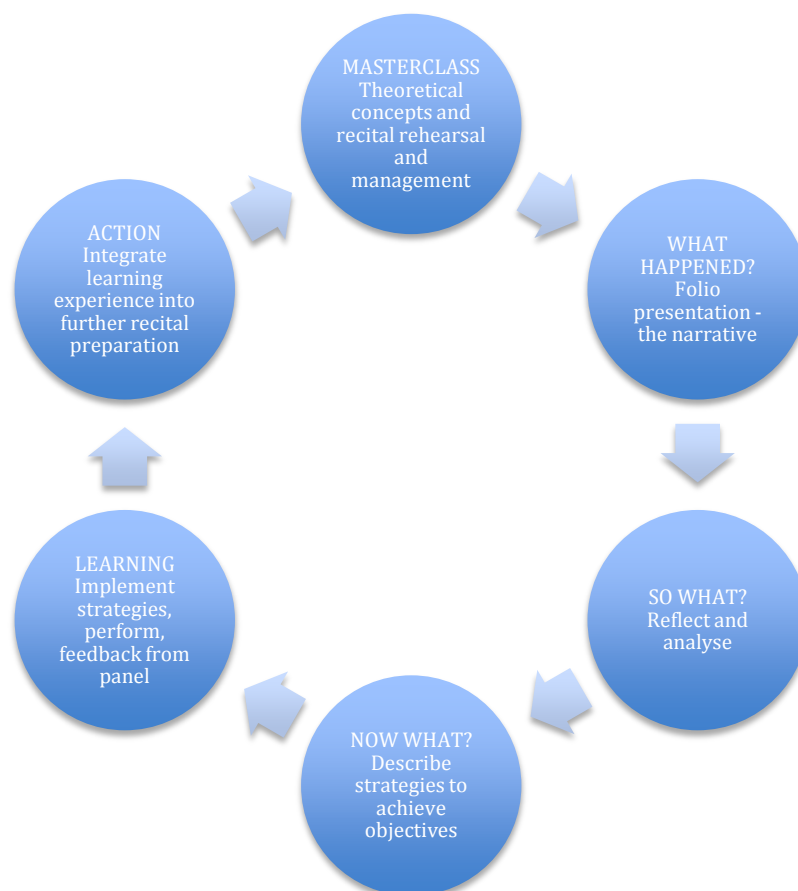
Figure 2. A reflective learning cycle adapted from Levett-Jones [12]

Positioning literacy outcomes within the Masterclass unit can sometimes seem ancillary to the student whose primary concern is to put on a good performance. Even though the concepts discussed in the Masterclass become more apparent the further the class progresses through the semester (here real time organisational and aesthetic issues surface during the rehearsal period), on occasion students put a low priority on the presentation event.

2016	*r*	+/-	*n*
Syd T1	-0.15	0.4	32
Syd T2	-0.07	0.5	22
Syd T3	-0.01	0.4	25
Mel T3	+0.15	0.6	11

Table 2. Statistical summary of the comparisons of the first (Reflective Portfolio Presentation) and second (Recital Performance) assessment results in the unit P2IM6. 'R' represents the level of correlation between two assessment events (negativity denotes being good at one event you will be worse at the other) positive that there is a tendency for them to be related together. '+/-' represents the number of people above the mean of one event and below the mean of the other but doesn't give the extent of the difference (almost qualitative value because it doesn't look at size).

Table 2 is a statistical summary of the comparisons of the first (Reflective Portfolio Presentation) and second (Recital Performance) assessment results in the unit P2IM6 at the Sydney campus of AIM in Trimesters 1,2 and 3 in 2015, and the Melbourne campus in Trimester 3. As expected with such small numbers in each cohort the Pearson correlation coefficients have no statistical significance. However, their very small values, and three of the negative signs, suggest that a comparison be made within each cohort between the number of students whose scores had changed from above to below (or the reverse) the arithmetic mean in each of the two assessments (+/- in the table). That around half of the students display this inconsistency merits further analysis into its meaning.

