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Music Performance Tuition in Higher Education: Student Expectations

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Introduction

One of the unusual facets of performance modules in Higher Education music courses is the division of responsibility between academic staff and specialist instrumental tutors. This is certainly true for Music at Lancaster University, in which academic staff are tasked with the role of designing such modules, defining the educational aims and objectives in the light of broader degree specifications and guiding these modules through university teaching committees; whilst instrumental specialists are consulted in the above, they are primarily responsible for the module delivery. Furthermore, decisions regarding the modes of tuition (one-one teaching, group lessons) and the number of contact hours are often shaped as much by budgetary factors as they are by educational concerns. The requirement to balance internal (curricula) and external (financial) demands when designing performance modules frequently necessitates a compromise between those aims and objectives that are desirable and those that are actually achievable. The extent to which the resulting aims and objectives inform the practice and expectations of both the teaching staff and the student body, both of whom may have very different aspirations for performance courses, is often unclear.

The aim of the study is to develop an awareness of the expectations of performance students in Higher Education in order to compare these expectations with the stated educational aims and learning objectives of such modules. The exploration of the nature of the gap between expectations and outcomes will enable a better understanding of how to design, deliver and market music performance modules in Higher Education.

The objectives by which this aim is to be realised are as follows:

(1) to discover students' expectations of performance courses;

(2) to discuss the prior educational experiences of students to discern the relationship between these experiences and the subject's expectations;

(3) to determine the students' self-assessment of their ability;

(4) to discover what teachers and students feel the educational aims and learning outcomes of the module are, and how these relate to assessment;

(5) to investigate opinions of different modes of teaching delivery (one-one, group etc.) and how these might help achieve the perceived and desired aims outlined in (4);

(6) to examine student reflections on their experiences of their performance modules, and how these experiences compare with the expectations of (1)-(5) above.

The project will not reflect on the philosophical and practical issues underpinning the actual formulation of the learning outcomes of performance modules, for such issues are beyond its scope. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the findings of this study will inform future discussion of these issues.

Research Context

There is a growing body of work that explores in a variety of disciplines the transition from pre-university to first-year undergraduate courses. For instance, in a 2005 report for PALATINE, Stephanie Pitts explored the distance between the expectations of university lecturers and incoming first-year undergraduates (Pitts 2005). Although focussed primarily on study skills, Pitts's report contains a short but significant description of the issues surrounding the self-definition and confidence of performance students during their first year of a music degree:

> Past research has shown that students who have been fully involved in music at school experience difficulties in adjusting to an environment where they are surrounded by many other musicians. While the opportunities for chamber music might increase under those circumstances, students are more used to gaining musical recognition by being a solo performer or belonging to the orchestra, and their status as unknown first years amongst established students can sometimes appear to remove those familiar sources of musical confidence and satisfaction. Asked to complete the sentence 'It might be harder than it was at school to…', many students expressed concerns about gaining sufficient performing opportunities (Pitts 2005: 10).

One of the aims of the current study is to tease out a number of the points raised here: how does prior (school) experience colour the expectations of university performance students? What forms of music making do they anticipate at university, and at what level?

Certainly, practical activities form an important part of most music students' self-identity. Yet there is a limited 'theoretical underpinning' for understanding performance learning environments – and thus how the university experience relates to, informs or challenges student expectations – for existing studies tend 'to emerge from existing practice rather than consideration, analysis or comparison of the educational outcomes' (Daniel 2004: 24). This conclusion has been borne out in

recent research. Recent studies of music performance teaching in Higher Education have

- tended to favour the effectiveness of, and approaches towards, tuition rather than its underlying premises or how this tuition relates to student expectation (Mills and Smith 2003, Purser 2005, Cheng and Durrant 2007);
- focused on conservatoires rather than universities (Daniel 2004, Purser 2005, Gaunt 2008);
- focused on one-to-one teaching models (Gaunt 2008), with group teaching offered as an alternative (Daniel 2004, Cheng and Durrant 2007) or, more rarely an additional resource to complement the one-one teaching (Gaunt 2008);
- highlighted the gap between administrators and educators (Hart 2003);
- afforded only a minor role in the research project to the role that student and teacher expectations have to play in the design and delivery of courses (Daniel 2004, Gaunt 2008).

