

A Preliminary Study of Assessment Progression

Evaluation of Assessment for Learning Lessons and Summative Assessment Tasks in the General Music Programme

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KEY IMPLICATIONS

- General Music Programme (GMP) teachers can reliably come to terms with the stage of assessment tasks by looking at enough examples and discussing them with one another.
- There is still much room for GMP teachers to learn about optimal assessment progressions, assessment task design and in particular, calibrating judgements of expectations and the quality of students' works.
- Policy and teacher education agencies (including schools) need to work hand in hand to support GMP teachers' complex assessment work.

BACKGROUND

In contrast to its counterpart Music examination curriculum at 'O' (Grade 10 or Secondary 4) and 'A' levels (Grade 12 or Junior College 2), the assessment grades of student performances in the GMP are not critical for the summative consideration of promotion or certification for both students and teachers. One can also hypothesise and problematise that without pressing summative assessment expectations that GMP teachers (unlike their academic subject teacher counterparts) need to exercise even more fully, their agency and judgement in supporting students' learning in the entire assessment progression.

FOCUS OF STUDY

This Ministry-funded research project focuses on studying subject-specific (music) and localised (Singaporean) classroom assessment practices. Specifically, we hope to understand what constitutes developmentally appropriate Music assessment tasks and standards of learning across primary and secondary school levels.

KEY FINDINGS

Of the 47 assessment tasks collected, we were only able to identify 5 summative assessment tasks (11%) with a full set of (three) students' works that had good agreement across the evaluators. Coincidentally, the set of assessment tasks and students' works were from Primary 1 to Secondary 2. Overall, the reliability of evaluation is diminishing from a highly acceptable value in the assessment tasks to a less reliable evaluation of students' works based on learning outcomes.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

This study has also shown that, while GMP teachers can come to terms with the stage of assessment tasks by looking at enough examples and discussing them with one another, such gaining of assessment literacy capabilities needs to be intentionally sought after rather than leaving it to chance. On the whole, there is much room for GMP teachers to learn about optimal

assessment progressions, assessment task design and also calibrating judgements of expectations and the quality of students' works.

Such research suggests that policy and teacher education agencies (including schools) need to work hand in hand to support GMP teachers' complex assessment work. At the time of writing, there is a continuing Ministry-led study of Stage 2 and 4 assessment tasks that is being mentored by the Principal Investigator of this research study.

PARTICIPANTS

Twenty-four primary and secondary school music teachers were invited to take part in this research as teacher participants, based on recommendations by MOE–STAR colleagues and also their school leaders. They were asked to submit an assessment task, which they used to evaluate their students in the GMP at the end of 2 semesters. Fifteen expert evaluators, who were made up of primary-school teachers, secondary school teachers, MOE and NIE colleagues, were selected to evaluate the tasks and student works for both rounds.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was conducted using mixed-design methodology. The quantitative evaluation data collected was analysed for consistency of inter-rater reliability, both holistically and analytically, and the qualitative data was analysed using open coding for recurring themes.

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