This latter measure could be further refined to exclude comparisons when the scores are within one standard deviation of the arithmetic mean. If we do this with results for SYDT1 we still find an inconsistency between the two assessments of around 40 per cent. If we consider the first assessment as being more about functional literacy and the second assessment as more about performance, then the current weightings of 20% and 80% respectively may need to be reconsidered in the light of the learning outcomes (if functional literacy is more important than performance). We are not talking about failing, but about relative achievements on the two measures.

Importantly, the inconsistency between student scores in the two events (especially where a below mean score changed to an above mean score) may denote a lack of student engagement with the Reflective Portfolio Presentation and issues of literacy associated with event organisation and communication (musical and non-musical). This can put the students at risk - the presentation is not only useful as a reflective exercise to improve their own practice, but also worth 20% of their final mark. Reflective practice is a well documented tool for learning and professional development [12, 13, 14, 15], and in an effort to ascertain better ways to engage the student body in this process a post unit questionnaire was employed to ascertain the student perspective.

4. Questionnaire Design and Methodology

4.1 Objective
The purpose of the questionnaire is to gauge student understanding regarding the benefits of the Reflective Portfolio Presentation to both the recital event and their own professional practice. In doing so the aim is to acknowledge the student perspective and inform the improvement of literacy, unit and course outcomes.

4.2 Method

A questionnaire utilising short answer questions was employed as a data-gathering tool. Since this inductive research is targeting a small group (two classes with students totalling 43) to gather 'varied responses' and 'richness of information' rather than 'statistical significance', the short answer questionnaire is deemed most appropriate [14 p 187]. This was delivered online via Survey Monkey ™ after the presentation schedule was completed – an invitation was sent via email. Here students were asked a small number of questions regarding their experience and perspective as it related to the Reflective Portfolio Presentation event, its preparation, and its relationship to the recital performance.

The title page featured AIM's standard Ethical Research Guidelines and Research Participant Consent Form (see appendix) to indicate 'click through' consent. Here student anonymity is prioritised to ensure unbiased opinion is obtained. Two tasks and two questions were presented with a comment box attached to elicit open-ended written feedback from students.

All questions were listed on one page to indicate that the questionnaire won't be time consuming, short answers are appropriate (although the dialogue box can be expanded to accommodate longer responses), and to encourage students to answer all questions [21]. The Questions are as follows:

1. Please list the aspects of the Reflective Portfolio Presentation (if any) that were helpful to your recital preparation.
2. Please list the aspects of the Reflective Portfolio presentation (if any) that had a negative impact upon your recital preparation.
3. Do you think the reflective skills used in your Reflective Portfolio Presentation are applicable to your musical practice outside AIM? If so, could you describe a situation where you have – or would – apply these skills?
4. What do you think the term 'literacy' means in the context of your recital preparation and performance?

4.3 Results
There were 11 responses from the 43 students (compiled in Appendix ii). Points of note were as follows.

With respect to the positive aspects of the Reflective Portfolio Presentation (Q1) a number of students conflated the presentation event with the Masterclass program as a whole (4/11) articulating positives from the lecture series rather than the event itself, and another four responses focused primarily on the music aspects of the performance section rather than the reflective practice. The overarching negative theme regarding the presentation event (Q2) was equity in timetabling (4/11), and how this exasperated issues of time and stress management when preparing for the recital performance. Two respondents did not agree with their grade, and three commented that there were no negative impacts. Nine respondents agreed that the reflective practice skills were applicable to music practice outside of the classroom (Q3), but only one respondent attempted to try and link 'literacy' to the recital preparation and performance (Q4).

4.4 Discussion
There were two key responses that highlight how issues surrounding literacy in the recital performance context may need greater focus.

- Q1 (regarding if the presentation was helpful to the recital performance)
'To be honest, not a whole lot. I almost viewed the two as separate things with not much relation.'
- Q3 (regarding the applicability of reflective skills to professional practice)
'I had trouble trying to properly communicate what I was doing, without sounding like I was saying 'Well I just did it'.'

