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TUNING INTO THE MUSIC OF GROUPS: A METAPHOR FOR TEAM-BASED LEARNING IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION —

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This article explores the metaphor of music in the analysis of teaching team-based courses. The metaphorical lens suggests creative ways of sensing the character and flow of learning by guiding inquiry into such musical attributes as melody, harmony, dynamics, tempo, and rhythm. Viewing teachers and students as “players in the band” and “naming that tune” enhances the instructor’s awareness and crystallizes the broader meaning of the situation. This novel way of analyzing these data can lead to interventions that may not occur to the teacher using more literal analysis.

Keywords: *teaching teams; music metaphor; metaphorical thinking; experiential learning; management education*

“Who’s Sorry Now”: a scene from a classroom near you:

The team’s problems came to light when they turned in their incomplete mid-term exam and glumly reported that Phil had failed to do one quarter of their exam, which he had assured them he would do. Now he was missing from class and they knew that the grades for all of them would suffer. The slow, somber music and disharmony were evident. The instructor tried to be the conductor of the band by urging them to have a frank discussion with all members to see

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what they could have done to prevent this collapse and to build a more harmonious ensemble. They agreed this was wise, but they never did find a rhythm together. The semester-end presentation on their group project had an irregular beat and was out of tune. Two members thought the music of the whole group was lifeless and angrily split off from the others to rewrite the paper at a feverish tempo in a duet that was supposed to be a quintet. Rather upset that they had ignored his earlier advice, the instructor realized he was singing to himself “Who’s Sorry Now?” He was not proud of that sentiment.

With the ubiquity of groups in today’s organizational settings, team-based learning has become common practice in management education. Learning about teams may be incidental to other objectives or central to a course on group dynamics. As practitioners encouraging this experiential learning, we collaborate with our students to create a variety of textures, rhythms, and melodies. Each of us makes our own kind of music in the classroom, and the groups that are a key part of our experience as teachers add the potential for untold richness or excruciating cacophony.

A key issue in facilitating such courses is that they need to be grounded in building a sense of interdependence and collaboration, which can often stand in stark contrast to the individualism that may be the hallmark of students’ earlier school and life experience. However, this is a worthy challenge for instructors as team-based classes can uniquely engage students with establishing rapport, setting group goals, and dealing with issues of mutual accountability. And they can provide them with intimate learning about themselves and their sensitivity to others in a way that more traditional learning cannot.

If the use of learning teams has such potential, why do disappointing incidents occur like the one above—to the consternation of students and teachers alike? Although the risks inherent in facilitating this creative pedagogy can drive us to be our best, they can also expose our own personal challenges with groups and relationships. The same complexity that makes group courses so rich also makes the management of our relationships with students more challenging. Although teacher-student relationships may be clearer and more comfortable when using traditional teaching approaches, the group-learning paradigm can leave us uncertain about how best to add value. These classes call for a better way for teachers to diagnose their actions and improve the way they intervene with students.

New Perspective Through the Metaphor of Music

A shift in frame can be critical to a teacher’s creative response to these challenges. This shift can be accomplished through the use of a metaphorical

frame of reference, which holds the potential to liberate us from a more literal approach. Metaphors derive their power by suggesting a different lens through which to see our world. They allow us to depart from habitual schemas for describing and thinking about a particular domain by highlighting similar but different attributes of a phenomenon (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990; Srivastva & Barrett, 1988). Because metaphors filter and simplify one's perceptions, some facets become obscured and others more salient¹. Metaphors can suggest new ways of acting because they enable analytical manipulation that is otherwise inhibited due to aspects of the target domain that are experienced as familiar, rigid, or threatening. An expansive, so-called generative metaphor (originally coined by Schön, 1993) "is an invitation to see anew, to facilitate the learning of new knowledge, to create new scenarios of future action, and to overcome areas of rigidity" (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990, p. 224).

