
A Student-Led Discussion Model: Collaborative Learning in Music Production Courses

Peter Schyborger

Royal College of music in Stockholm

Director of studies / Department of Music and media production

Music production students

Bachelor in music production (45 stud.)

Master in music production (17 stud.)

In focus in this presentation

- Different problems related to when listening to and discussing music made by the students in group
- Some methods to get around the problem
- Try and experience the methods together
- Discussion about problems and solutions

Teaching situations in this presentation

- Seminars in Music production courses (class with 15-16 students)
- Seminars in Artistic projects (smaller groups 5-8 students)

The problem

...when discussing the music of the students together in a group.

- Difficult to set up a situation where the students are able to hold balanced and engaged discussion.
- The discussions on the seminars very often do not turn out to be really real
- A risk that the discussion is flattened by too overly positive comments from the students
- Students constantly tend to turn to the teacher with their comments
- The students do not dare to discuss the details in the music in a really open manner.

Solutions?

How can we create better conditions for discussing the content of music?

- Let the discussions be based upon questions
- The students are the ones who shall formulate the questions

Some examples...

Intense music production week

In the beginning of bachelor year 1

- Work in small groups
- Focus on keyboards and keyboard sounds
- Producing new music every day
- Different themes for the music every day
- The next morning, we listen to what they have created the day before

Method in this case

To avoid that the discussion stopping at a few quick and spontaneous comments, as it very often can do in a bigger group.

- Work with prelistening in small groups (3 stud./group)
- Every group listens to the music of another group and their task is to:
 - 1) Highlight 2-3 details in the music that you want everyone to listen for extra carefully when we listen together.
 - 2) Formulate 2-3 open-ended questions to the other producer group about details in the music, (which at least one question about the piano in the production).

Now let's try this...as if you were the student group who listens to the music made by another group.

Artistic project course – method

The students work on their own music production projects during one semester.

3-4 feedback seminars

Students bring their music to the seminars that they are currently working on to discuss and get feedback from the group.

Every student who bring their music shall also bring 2-3 questions to the seminar about things in their own project that they want to discuss with the group.

Through this, the student takes command of what is to be discussed.

case...

Let's pretend I'm a student coming to the seminar with my music.

I'm really in the middle of the process with this song and I have a few questions to you all about things that I think are a bit problematic in my production.

My questions about my music are:

1. Not sure of what to do with the second verse, something has to happen there?
2. In the 3:rd part after the second refrain I'm not sure what I shall do with that part?
3. Think that the drums need some kind of treatment, in which direction do You think I should go?

Final words

- Let the listening take time.
- Short, direct encouraging comments can be positive for a student to hear, but they rarely lead to a deeper and more interesting discussion about the music.
- There is great value in listening to music together in a group and talking about the content in depth.
This provides common experiences that we can then share.
- It is worth planning in which direction you want the discussion to go.
- Base conversations and discussions on questions, open-ended questions that do not lead to simple yes and no answers,
- The questions are often even more interesting than the answers.

Discussion.....

What are your experiences?

Thank You