Theoretical models for the effectiveness of teaching tend to assume that the underlying rationale for the performance module is self-evident, questioning the efficacy of the means by which the education aims are achieved. Yet such means are dependent on teachers and students having a shared sense of purpose and goal; whether this shared sense maps onto the stated educational aims of the module, and how this relates to student expectations, are left unexplored.

Teaching Approaches and Context

The study focuses on students enrolled on the performance modules offered by the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts (Music section) in 2008-09. In recent years, a new model of performance tuition has been gradually phased in at Lancaster with the result so that in 2008-09, students in each academic year experienced a different model.

Final-year students had received predominantly one-to-one performance tuition (complemented by a few group lessons) throughout their undergraduate career; the amount of contact with their tutor increased proportionally over the course of the three (or four, for combined honours students who studied a language) years of their study. Single-honours students were enrolled on a 'double-unit' performance course; combined-honours students and those also enrolled on the final-year conducting course were registered on the 'single-unit' course. Aside from credit weighting, the two final-year courses differed in terms of allocation of one-to-one lessons and length of assessment.

First- and second-year students were taught either on a 'solo' or 'chamber music' route, with entry onto these routes determined either by audition (first years) or based on the previous year's final recital (second years). Students on each route were given a mixture of one-one and group lessons, with those on the solo route receiving a greater proportion of one-one lessons. Students enrolled on the chamber route of the course also received 15 two-hour master class sessions that explored in greater depth issues involved in chamber music performance. This was the first year in which first

year students were streamed (the second years had all been ‘solo’ performers) and in which master classes had been offered.

All students were required to participate in at least one of the department’s three large ensembles (choir, orchestra and concert band); in addition, in 2008-09 first-years enrolled on the Harmony and Analysis module were required to join the choir. The ensembles were conducted by a mixture of academic staff, instrumental staff and students (final-year and postgraduate). Rehearsals for the three departmental ensembles were timetabled in the first two terms (there were three two-hour slots per week); individual or group lessons were arranged with the tutor and distributed throughout the three academic terms. In some cases, such as when tutors were ill or unavailable, lessons could be spaced a few weeks apart (this is particularly true for first years); generally, however, students received weekly or fortnightly lessons. All three ensembles gave a concert in both the first and second term, and students had the opportunity to perform in the twice-weekly lunchtime concert series organised by the student music society. All students were required to perform one work to concert standard in each of the first two terms; in the case of final-year students, there was an assessed public lunchtime concert in the second term, and all other students could choose (in negotiation with their teacher) whether to perform this work privately (in a lesson) or publicly (in a lunchtime concert). In addition, many students were active members of the society and participated in the range of ensembles offered there.

Module descriptions for all of the performance courses were available from the university’s on-line module handbook; these included clearly-articulated statements of course aims and outcomes, explicitly linked (where relevant) to the QAA

benchmarking statement. For instance, for the first year performance students, the aims and learning outcomes were described as follows:

> In Performance, the aim is for students to develop individual and group performance skills. These skills are taught through a mixture of practical workshops and individual tuition with specialist instrumental and vocal tutors. It is intended that, on completion of the module, students will have a solid grounding in performance skills (at a standard approximate to post-grade 8 of the ABRSM), and the highest achievers on the module will have the necessary training to progress onto performance options in the first year of Part II.
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> On successful completion of the module, students of performance will be able to:
>
> a) demonstrate a measure of personal expression, imagination and creativity in practical music-making in group performance
>
> b) demonstrate the ability to communicate through music employing appropriate technical and interpretative means;
>
> c) participate effectively in a professional manner in ensemble rehearsals;
>
> d) demonstrate the ability to work independently, and to show self-motivation and critical self-awareness;
>
> e) demonstrate the ability to work in combination with others and to show skills in teamwork, negotiation, organisation and decision-making.
>
> Outcomes (a) to (c) can be related to all the skills outlined in the threshold level of 'practical skills and musicianship' in the Music Benchmarking (2002). Outcomes (d) and (e) relate to 'Generic and Graduate skills' from the same document.
>
> Additionally, the following are also applicable:
>
> (f) establish cooperative and productive team relationships in supervised departmental activities (cf. threshold level of 'Generic and graduate skills' within Music benchmarking (2002): 'to demonstrate the ability to work in combination with others on joint projects of activities, and to show skills in teamwork, negotiation, organisation and decision-making' (assessed through ensemble and recital work; see assessment criterion: 'Interaction with other performers')
> (g) 'demonstrate the ability to recognise and identify by ear essential components of a musical language, such as intervals, rhythms, modes, metres and sonorities' (threshold level, Music benchmarking; assessed through ensemble and recital work)