The above statements accord well with the minor statistical analysis presented from previous classes (Table 2). The students generally segregated the two events, distancing skill in reflective practice from success in the performance event. Reinforcing this are comments relating to the problem of synchronising assessment of the two parts (Reflective Portfolio Assessment and Recital Performance). This can always be an issue where two related but different skills are put together in the one unit -

sometimes because of credit point balances, but mainly because they are actually related in a complementary way as a couple of the respondents realised. These (very minimal) results point towards a schism between excelling in performance and understanding why. While performing well is obviously a prerequisite for developing a performance career, understanding the field and the processes that construct performance (music, production and industry) is paramount to a sustained career. Here literacy issues and reflective practice come to the fore when preparing students for life long learning in their chosen artistic pathway. To bridge this gap more emphasis may need to be placed upon the reflective practice component of previous Masterclass units to unpack the utility of such practice to meaningful music performance outcomes.

5. Concluding Comments

Currently most HE and VET courses do not specifically address functional literacy skills. A student could potentially pass the course, yet still be functionally illiterate. A solution would be to build functional literacy processes into the learning outcomes of the course and then assess them as appropriate in each unit of study. In this way, functionally illiterate students would not pass until they have mastered the necessary skills.

AIM has created a Reflective Portfolio task in an effort to address the issue of functional literacy. It is the hope of the teachers and assessors that this assignment will not only help students achieve the learning outcomes of the course (both the educational and functional literacy outcomes), but that it will also help the educators get an idea of how the students are experiencing the course, and therefore continue to improve not only this course but also all of AIM's courses.

Table 3 (below) suggests the gradual development of a potential course in relation to cognitive processes within an undergraduate degree in which the concurrent development of information literacy is a distinguishing attribute of the graduates.

An alternative perspective is that it is about creating opportunities for these skills to develop, and it remains a question as to where such opportunities could exist within current regimes. Regardless, the aim is to support content understanding by focusing on the nature and practices of academic reading and writing. Smaller higher education providers may have an advantage in this respect. A study by Potter [16] from Avondale College of Higher Education infers that having fewer students with similar educational backgrounds results in academic success not available to those lost in the mix of larger providers.

The issues for consideration are not the methodology or scope of the report in itself but rather the extent to which the findings need to be addressed. For instance:

- What are our distinctive strengths in fostering functional information literacy & numeracy? And how do we know?
- What are the identifiable weaknesses of our students in functional LLN? And how do we know?
- What could we be doing to remedy these weaknesses or gaps?
- What are the specific plans to do so without overburdening those students who are probably least able to cope with any extra load?
- How can we inject one of each of the six ANZIIL levels as a backdrop to assessment procedures in each of the six semesters of a three year degree so that the engagement of staff and students is sustained throughout the undergraduate curriculum?

COGNITIVE PROCESSES DIMENSION

AQF LEVELS
5 (red)
6 (orange)
7 (green)

KNOWLEDGE DIMENSION	RECALLING	UNDERSTANDING	APPLYING	ANALYSING	EVALUATING	CREATING
FACTUAL	LIST	SUMMARISE	RESPOND	SELECT	CHECK	GENER-ATE
CONCEPTUAL	RECOGNISE	CLASSIFY	PROVIDE	DISTINGUISH	DETERMINE	ASSEM-BLE
PROCEDURAL	REMEMBER	CLARIFY	CARRY OUT	COMPLETE	JUDGE	DESIGN
METACOGNITIVE	IDENTIFY	PREDICT	UTILISE	DECON-STRUCT	REFLECT	CREATE

INFORMATION LITERACY — ANZIL Standards 1 - 6:
- Recognises the need for information literacy and determines the nature and extent of the information needed
- Finds needed information effectively and efficiently
- Critically evaluates information and the information seeking process
- Manages information collected or generated
- Applies prior and new information to construct new concepts or create new understandings
- Uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information