In this inquiry, our decision to apply the metaphor of music to teaching was prompted by important developmental experiences in our own lives. Our early musical experiences occurred in parallel with our formal education but were qualitatively different. We experienced music making as a more collective and intimate activity than we could achieve in other ways. Music had an integrity that uplifted us and allowed us to connect with family and community. Challenging family dynamics melted and stiff social engagements turned to profound and joyful connections when the instruments came out and the music began. It was music that allowed a communion with others that was nearly sacred. It seemed there was much to learn from the musical realm that could be applied to the educational setting. What better way to inject our teaching with passion than to use a metaphor with deep personal meaning?

Music as metaphor in teaching teams offers rich insights for several reasons. At one level, a student team in class is not too dissimilar to a musical ensemble playing together (Butterworth, 1990; Murnighan & Conlon, 1991). Technically, such a comparison is a simile, which is saying "a student team is *like* a music group." As Oswick, Keenoy, & Grant (2002) point out, however, still more creative insights can be derived from choosing aspects of a metaphorical domain that are even more removed from the target phenomenon. When challenged to "describe the music you hear in a student team," the teacher is invited to tune in to an abstract dimension of what is occurring. Compared to the normal world of daily interchange, music can transport us in a way that is nonverbal, nonlinear, and more emotional. Experiencing music can bring the hearer to ecstatic joy, mournful tears, or abject terror (Krumhansl, 2002; Storr, 1992). In fact, when we reflect on how learning occurs, we realize that *the paradox of both learning and the impact of music is that they are ephemeral and fleeting, on one hand, and profound and*

enduring on the other. Employing music to enlighten our learning and teaching is more natural than meets the eye.

The Diagnostic Dimensions of the Music Metaphor

To explore the musical metaphor, we reconstructed the “Who’s Sorry Now” case and several others that illustrate some of the conflicts both in teams and in the teaching of teams. We also debriefed each other about our teaching experiences. We discovered that using the music metaphor permitted much more depth of understanding than we had achieved in previous attempts to support each other’s teaching with more literal analysis. We performed an informal content analysis to identify the key facets of the music metaphor that were helpful in the analysis. They sorted out into six principal dimensions that offer potential insights into team functioning. They are melody, harmony, dynamics, tempo, rhythm, and the players. It is also helpful to distill the overall tenor of the music by labeling with a song title the dynamics of individual groups that we taught. These dimensions can become valued tools for both teachers and students themselves to better assess their group process dynamics and to make adjustments accordingly.

MELODY

Melody is the arrangement of tones to produce a tune or song, organized as an aesthetic whole. Melodies can vary from simple to complex, and some move gently between pitches whereas others jump about wildly. In any group, the prevailing melody may sound clear and heartfelt like a good folk song. Or, it might be an effusive jazz saxophone solo, swirling and tumbling in a current of ideas. It could be as ordered as an elegant piece of chamber music. Teachers can choose to respond to the music just as readily as to the literal words. Sometimes that music tells far more about the heart and soul of what is happening with the students.

Melody is what students are left humming when they wander away from a team experience. One hopes that some will stick and become part of students’ permanent repertoire. The teacher can help students listen and build on each other’s melodies or start off their own song. The instructor’s artful attention to melodic development can help determine whether the overall music in the team goes beyond being a series of fragments to a complete symphony at the end of the team’s existence.

Some key questions, summarized in Appendix A, are useful for assessment of any small group or team. For one, what kind of melody do you hear? Is it a clear folk song melody, a surprising jazz tune, or an ordered piece of

chamber music? It may be that the group is mustering only a slur of sound without melody. What does that signify? Another question is when members introduce new melodies, how do other members work with them? It may be that when certain members raise up a new melody, others go back to playing their own tunes. What difference does that have for the group? We surveyed the student teams in a recent class on how they would describe their team functioning using the music metaphor. A member of one lower performing group described the melody this way: "At times it seemed like we were making music, but some of it was classical and some was popular music. We did not create the same music."