In addition, the department publishes marking criteria for the modules which relate (albeit implicitly) to these outcomes.

To summarise, the teaching and learning contexts for students enrolled on performance courses in 2008-09 were as follows:

Year of entry	First year	Second year	Final year
2005 (combined honours with a language) or 2006	Predominantly 1-1 lessons; some group lessons; ensemble participation	Predominantly 1-1 lessons; some group lessons; ensemble participation	Exclusively 1-1 lessons; ensemble participation
2007	Predominantly 1-1 lessons; some group lessons; ensemble participation	Either 'solo' route (predominantly 1-1 lessons) or 'chamber' route (some 1-1 lessons, some group lessons, chamber music master classes); ensemble participation	
2008	Either 'solo' route (predominantly 1-1 lessons) or 'chamber' route (some 1-1 lessons, some group lessons, chamber music master classes); ensemble participation		

Thus, by conducting the study in 2008-09, I was able to take advantage of this unique situation, allowing comparison between different models of tuition, discovering the ways in which these models affect the expectations of students.

Methodology

Data for this study were collected through the use of semi-structured interviews that were subsequently transcribed for analysis. All willing students and performance tutors were interviewed in the first few weeks of the academic year (October-November 2008), and most of the students returned for a follow-up interview in May 2009. All participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and all data emerging from the interviews (recordings and transcripts) were coded for administrative identification. The focus of the two interviews differed; in the first case, the student interviews were designed to provide information relating to

expectations and hopes on entry at university. For the second, students were asked to prepare by listening to their previous interview in order to reflect on their experiences. The transcripts of both interviews were then analysed thematically using Nvivo 8.

The decision to interview all of the (willing) performance staff and students was made with the awareness of the heavy time demands on the researcher. However, given the unique opportunity to engage with three cohorts of students who have experienced different modes of teaching delivery, it was deemed necessary to question as many students from all three years in order to ensure that statistics were as meaningful as possible.

The available data are as follows; most of the students interviewed in 2008 returned for a follow-up interview in May 2009:

	Oct/Nov 2008	May 2009
First-year students:		
Solo route	12 interviews	10
Chamber route	11	9
Second-year students:		
Solo route	10	6
Chamber route	4	4
Final-year students:		
Single unit	4	1
Double unit	4	4
Instrumental staff	6	NA

The analysis presented here relates to student expectations and how these relate to departmental aims and objectives. Given the richness of the data, the results reflect only the 'first pass'; results from drilling down deeper will, I hope, be made available at a later date.

Outcomes and Findings

Given the large numbers that were interviewed for this project, it is unsurprising that many different views, expectations and experiences were encountered. The following summaries are representative of the interview data as a whole, and it is with some regret that the occasionally unrepresentative, if wonderfully lucid and fully-engaged, opinion is not recorded here.

Student Expectations on Arrival at University

> Interviewer: What are your expectations of performance at university?
> Student: I really don't know. To have a good time and learn some things, possibly. (MUSC 102 solo route student, 8 October 2008)

One of the most salient points to emerge from the interviews is how few expectations students had of the performance course. The following response is typical:

> I didn't really have any expectations to be honest and I don't know whether that's quite sort of, I don't know, whether that's a good thing. But I didn't really have … I didn't really come thinking 'it's going to be like this' and 'it's not going to be like this'. I didn't really know what to expect. (MUSC 102 chamber route student, 14 May 2009).