Table 3. Learning Outcomes Progress Chart

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Appendix i Major Study 6 Extended Unit Outline

Unit Name: **Major Study Contemporary 6**
Unit Code: **P2IM6**
Teaching Period: **Trimester x, 201x**

Role	Staff Member	Email / Extension
Unit Coordinator		
Teacher(s)		

LOCATION AND TIMES

Lesson	Location	Time
Weekly Lesson	Tom Mann	Thursday 2pm to 4pm
Masterclass		

NOTE: Classes commence 5 mins after the hour, and finish 5 mins before the hour

IT IS EXPECTED THAT YOU WILL READ ALL THE INFORMATION IN THIS EXTENDED UNIT OUTLINE (EUO). PLEASE CONTACT YOUR TEACHER OR UNIT COORDINATOR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

UNIT RATIONALE

This final unit of study is focused upon preparing the student for a graduating recital. The purpose of Major Study Contemporary 6 is to consolidate knowledge acquired during the previous five units paying particular attention to technique, repertoire and performance skills. The role of the student is to demonstrate leadership by coordinating all aspects of their graduating recital at a professional level. This performance will incorporate co-requisite skills such as arranging and/or composition and musical direction.

UNIT DESCRIPTION

The student will present a 40 minute program of music, to be planned with support from their IM teacher and Masterclass 6 Lecturer. The program should highlight technique, knowledge of repertoire and performance skills. While the program should demonstrate the student's ability to cover a broad cross section of styles, tempi, keys and instrumentation, they should take care to play to their strengths. While ensemble leadership and communication are significant components of the final recital, focus is placed on individual technical and performance skills, and clear evidence of professional preparation.

WEEKLY TOPICS

Week	Individual Lesson	Masterclass
Week 1	Discussion of preparation for recital	Overview. Conceptualising your Recital.
Week 2	Ongoing preparation for recital	Leadership and Communication Program Notes
Week 3	Ongoing preparation for recital	Advice from a recent recitalists
Week 4	Ongoing preparation for recital	Marking Criteria, recital marking, external examiner perspective
Week 5	Ongoing preparation for recital	Motivational Psychology
Week 6	Ongoing preparation for recital	Production and Staging – David Richards
Mid Trimester Break		
Week 7	Ongoing preparation for recital	**Reflective Portfolio Presentations**

Week	Individual Lesson	Masterclass
Week 8	Sign off on repertoire selection and program notes with IM teacher	**Reflective Portfolio Presentations**
Week 9	Ongoing preparation for recital	**Reflective Portfolio Presentations**
Week 10	Ongoing preparation for recital	**Reflective Portfolio Presentations**
Week 11	Ongoing preparation for recital	**Reflective Portfolio Presentations**
Week 12	Ongoing preparation for recital	**Reflective Portfolio Presentations**
Week 13	**Recital Performance – as scheduled.**	

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of this unit, students should be able to:
a) perform at a professional industry level using contrasting styles and genres of repertoire
pieces that demonstrate:
   • the integration of advanced technical development
   • a thorough understanding of the style(s) and genre(s) being performed
   • artistic creativity and development
b) demonstrate advanced performance preparation and presentation skills incorporating:
   • Arranging and/or composition
   • Musical direction
   • Coordination, organisation and leadership skills
   • Presentation and communication
c) create and present a reflective portfolio that:
   • demonstrates an awareness of self-growth as a musician
   • reflects weekly class content, learning and contribution
   • focuses on the connection between practical experience and theoretical understanding

ASSESSMENTS

Summary

Description	Weighting	Submission Date	Learning Outcomes Assessed
Assessment 1: Masterclass Reflective Portfolio Presentation	20%	Delivered as a presentation in class weeks 7 - 12	c)
Assessment 2: Recital	80%	End of trimester Performance Exam Week 13/14	a), b)

ASSESSMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Assessment 1: Reflective Portfolio Presentation – 20%
Description

Guidelines for presenting your Masterclass Reflective Portfolio Assessment

The 'Reflective Portfolio Presentation' is an onstage presentation and performance that will examine recital organisation and preparation in the context of Masterclass discussions.
This presentation is in three parts.