Another question that teachers can ask themselves is "Where do your own melodies come from in working with teams? From your head, your heart, or elsewhere?" There may be times when each of these locations may be appropriate. "How satisfied are you with your melody? Is it fresh? Are you stuck singing the same melodies time after time?" We also are in the business of helping our students to find and express their own unique melodies. Our international students may have a very different song to sing. Does it get heard in our classroom? Are all of the students trying to "sing along with Mitch" or are they finding their own voice?

In assessing the melody of a learning team, the instructor must listen deeply for what is being sung beyond the words. What are the recurring themes? The emotion of the melody can be read as well. Is it a melancholic ballad, an impassioned aria, or an angry heavy metal shout? How does the melody change when the teacher is in the room? What are the final notes of the team? What do students go away humming after the experience?

HARMONY

Technically, harmony is two or more pitches occurring at the same time. In practice, harmony occurs when these pitches are arranged in complementary fashion to add richness to a single tune. A series of particular harmonic combinations can create a sense of movement. Although it is seldom articulated, one can feel the quality of the harmony in a team.

Harmony can also be described in terms of dissonance. Disharmonious, or dissonant, notes can cause discomfort to the listener but also add harmonic interest and allow the group to explore the full range of human experience. One diagnostic is to ask, is there a single voice? Is there resonance between voices? When a group is working together, when does it seem like they are playing together? Who attempts to harmonize with whom? Is there dissonance? One student wrote, "I feel like four of us were completely coordinated and in harmony. While we each played a different instrument (as we have dif-

ferent skills), we came together to play very effortlessly. However, one member played a flat instrument or refused to play at all.”

Teachers may note that students tend to harmonize with whomever is in power. When instructors try to connect with their students, they are in a way reaching out to harmonize with students’ internal voices, just as jazz musicians improvise by building on each other’s playing. The teacher’s own voice may be viewed as a song that students may sing along or improvise with. In engaging students’ participation, teachers are often asking students to “jam” with each other. This is a kind of jazz, and the group becomes a live ensemble with opportunities for rich dissonance as well as soothing harmony.

It is useful to consider how a group handles dissonance—whether it is drowned out or incorporated into the musical flow. In some teams, the avoidance of dissonance prevents any possibility of music with depth. Sometimes, dissonance may be a useful prod to change directions. Teachers can assess how tolerant they themselves are of dissonance and how they handle it. There is great creative potential in drawing out the dissonant voices, which may provide their own kind of beauty and suggest new melodies once thought impossible. Students soon learn by our own actions how much dissonance will be accepted in our educational culture.

DYNAMICS

Dynamics refers to the level of volume in music. Conventional markings for dynamics are in Italian, ranging from soft—*piano*—and very soft—*pianissimo*—to loud and very loud, *forte* and *fortissimo*. At a superficial level, one can listen for simply the audible sounds from a group to judge its dynamics. More revealing, however, is to listen deeply to whether the spirit of the group’s functioning feels more big and bold, as in *fortissimo*, or more muted in the style of *pianissimo*.

Once a person’s attention is drawn to whether something is loud or soft, the more helpful information comes from what the dynamics seem to imply. For instance, if the group is soft, can everyone hear each other or is it too quiet to allow effective exchange of playing? On the other hand, quiet in a group may be symptomatic of a smoothly efficient ensemble. Or is it about tentative playing by the members? If the group is loud, does that allow for all players to be heard? Or is it raucous chaos? For instance, one student reported, “Many times everyone played like a loud trumpet, different notes yet at the same volume. Therefore, not everyone could be heard.” Changes in dynamics are also revealing. What brings about a *crescendo* or *decrescendo*? Is it effective? Or does it reflect chaos or lagging energy?

Teachers can recognize that quiet in a team may indicate players who are bored, confused, or quietly engaged. The loud team may indicate chaotic conditions. Is that okay with you? Does it represent players who are blowing off steam and who will return to melodies that are closer to the desired musical score? Or does the loudness show that actually the team is out of control?