A number of students articulated a vague desire to 'get better'. When pressed on this point, few were able to define what 'getting better' entailed, though in general their responses focussed on technical matters rather than musicianship or performance skills. The minority of students mentioned the broadening of repertoire; those that did tended to be second- and third-year performers recalling their expectations on entry.

Turning to the nature of tuition, the provision of one-one lessons was a common expectation (though many students anticipated a greater number of contact hours than they actually received), with the majority of students expecting that the nature of tuition would follow patterns established in pre-university education. There was a general feeling that 'it will be harder here' (MUSC 102 chamber route student, 15 October 2008). Students often reported an expectation that there would be numerous performing opportunities (those on the first-year chamber route rarely brought this up), both as soloists (or in small groups) and in larger ensembles. With only one or two exceptions, neither group lessons nor masterclasses were anticipated, and students approached these with a certain degree of trepidation. Some students had previously studied at conservatoires and/or music schools, and brought with them expectations that university tuition would either maintain (or, in some cases, fall below) previously encountered standards.

Students came with the expectation of assessment in the form of an end-of-year recital, though its nature (private rather than public) and duration was often unexpected. Yet even with this knowledge, very few students mentioned the requirement to practice as one of their expectations; this was perhaps considered self-evident. The goal of 'passing' the recital in order to continue into the next was brought up on more than one occasion. A third-year student, looking back on their time at university, noted that:

> people come in with [the hope that] 'oh I really want to pass this exam' or 'oh I really want to pass this and that' […]. You can just say 'I want to get a good mark in my recital' or you could say 'actually, I want to get to this point where I can do something further with it' and that's what people don't necessarily have in consideration when they start off. (Third-year single unit student, 13 May 2009).

The instrumental staff reinforced the impression of students entering university with

a limited sense of what to expect; many of them used this blank canvas to discuss with students what they wished to achieve. With the exception of all but the strongest performers, many students had few ambitions other than to play their instrument (in private – the idea of *performing* was often alien to them).

Prior Educational Experiences

Unsurprisingly, there was a wide range of prior educational experiences, ranging from the all-but-self-taught through to the conservatoire-educated. The most common shared experience, however, was that of working through Associated Board Graded Exams, with A-level recitals coming a close second. Those students who had completed Grade 8 some years before entering university had (inevitably) most experience of developing both technique and awareness of the repertoire.

The tendency to learn pieces in order to pass exams (whether Associated Board or in Secondary Education) not only shaped student expectations of performance at university, but also their relationship with their instrument and practice routines. Quite often students had only ever been taught for assessment purposes (exemplifying the attitudes found in Davidson and Scutt 1999), and so crucial aspects of technique, musicianship and self-analysis had been overlooked in their prior education. In some cases, student expectations were thus shaped by a dissatisfaction with such experiences:

> I'm hoping it'll be more varied and more in-depth, because I think [prior to university] you just tend to focus on grades and exams, well, that's what my teachers have focused on, so I'd actually like to really focus on the instrument and not just a piece to play in an exam (MUSC 102 solo route student, 8 October 2008).

One of the most profound consequences of this prior education was that students frequently experienced difficulty negotiating the transition to the demands of a

university-level course, especially in the areas of self-directed learning, efficient practising, technical development and exploration of repertoire. It was clear that a number of students had never adopted an active approach to their musical education:

> My teacher expected me to learn a lot more by myself which was completely different. And erm, a lot harder because I wasn't used to that. […] I think that didn't really help me in any way because I just learnt it wrong and then had to redo it again. […]I've found it more useful [in the past] to go through it with my teacher being there and saying, you know, saying to me 'you play it to me' and then they'd say 'well, you know, this is wrong' and then I'd do it differently. (MUSC 102 chamber route student, 13 May 2009).

> When you've got a new teacher as well, it's hard for them to know what you want, especially if you don't know yourself, which obviously, like, you should have realized but I always found it hard when [the teacher] would say "what do you want to do today" or whatever, 'cause my [previous] teacher always suggested things, so we just kind of went through it and when we got to Grade 8 I stopped, really, so it was getting back into the swing of things again. (MUSC 221 chamber route student, 8 October 2008)

> Well, I think they think life stops after [Grade 8]. […] A lot of them did their Grade 8 and as far as they are concerned […] they've done all they need to do. (Instrumental tutor, 28 October 2008).