1. A five minute talk answering the compulsory questions (see below)
2. A performance of repertoire (one work approximately 5 minutes in duration)
3. Time for questions and feedback from the panel (approximately 5 minutes)

The following questions must be answered in the first section of your presentation

1. How does the work that you are presenting: a) fit into your recital program (order, dynamic, purpose, etc.); and b) relate to your overall recital aesthetic?
2. How do you intend to arrange the work for the recital event? For example are you arranging the song to feature yourself, to suit your ensemble lineup, to change the style of the work, etc.? What problem solving skills are you employing in this process?
3. What are you trying to achieve in this trial performance of the work today? For example, performing the work to rehearse a particularly difficult section to play on your instrument, demonstrating a particular arrangement idea, or obtain feedback for certain issue.

Following this talk you are to perform the work discussed. The minimum lineup for your performance is a trio. The musical performance will not be assessed as a musical event. The performance is designed to demonstrate the points discussed in the previous talk.

After the musical performance time will be set aside for the panel to provide feedback and ask questions if necessary.

Assessment Criteria
20% of your overall mark for Major Study (learning outcome 'c').

Criteria	%
1. Synthesis of Masterclass content evidenced through the rationale of the work Q1	30
2. Application of Masterclass content to aspects of recital preparation/performance Q2	30
3. Awareness and reflective practice Q3	30
4. Presentation Skills (formal presentation event)	10

N.B. PLEASE READ

If you are not able to attend a Masterclass it is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to research the missed weekly topic for your portfolio. You are required to reference your source of information (i.e. class teacher or fellow students) and research the class topic independently.
If you are in danger of failing this assessment due to ongoing absences (for reasons as outlined in the Student Handbook) you must submit a special consideration form with accompanying supporting documentation.

Assessment 2: Recital - 80%

Description
The student will present a forty-minute program of music, to be approved by your instrumental/vocal teacher and Head of Department. The program should highlight technique, knowledge of repertoire and performance skills. While the program should demonstrate the student's ability to cover a broad cross section of styles, tempi, keys and instrumentation, they should take care to play to their strengths. Ensemble leadership and communication are significant components of the final recital; however the focus is placed on individual technical and performance skills.

The resulting public recital should demonstrate a professional level of technical and performance skills. The performance will incorporate co-requisite skills such as arranging and/or composition and musical direction.

Recital Presentation Criteria
80% of your overall mark for Major Study (learning outcome 'a' and 'b').

Criteria	%
Technical proficiency of recitalist's performance	40
Understanding and integration of style(s) and genre(s)	20
Ensemble preparation and precision in delivery of arrangements	20
Musical Direction and leadership	10
Professionalism in presentation	10

Criteria Description

1. How the candidate performs on their instrument: i.e. tone, melodic and rhythmic precision, and dynamics.
2. Authenticity of the candidate in the interpretation of the repertoire
3. Accuracy and quality in the ensemble performance of the arrangements
4. Ability to command and lead within the performance environment
5. Professionalism and musical integrity of the candidate in performance

ASSESSMENT DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

Program Notes are the written document that accompanies a recital performance. It is important to supply three copies of program notes to examiners before your performance begins. These notes function not only as a guide that informs and engages the interest of the listener, but also contextualises the performance within the instrumental major program for the examiner (i.e. informed reader). A clearly expressed and well-formatted document will signal to the examiner (and audience) that a quality performance is about to take place, and will position your work in the best possible light to the examiner panel.