TEMPO

Tempo is simply the speed of the beats in music. It may be expressed in beats per minute or by such traditional terms as *scherzo* for very fast, *allegro* for fast, *andante* for medium, and *adagio* for slow. The pace of a group's music is easy to detect. As with the other characteristics of music, the tempo is not important in itself but in what it implies about the meaning and feel of the situation. A fast tempo may indicate that a rapid series of learnings is coming out, or it may reflect people trying to hurry to get finished with their task. A slow tempo could accompany the contemplation of difficult, deep material, or it could reflect a dreary segment of boring talk. Which players or groups of players are playing at allegro, or a fast tempo, and which ones at adagio, a slow tempo?

Learning teams vary widely in their tempo. It can be useful to compare the unique ways in which they express tempo. One student reported, "It started out as an extremely slow melody and gradually built up right before the midterm exam. Trumpets were sounding as we passed in the midterm but a soft lull fell soon after. The tempo didn't speed up until right before the presentation, but we finished on a high note."

How quickly does a group get down to business? What pace do they work at? How quickly do they make decisions? How much time do they take for just relating to each other? Are they managing the tempo of their work, or do they simply react to a constant flow of crises? How do they deal with external time pressure? Teachers can consider what tempo they wish to strive for at different times. An unanticipated adagio, or slowing, for instance, may reflect an opening for special insights to emerge. On the other hand, it may call for some dramatic gesture to reenergize a boring discussion.

RHYTHM

Rhythm is defined as "the aspect of music comprising all the elements (as accent, meter) that relate to forward movement" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 1993). Describing rhythm involves deep listening, feeling, and intuiting the subtleties, accented beats, and patterns in a group's behavior. Valuable rhythmic associations can also be made by describing the type

of music evoked by the rhythm, such as a waltz, a gentle trot, a syncopated jazz rhythm, or a military march. Each conjures up a variety of images that get to the character and flow of each particular group. For example, a group in a military march evokes images of a team that tolerates no nonsense and follows the chain of command. In contrast, one student described his group's rhythm this way: "It was very much like a punk band between and during drug binges. Extended moments of flurry, followed by days of complete inaction."

For any group, one can ask, where are the rhythms coming from? Who are the catalysts? Who are playing the rhythm instruments, such as drums, bass, or backup guitar? One can also notice whether more than one rhythm is occurring at one time. If so, do they feed off of each other like African polyrhythms or are the rhythms weakened in competition with each other? The instructor could ask himself or herself, could people dance to this rhythm? Does this rhythm give the teacher energy or does it sap it? Should he or she help the group align around one rhythm or create awareness of the different rhythms present?

THE PLAYERS

Members of a group need to identify when they are enacting different roles. Whether one is serving as conductor, player, soloist, composer, critic, audience, and the like has critical implications for one's influence on the group. Another useful question is what instrument each member of the group is playing. What does it signify? For example, is someone playing the tuba, the saxophone, the flute, trumpet, or drums? Are some people just turning the page of the score or serving as audience? As one student wrote about the semester project group, "One instrument was left out of most of the piece and the other instruments invited it to play at the proper time and taught it the song many times." Another used the language of players' roles to describe her disappointing experience: "Initially our team was guided by a few conductors, but when the harmony was disrupted, roles started to change. Unfortunately, by the end of the musical, it became a trio instead of a sextet." Another reported, "We had a quartet with a conductor who sometimes joined on her instrument and other times conducted to bring us back in rhythm. One musician was out of tune the whole semester and eventually broke his instrument in two and left rehearsal."

The teacher needs to consider how one's role has an impact on power in the team and on one's direct responsibility for outcomes. There may be times when it is appropriate to be just a bystander to the performance of students and other times when it is vital to step forward as conductor or composer to

bring out a crescendo of learning. Sometimes teachers realize that they don't want to be a conductor all the time because they want to savor the discovery and relationships implicit in being a player. Other times, it is expected that the teacher will give the critic's feedback or an outright grade to the ensemble.