Self-assessment of Ability

Anecdotally, I have often heard expressed the opinion that students (in institutions around the country) possess a somewhat inflated sense of their own performing abilities. This does not appear to be the case for Lancaster students. 4 of the 6 instrumental tutors interviewed felt that the majority of students came to university lacking confidence. Few students were willing to express an opinion of their own ability; those that rated themselves highly tended to do so on account of previous examination success (both in terms of results and methods of preparing for exams):

> To be honest I wasn't confident at all at performance at all, I was really really dreading starting […]I just thought everyone would be really amazing, outstanding, that I'd feel really uncomfortable. (MUSC 221 chamber route student, 8 October 2008).

> I knew that my [first year recital] performance was going to be good because I practice[d] a lot. (MUSC 221 solo route student, 8 October 2008).

Awareness of Course Aims and Outcomes; Relationship to Assessment

Students appeared to know where they could find the documentation relating to course aims and objectives; only a minority actively sought this information out. Frequently, students made fairly broad assumptions about what these aims and objectives are, relating them explicitly with assessment and progression. The following representative comments indicate the pervasiveness of such views across all year groups:

> Interviewer: Do you know what the learning outcomes of the course are?
> Student: Erm..so like in a very like narrow-minded sense, to … pass? (First-year solo route student, 9 October 2008)
>
> Interviewer: Do you know the what learning outcomes [are]?
> Student: Erm, I know some of that. I know that we have to do a recital, er twenty minutes I think. (First-year solo route student, 8 October 2008).
>
> Interviewer: What do you think the aims and outcomes are […]?
> Student: Erm, to show that you've developed as a performer, that you've not…that you've gone that extra mile, you're not just taking what your teacher says, you're doing your own input to it as well.
> Interviewer: […]What were the things that contributed to [this impression]?
> Student: I don't know, it just seems logical. (First-year solo route student, 13 May 2009)
>
> Interviewer: We've got lots of information [on learning aims and objectives].
> Student: Yes I know that.
> Interviewer: Oh, you've seen that? OK, that's the information I'd wondered if you'd read. […]
> Student: You mean the percent I have to…to pass?
> Interviewer: Not just the percent, but also the types of skills we're looking for [in the assessment].[…]
> Student: I read the percentages, but I didn't look up the skills. (Second-year solo route student, 8 October 2008).
>
> Interviewer: So, […] your goal for the first year was to get better. What do you think the Department's goals were for you in that first year in terms of [learning] outcomes […]?
> Student: I don't know. […]
> Interviewer: […]The Department publishes a whole list of learning outcomes and criteria and so on. […]
> Student: Yeah, but it, doesn't tell you whether you can do it well, it doesn't tell you whether you're better or worse than someone else. (Third-year single unit student, 8 October 2008)

For many students, however, the departmental learning aims and objectives were less important than their own personal goals; again, this is true for all years:

> Well, I haven't really felt the need to look at the aims and objectives. I don't know…it's just not something that's come into my mind 'I thought…oh I need to check what I need to go and do'…I've felt that I've been…I don't know…I've felt that I've been working towards

whatever it is I need to work towards. I haven't felt the need to go and find out exactly what they are. (First-year solo route student, 13 May 2009).

Interviewer: did you know last year what the stated learning aims and outcomes were of the performance course?
Student: No.
Interviewer: Why was that do you think?
Student: Erm, I don't know…I suppose I'd never really thought of what the department expected of me it was more what I expected, and so I never, I never asked I don't think. (Second-year chamber route student, 9 October 2008).

Interviewer: Where did you think we wanted you to be at the end of [your first] year, in terms of learning outcomes, standards, levels of attainment, things like that?
Student: Erm, I don't know really. I didn't really think about that at the time […] This year, I want to sort out all the things I've been doing wrong for ten years which [names tutor] touched on last year, erm, I think doing the diploma got in the way of that. I think s/he wanted to focus on that right from the beginning but I was finishing the [diploma]…and so that's what this year's going to be about for me.
Interviewer: So again, you've got your personal goals and is there a sense that you'd hope that these map onto the course goals?
Student: Yeah […] I'm hoping it'll all link… (Second-year solo route student, 8 Oct 2008).