TEXTS

Recommended texts and references:

Bonetti, R., 2003. *Confident Music Performance: fix the fear of facing an audience* 1st ed., Words and Music, The Gap Qld.
Caldwell, R., 1990. *The Performer Prepares* 1st ed., Caldwell Pub Co.
Greene, D., 2012. *Performance Success: Performing Your Best Under Pressure*, Routledge.
Hays, K.F., 2009. *Performance psychology in action: a casebook for working with athletes, performing artists, business leaders, and professionals in high-risk occupations*, American Psychological Association.
Liertz, C., 2012. *Performance Confidence - a Training Program for Musicians*, Carmel Liertz.
Parncutt, R. & McPherson, G.E., 2002. *The Science & Psychology of Music Performance: Creative Strategies for Teaching and Learning*, Oxford.
Quirk, T. & Toynbee, J., 2005. Going through the Motions: Popular Music Performance in Journalism and in Academic Discourse. *Popular Music*, 24(3), pp.399–413.
Reid, F., 2001. *The Stage Lighting Handbook*, Psychology Press.
Wilson, G., 2001. *Psychology for Performing Artists: Butterflies and Bouquets* 2nd Edition, Wiley-Blackwell.

STUDENT RULES

Please refer to Section 5 of the *AIM Student Handbook* for details regarding policies on Assessment, Examinations, Grading, Late Penalties and Student Conduct.

Appendix ii Questionnaire Responses

Q1 Please list the aspects of the Reflective Portfolio Presentation (if any) that were helpful to your recital preparation.

Psychology lecture And seeing development from day one to now

5/6/2016 6:50 PM

I enjoyed the lady that came in to speak about stress management. Visualising techniques helped me greatly.
5/6/2016 4:01 PM

This helped me get a small taste of how it was going to be playing alone and solo for my recital. It was good to get used to that setting with a small amount of pressure.
5/6/2016 3:00 PM

It was a good way to off load some incredible aspects of my recital that I know will go unnoticed at the event, such as rearrangement ideas, having prepared transcriptions/arrangements including individual charts for every instrument, etc. A great opportunity to boast.
5/6/2016 11:59 AM

None of it was helpful. The feedback on what students needed to present and how they presented it was incredibly inconsistent. I can see the benifit in the presentation but the way it is being run currently is not beneficial at all. It also currently ends up wasting a lot of time for majority of the students for half the trimester.
4/29/2016 12:01 AM

Having to give additional consideration to aspects of my recital such as the overall aesthetic, awareness of my own strengths and weaknesses, and stress management, allowed me to be more mindful of each throughout the entire process (and not just in preparing for my presentation)
4/22/2016 3:58 PM

I thought they were helpful as it was great to be able to perform one of my songs for my recital and get feed back on it. However I didn't think it was fair on the people who had to present in the early weeks as a lot of them didn't have anything to talk about yet as they hadn't start rehearsals.
4/22/2016 2:38 PM

Previous recitalist presentation, examiner presentation, how to be a band leader, sound and lighting presentation.
4/22/2016 12:45 PM

Performing the song prior to my recital when I was nervous and doing well showed me that I would be able to play under pressure and the feedback was helpful as I wasn't sure if my starting song was a good choice
4/22/2016 12:25 PM

The lecture on stress management and insights from past recitalists regarding preparation
4/22/2016 12:05 PM

To be honest, not a whole lot. I almost viewed the two as separate things with not much relation. In terms of the master class, I think it would be more beneficial for students to have a longer IM lesson with their teacher, and a shorter master class. I feel that a lot of the times, the master classes were more drawn out than they needed to be.

Q2 Please list the aspects of the Reflective Portfolio Presentation (if any) that had a negative impact upon your recital preparation.

Well if I'm honest. I prepared my speech greatly and only received a credit and I believe this was due to the fact Michael was away in my week of speeches and the other teachers were not capable of marking fairly as they did not understand the marking criteria. I followed the EUO and answered the questions perfectly but they weren't even listening. I was very dissapointed in this. My speech was 5 minutes long and I made sure I had the minimum line up for the performance. I am able to take marks that I think I deserve but I know I should have received a higher grade.
5/6/2016 4:01 PM

I didn't exactly learn anything from doing the presentation. It was mostly documenting and presenting what I was already doing. There was not so much of a negative impact, however, it did seem only necessary to just perform the piece and display the work rather than to have to discuss the how and why.
5/6/2016 3:00 PM