"NAME THAT TUNE"

The overall impact of the music conveys much data about the effectiveness of a team and implies what needs to be done for improvement. The music may sound jubilant, sinister, or confused. These feelings may be quite appropriate for effective team performance or learning to take place, or they may signal the need for a way to intervene.

Creating song titles is a powerful technique for getting to the heart of things. When interacting with the group, teachers can ask themselves what the group song might be. We can also think about the song we'd like them to sing to test out our assumptions about what our interventions should be. For instance, a team's functioning might be characterized by such titles as "You are the Wind Beneath My Wings," "Alone Again, Naturally," or "By George, I Think You've Got It!" Thinking of song titles describing different groups in your class can unearth the unique challenges of each group. Of course, one needs to identify new song titles to reflect their growth and evolution.

Using the Music Metaphor to Intervene in Teams

As an analytical schema, the music metaphor can reveal aspects of a team that are otherwise obscured or ignored. The real pay-off, of course, results when a teacher or for that matter a team member is able to design and enact strategies to intervene in the dynamics of the team. We will identify a number of potential design considerations as well as cite some examples of how certain actions grow out of the musical analysis.

Teachers can also think about their own natural rhythmic style and how it compares to others'. It is important that teachers skillfully plan out and attend to what role they are playing. Changing too abruptly from a fellow player to a harsh critic can have predictable upsetting effects on the music in the room. Serving as nothing but a conductor can deteriorate into an authoritarian stance, yet we still need to be ready to exert the influence of composer when our expertise needs to be heard (Brookfield, 1990). For instance, if a student falls silent because no one harmonizes with her voice, we may suggest that she rehearse with one or two teammates to work out the harmonies in advance of a team meeting.

Intervening in a team encounter is one of the most potent uses of the music metaphor. It is also one of the most difficult to execute. Practice in thinking in these terms, however, greatly helps one use this technique skillfully. Creative interventions demonstrate that using a metaphorical approach goes beyond merely relabeling the literal domain with a musical vocabulary. Done well, a metaphorical approach, such as using music, casts the concrete immediate situation into an alternate, simplified domain, which allows manipulation of the musical ideas and produces new ideas for steps to take or interventions to make. This analysis may take place strictly in the head of the teacher, or it may involve students and others in openly using the metaphor.

One example of this potential stems from a situation when one of the authors was conducting a one-on-one discussion of an uncomfortable problem-solving situation with another person:

- Author: What's wrong right now?
 Cathy: I feel sort of disconnected from our approach to this problem right now.
 A: What kind of music do you hear?
 C: I feel like I'm just playing some lonely bass line on a cello, and I'm tired of it.
 A: What's wrong with being a cello?
 C: It's as though I am not playing with anyone else. My slow themes are in search of other players who aren't coming along.
 A: What instrument would you rather be?
 C: I'd rather be a violin, establishing my own tune, and having others join in.
 A: Okay, go ahead and become a violin. What's that like?
 C: [Pauses, then with conviction] Yes! I am playing with strength, and I am right in the middle of the ensemble.
 A: So what do you need to do with this now?
 C: I am going to speak up and voice my concerns to the others and advocate my approach!

In this actual dialogue, Cathy moved from a generalized numbness of detachment from other people into metaphorical territory (see Figure 1). There she could sense the music of the moment and tune in to the feelings and desires associated with that music. Then she took on a new identity—the violin—and converted that action by analogy to a new assertiveness in dealing with the other people back in the here-and-now domain. The power of the