Interviewer: You've spoken a bit about your own personal aims for the course, what you wanted to get out of it. Have you ever given any thought to what the university or the department aims for each course are in terms of learning outcomes […]?
Student: Erm, when I got to university I didn't but as I've gone through, as I've matured a bit and seen things from a different perspective maybe a little bit more I've thought about that but I've not… I've never … it would be quite nice, actually, to have sort of almost an agreement again between the sort of every course and what the university wants you to get out of it, what the university wants you to do as well, umm, that's something that I don't think … in my opinion I've never seen it. (Third-year single unit student, 13 October 2008)

Interviewer: Were you aware of what the […] learning outcomes were for the course? […]?
Student: Er probably in first year but not entirely clear in the second year. But I could have found out myself if I wanted to. (Third-year double unit student, 9 October 2008).

The extent to which course aims and objectives were communicated to students was therefore, by the admission of nearly all the students asked, the responsibility of the instrumental tutor. In most cases, this information was felt to be passed on implicitly, through the content of the lessons, rather than spelt out. For instance: 'I would want to look at what I want to achieve, but I mean, I hope that if I did all my work and went to all my lectures and went to everything then I would be at the level that is necessary at the end of the year' (First-year solo route student, 8 October 2008).

Yet for the tutors, the departmental aims and objectives only go so far in shaping the learning experience. One tutor described how the contracted teaching hours, final

assessment and marking criteria together provided a framework for planning the year's teaching. Nevertheless, the stated course aims did not feed into the ways in which individual students were taught; rather, s/he and all the other tutors tended in their interviews to fall back on to the same generic terms (albeit more clearly defined) as the students in describing areas for development: technique, performing skills and so on. (This is also the language to be found in the marking criteria.) Here, as with the individual students, broader developmental issues took precedence over narrower (but specified) modular outcomes.

Modes of Teaching

In all cases, one-one teaching was prized most highly as the means by which aims and objectives (departmental and personal) might be realized. Frequently, contact hours were felt to be insufficient, although if quizzed further, students and teachers alike felt that in general the allocated hours were just about appropriate to meet the course requirements, though not to fulfil personal ambitions. The increased emphasis on technique (in comparison to pre-university lessons) was often a surprise to incoming students, but in most cases this was recognized as a necessary part of their own development.

Despite the relative novelty of group lessons and master classes, students were positive about the benefits that they could bring. Group lessons (on single instruments) provided students with opportunities to interrogate their own practice ('I think they've been good. Because you get to know other people's opinions and you have to form your opinions of other people as well. So it's good because it makes you

think about it.' First-year solo route student, 13 May 2009) as well as have models against which to assess their own ability ('Group lessons were brilliant because I was the only first year [...] put with lots of second and third years and you suddenly work at a much higher level and you're expected to do all the extra things and it was really, really beneficial. And for…and it was nice to have someone to compare yourself to as well…someone that you think 'right…I'm aiming to get to this point'. Third-year single unit student, 9 October 2008). Master classes too provided an opportunity to present work to a small group of listeners and receive feedback; students on the chamber music route commented on how useful that experience had been. Students on the solo routes reported a sense of disconnect from other performers, and a number of them requested master classes for the following academic year (this was implemented at Lancaster in 2009-10).

Despite the opportunities for master class sessions, there was nevertheless a widespread feeling that the chamber music route was in some way inferior to the solo route:

> I know that you know if you didn't pass, if you weren't good enough doing solo performance this year, you wouldn't be able to do it in the second year and you would…might have to do chamber' (First-year solo route student, 8 October 2008).
>
> I'm really worried about being put on chamber route so I want to be sure that I'm going in there with the best thing I've got so that I'm still on solo next year. (First-year solo route student, 13 May 2009).

Not all chamber music groups worked well together. Students in those that did, however, appeared to enjoy the different demands placed upon them, and were able to reflect on how the experience might benefit their solo performance: 'I think there are definitely things I could take in [to my solo playing] you know. I mean, issues of balance between things I mean, you know for example, with the piano, treating each

hand as a separate, you know, entity as it were. (First-year chamber route student, 13 May 2009).