A bad presentation before a recital is a real downer and it's difficult to re-motivate before the recital. It was also hard to bag myself, discussing my difficulties, issues I faced, asking for help on an issue two weeks before my performance when really it should be dealt with by then. I'd rather let you know I've conquered instead of telling you 'please help me'.
5/6/2016 11:59 AM

The entire thing was wrong. The fact that it's worth 20% of our mark seems incredibly wrong. The way it was run this trimester was we began the presentations in week 6...so 1) every student over te second half of the trimester had 5weeks of wasted two hour blocks because they were just sitting around while other people presented. 2) we started in week 6...some people didn't start rehearsing until week 6/7/8...so how am I supposed to talk about how rehearsals are going and if I'm having trouble if there hasn't even been a rehearsal? It seems entirely unfair that just by pure luck (and alphabetical order) some students got a 6 week extension over other students. Automatically the students who had to present in week 12 did so much better than those in week 6 because they had more time. Prime example for my group. I had two present in the 2nd week of folios. One of my band members ended up having a medical problem that we had to deal with which only came about in week 11. By my recital time this week we had a 7 point plan in action, I had organised 3 different people to be on standby looking out for my member, I had a replacement musician if it was needed. This whole process would have been a big thing to talk about in my folio. But unfortunately I had to present 5 weeks earlier when the issue wasn't in place and I had had one rehearsal with my band. So while I got slammed for not having enough detail, there was hardly anything to say, I squeezed out as much as I could. I also found that the feedback was incredibly inconsistent and so the students didn't really know what they were meant to talk about. One of my assessors also compared me to another student who presented before me and he did so in front of the entire class. I found this both unprofessional and unfair in terms of marking as the mark should be based on what I've said, not what the guy before me did that I didn't do. The marking criteria for this subject needs a good look at and the way it is going t be marked needs to be standardised across to board.
4/29/2016 12:01 AM

The only negative that comes to mind was the inconvenience to my bandmembers in having to perform with me. Two had to skip class and another was unable to make it and so I used a fill-in. I appreciate I could have used a stripped back line-up but this would have negated any benefit of the exercise and I would have done so only to 'tick the box' so to speak. That being said, it was little more than a mile inconvenience.
4/22/2016 3:58 PM

Nothing
4/22/2016 2:38 PM

Nothing.
4/22/2016 12:45 PM

No negative impact. It was a good practice
4/22/2016 12:25 PM

The fact the lecture component went for 2 hours - occasionally it felt as the content could have been covered in 1 hour, allowing the extra hour for individual recital preparation. The reflective portfolio component needed to 2 hours. Perhaps alternating the time frame?
4/22/2016 12:05 PM

I was the first to present and unfortunately that fell in week 6. With my recital still being nearly 2 months away, there was not much for me to talk about in front of my peers as it was very much still in 'development stage' as opposed to presenting later on when your recital was closer to being a finished product.
4/22/2016 11:47 AM

Q3 Do you think that the reflective skills used in your Reflective Portfolio Presentation are applicable to your musical practice outside of AIM? If so, could you describe a situation where you have - or would - apply these skills?

Yes, gives all musicians the leadership skills to make the set their own
5/6/2016 6:50 PM

Yes I believe so. Making sure I am prepared and have adequate information for all my musicians is very important.
5/6/2016 4:01 PM

No. The best method to analyze for me is to perform or record myself and listen back. Any evidence on what you have or need to do will be there. To write it down and talk about it doesn't give you much of the story. I had trouble trying to properly communicate what I was doing, without sounding like I was saying 'Well I just did it'.
5/6/2016 3:00 PM

Absolutely, we're all human, we will always fight demons in our life and in our music. No-one will be perfect, except maybe Art Tatum. Turning brick walls into a challenge that CAN be conquered, I think that's priceless.
5/6/2016 11:59 AM

In my case no, but as you read above the timing did not allow me the same luxury that some students had in order to find the benefits.
4/29/2016 12:01 AM