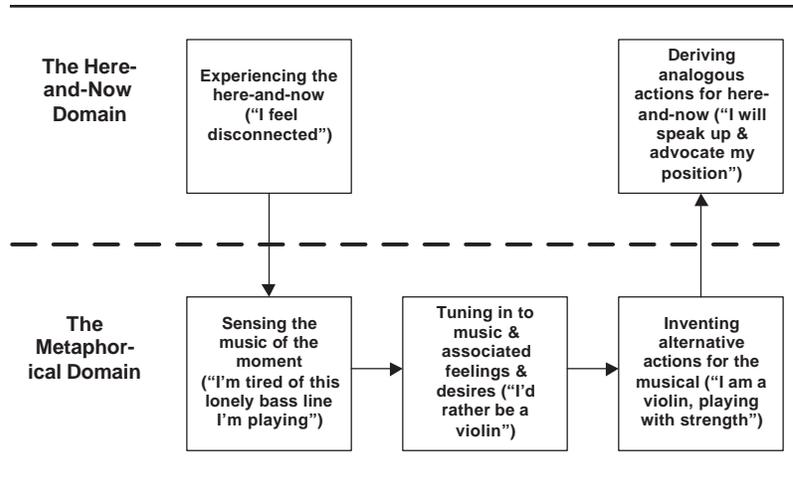


Figure 1: The Use of Metaphor for Deriving Alternative Actions

metaphor is that it opened up possibilities and led to insights that were previously invisible. These insights allowed her to engage in a new way.

To access potential intervention strategies, a teacher can ask the diagnostic questions in Appendix A and consider using them as suggested in Appendix B. Following is a final example of how a teacher can both assess the music in a team and act accordingly. It describes the launching of a new team at the start of a semester.

Learning teams were formed and the instructor planned to meet briefly with each team to observe its dynamics and to begin to forge a mentoring relationship. On entering the room of one such group, the instructor heard an empty silence. Ten students sat in chairs, avoiding eye contact. The weak *rhythm* of rustling papers and shifting chairs seemed random and disjointed.

As all eyes fell on the instructor, she felt pressure to do something to get the music started. She heard the song "Get Back" (The Beatles) and had the instinct to retreat to past formulas ("If only I was lecturing right now I could really jam!"). She wasn't sure what to do first, yet the intense gaze of the students told her that she was expected to adopt the teacher's role of conductor or star soloist. Sensing the lack of *melody* in the room, she decided to begin a simple song of one-to-one interchange with the students, "Reach Out in the Darkness." The safest way to make everyone a *player* rather than part of the audience seemed to lie in that old familiar song, "Getting to Know You" (from *The King and I*). She went around the room to shake each person's hand, introducing herself, and asking the students where they were from.

The familiar *melody* of personal introductions and gentle *rhythm* of shaking hands unfolded at an easy *tempo*. Besides providing relief, the simple exercise

also began to create clarity in the roles of *the players* and to establish norms and expectations. “We will be personal, we’ll be on a first-name basis, we are going to get to know each other.” It created the sense that although the instructor might get the music under way, all would be *players*.

When it was time to get into the immediate task, choosing a focus for the team’s project, one bravely extraverted student emerged and began to speak in what felt like a timid solo in dead air. But the *melody* of this awkward voice filled the room. Would the other students jump into this *rhythm*, add *harmonies*, and get in sync, or would they just be an audience—or worse, critics? The song “Wade in the Water” jumped into the instructor’s mind. Dead silence followed. Another student offered an idea like a flute in an empty train station—another silence followed.

At this point the instructor realized that her presence might be impeding the formation of the team and their music, so after a few minutes, she took a risk. She interrupted the fragile flow of the group to ask them to pair up and interview each other about their personal background and interests for their team project. In doing so, she was following her muse. By temporarily stopping their halting *melody*, she confounded the weak *rhythm* and changed the *tempo*. They were relieved.

The students felt like players with the teacher as conductor, and they quickly found partners. The song came to mind, “I Can See Clearly Now, the Rain is Gone.” When someone asked a clarifying question about the pairing exercise, the instructor augmented her answer with a gentle joke and a chuckle, adding a whimsical flute to the intense cellos of the first few moments. The culture of this team was being composed one note at a time.