Participation in the departmental ensembles proved to be most divisive. For some, they provided an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the repertoire, to build confidence, and to develop other aspects of their playing. For others, the mixed level of ability and application of students in the ensemble led to frustrating experiences. In general, though, the presence of six hours for ensemble rehearsal in the timetable enabled the majority of students to feel that there were sufficient performance opportunities provided by the department, even if the nature of some of those opportunities left something to be desired.

Reflections on expectations

Given that so few students brought specific expectations with them to their performance studies at university, it is unsurprising that their reflections on their experiences threw up relatively little new information. Some of the most common comments related to issues already mentioned above – amount of one-one contact, nature of one-one lessons, a growing awareness of the distinction between playing and performing, and so on. There is one area, however, that merits further attention here: the increased responsibility students must shoulder for active learning. This is something that nearly all the students appeared to recognize the need for (some more rapidly than others):

> I was used to college where there was always someone telling you to do this, telling you to do that. […] [Now, at university] in all aspects of the work really there's a big emphasis put on…you know, you have to go away and do it yourself, organise your notes yourself, it's all kind of down to you at the end of the day. (First-year solo route student, 13 May 2009)

> [The increased self-motivation was] quite a big shock to start with, kind of like there's so much more work kind of expected of me now. More input. But I think I've adapted to that quite well, I've got used to dealing with the extra work. (First-year solo route student, 14 May 2009)
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> I think there's a completely different approach to how you sort of are expected to learn in a way, because with my lessons that I had even last year, with here….you are sort of expected to do it on your own. It was a bit of a shock to me. Because I used to, in my lessons at home, it used to be going through how to learn the piece rather than just going over how to perform it. (Second-year chamber route student, 12 May 2009)
>
> Well, when you're younger, it's like, it's like you think you're doing a lot of work but really, you're just sitting about and you do a bit every so often. Whereas you get here, you do a bit more and you think 'oh I'll be alright' and you're not alright. And I think it's to do with being spoonfed and you don't get any, anybody saying 'you've got to do practice now, you've got to do this' you've got to do it all in your own accord which is harder. (Second-year chamber route student, 13 May 2009)
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> You need to do independent study and you know, you've got to actually take the initiative and find things to do yourself and the more you do the better you're going to be in the long run. (Third-year single unit student, 13 May 2009).

It is this, perhaps more than any other aspect of university performance, that most significantly challenges those expectations shaped by pre-university experience.

Implications for Practice and Conclusions

One of the intentions of this project was to provide a snapshot of the beliefs and expectations of students and teachers engaged in music performance modules in Higher Education. From this, three main points emerge. The first of these is that the students interviewed, despite information presented in publicity material and on open days, arrived at university with minimal expectations about what the performance course would entail. The second is that the personal goals of these students, and the teaching programme negotiated with their instrumental tutor, are reached independently from the stated aims and objectives of the performance modules. The degree to which these personal outcomes overlap those stipulated by the department result from the extent to which the marking criteria embody the learning outcomes.

Finally, the third point is that students prior teaching and learning experiences rarely prepare them for the increased demands of self-motivation and active learning.

Institutionally, these findings fed into revisions of the performance courses in 2009-10. All of the performance students were required to attend an extended series of performance practice lectures and master classes. In the first group of lectures, the course aims and objectives were clearly explained to the students, related to the assessment criteria, and guidance was given on how to negotiate the increased demands of performance at university level. The handbook for performance courses was substantially revised in the light of this research, and circulated amongst staff and students. Future plans include revisiting the aims and objectives of the courses in negotiation with instrumental tutors in order to develop and strengthen a sense of common purpose.

It is clear that – at least for the cohort of students enrolled on performance courses at Lancaster in 2008-09 – that there existed gaps between departmental aims, delivery of the module and student expectations. Future research aims to delve deeper into the available data in order to get a clearer picture of the expectations, experiences and motivations of student performers, and the ways in which the departmental learning outcomes have been realised. As we move deeper into a period in which rising tuition fees creates an ever more demanding student base, the need to reflect on such issues becomes ever more urgent.

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