Absolutely. I'm involved in a number of projects that have a specific sound/image/aesthetic. Being mindful of stage presence, interpersonal skills between band members, stylistic accuracy in my playing, and the idea of having a common goal for all in the project to work towards is something that I know will continue to be helpful to me in my career.
4/22/2016 3:58 PM

It was good interms of band leadership and time management. Also strategies of dealing with stress and ways to stay on top of things.
4/22/2016 2:38 PM

Yes, in ensuring that I deliver a great recital, I need to reflect on my progress to make any changes.
4/22/2016 12:45 PM

I imagine they would be but I can't imagine myself using them often
4/22/2016 12:25 PM

Yes
4/22/2016 12:05 PM

Yes in terms of organising a band and self time management.

Q4 What do you think the term 'literacy' means in the context of your recital preparation and performance?

I am not sure...
5/6/2016 4:01 PM

Not sure.
5/6/2016 3:00 PM

No idea. Sorry. The context has been described wrongly here. Do you mean in context to the music history, or the music score writing and harmonies, maybe in terms of how well written the program note are written out, or is it how well I memorised a piece of music from a written score? Literacy is everywhere in the recital and would be a 500 word essay if I discussed all aspects of my recital literacy.
5/6/2016 11:59 AM

No idea It was not covered in the 6 classes that we were supposed to be taught stuff in.
4/29/2016 12:01 AM

Not entirely sure that I understand the question completely. I don't specifically recall the term 'literacy' being used in this process so I don't have enough context to answer.
4/22/2016 3:58 PM

N/a
4/22/2016 2:38 PM

Making sure my recital is well prepared and well delivered.

'Chained and Engrained' – Breaking the PowerPoint Dependency Cycle in English Education

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Abstract

This paper investigates the over-dependency on PowerPoint within English education. Taking an action research approach with a group of first year students, the authors taught one unit of an initial teacher training programme employing a range of teaching strategies excluding PowerPoint.

Data was gathered using semi-structured interviews at the end of the taught unit. The findings suggest that teachers were aware of the limitations of PowerPoint as a teaching tool yet still chose to use it. The justification for this was that it provided structure for the lesson and was what students and in some cases, employers, had come to expect.

Despite being positive towards the teaching strategies employed in this research, the majority of participants were mindful of the need to meet the expectations of others and as a result were reluctant to change their approach.

Background to the study

'*Is the PowerPoint on the VLE*?' Is a recognisable phrase for many lecturers in Higher Education and one which is likely to prompt relief or annoyance depending on the individual's viewpoint. In this case, the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) was a Blackboard-based tool used mostly as a repository for teaching materials and additional notes and articles. Accessing the VLE does suggest that students are taking some ownership of their learning, likewise, questions about the lesson notes make also be construed as '*I fully intend to switch off in this lesson so need to know where the notes are.*'

Despite research findings which suggest that presenting information using media such as PowerPoint is not the most effective way of enhancing learning, this remains the established orthodoxy for many lecturers in both Higher and Further Education (Bartsch and Cobern (2003), Brandl et al (2015)). Subsequently, the expectation of students in these settings is that a set of 'slides' which outline learning objectives and key content will be provided, normally in advance of the taught lesson. It could be argued that this expectation is further encouraged by the marketization of English education, a process which has reinforced the notion of the student as a 'customer' who is entitled to learning resources as part of the learning package (Mark 2013).

Enhancing learning is something we would certainly uphold in terms of student entitlement and there are many examples which could be provided to evidence the ways in which HEI's have attempted to do this. The purpose of this research is to investigate whether or not the regular (in some cases omnipresent) use of PowerPoint does indeed enhance the learning experience. Recent evidence suggests that this approach promotes a belief that learning may be achieved by collecting notes to be used in the required assessment and there is no real necessity to participate in lessons (Worthington and Levasseur 2015). In this way, students have become used to being passive vessels in lectures, safe in the knowledge that the