

Tackling the 'full' music technology option in the Leaving Certificate practical examination: A longitudinal case study

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Introduction and Overview

1. Context
2. Research Question
3. Longitudinal Case Study: Catherine
4. The Pedagogy
5. The Process
6. Connection to Existing Theory
7. Creative Choices
8. Findings
9. Recommendations

1. Context

‘Full’ music technology option in the Leaving Cert:

- compile and perform to a backing track
- at least 3 tracks
- at least 32 bars long and
- two other inputting and editing tasks

Reluctance of teachers to choose this option due to:

- high-stakes nature of Leaving Cert exam
- more conventional routes
- lack of confidence using the technology
- lack of training in this option

2. Research Question

How does a *Classically*-trained music teacher help students to create and perform to a backing track in the Leaving Certificate *examination*?

3. Longitudinal Case Study: Catherine

Catherine's Mantra:

"I hate technology"

Duration of Case Study:

11 years (2004-2015)

Students:

36

Phases:

3

Data Collection:

- observation
- informal conversation
- interviews
- notation and audio files
- programme notes
- video recordings

4. The Pedagogy

The pedagogy emerged in three phases:

Phase 1 (2004-): experimentation

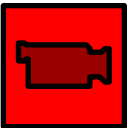
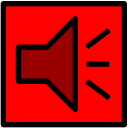
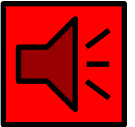
Phase 2 (2007-): expensive software

Phase 3 (2012-): freeware and dissemination



5. The Process

1. Student chooses piece / song.
2. Original recording of piece is explored.
3. Piece is arranged in a notated score.
4. Each track is exported as a wav.
5. Individual wavs are imported into multitrack.
6. Multitrack is edited and balanced.
7. Multitrack is tweaked during rehearsals.
8. Multitrack is mixed down and CD is burnt.



6. Connection to Existing Theory

Informal Learning:

- ✓ 'The learner chooses the music'
- ✓ 'Recordings are copied by ear'
- ✓ 'Personal creativity using integrated skills'
- ✗ 'More peer-learning, less adult guidance'
- ✗ 'Haphazard'

Green (p. 10)

7. Creative Choices

Key variables that underpin the creative choices:

- musical genre
- musical instrument
- transferability between media
- computer programme(s)
- performing ability
- arranging ability
- ability to use the technology

8. Findings

Catherine's strengths:

- musical skills
- openness to repertoire and technology
- willingness to develop craft knowledge
- eagerness to share with others

Student learning:

- arranging
- listening skills
- decision-making and problem-solving
- accuracy
- recording techniques

9. Recommendations

Regarding assessment procedures:

- Time-based parameter rather than bar numbers.
- Standardised technical requirements.
- More credit given for the process.

To teachers:

- Try every style e.g. Classical and Traditional.
- Avoid over-editing.
- Accept that it will not sound like the original.

Thank you for your attention!

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