Now everyone seemed to be joining the band and there was an emerging sense that they were all now playing, albeit in smaller dyadic ensembles. Even though the *rhythms* were still somewhat tentative, *harmonies* were emerging and you could hear them in the collective sound in the room. Moment by moment one could feel a pulse beginning to echo what would eventually become the unique *rhythm* of this team, different from any other. Now the students were responding to each other’s playing, not just the teacher’s. This dynamic interaction brought an intriguing complexity to the texture of sound. Above all, the students sharing their own favorite songs filled the room with badly needed warmth. She thought, time to leave and let them get on with their own music; this is their group. She asked the students to take turns presenting their partners to the group once they finished interviewing them and then left the room. At first the volume dipped a bit as they noticed that it was their music now and no conductor was present. Then it got louder than ever. The instructor left the group with the song, “Up, Up and Away!” (The Fifth Dimension) echoing in her head.

Conclusion

Applying the music metaphor to one’s teaching involves the discipline of deep listening. One must hear both the internal voices of the team and the instructor’s own in reaction to it. Although a teacher may use the diagnostic

questions to spark an analysis of the music, it is ultimately the larger attention to the music surrounding the activity that takes the teacher to higher levels of performance. Using the six dimensions and the steps suggested in Appendices A and B opens up a different frame from the one usually employed, and it unlocks the possibility of a depth not explored before. The pay-off from this framework arises from sensing the patterns from a new perspective and generating new choices about interventions. The net effect can be to access a higher level of sensitivity, awareness, and understanding in this wondrous and ambitious art we call teaching.

Appendix A

Diagnostic Instrument for Use of Music as Metaphor

The following questions can guide teachers or teams to analyze what is taking place in their teams.

MELODY

1. What kind of melody captures the group process?
 - A folk melody, clear and authentic?
 - A jazz melody, surprising and subtle?
 - A rock melody, shouted and loud?
 - A classical melody, ordered and thoughtful?
 - A Middle Eastern melody, mournful and joyous at the same time?
2. When members introduce melodic themes, how do others work with them?
 - Do they encourage them to continue?
 - To what extent do people feel heard by you? By others?
 - What are the "silent melodies" that are not voiced?
3. Where do your melodies come from?
 - From your heart, your head, your feet, etc.?
 - From other peoples' melodies?
 - Do you compose them in advance or improvise in the moment?
4. How satisfied are you with your song?
 - When do you feel you are singing the same old melodies over and over?
 - What are the freshest new melodies you have come up with lately?
 - Are you employing a melody that is easy for everyone to sing?
5. Describe what happens in the final notes of the term.
 - What do your students go away humming after the experience?
 - What kind of note do you like to end on? (e.g., quiet, surprising, challenging, loud?)

HARMONY

1. How would you describe the harmonic texture of the group?
 - How many voices are being heard?
 - How much resonance is there between voices?
 - When do you feel most resonance?
2. To what extent is there a feeling of harmony as your students attempt to work together?
 - When does it most seem like they are playing together?
 - Who attempts to harmonize with whom?
 - To what extent do they listen to each other?
 - To what extent do students respond to each other's voices during class discussions, or does it all go through you?
3. To what extent are you and your students in harmony?
 - When is there the most harmony between you and your class? When the least?
 - When you are soloing in your class, how do students try to harmonize with you and how do you respond?
 - To what extent do you listen to students' music to gauge your harmony with them?
 - When students do a solo, in what ways do you harmonize with them? How might you drown them out?
4. Do some students' contributions sound dissonant? How do you handle it?
 - What do you do, as conductor, to incorporate dissonant voices into the total musical experience?
 - To what extent do you make it safe for students to play? Even when they hit a sour note?
 - What do you do to nurture dissonance and bring out its richness and beauty?

DYNAMICS

1. Is the volume of the group loud or soft?
 - If soft, to what extent does everyone in the group hear each other's nuances?
 - Does soft volume suggest quiet confidence, tentativeness, or something else?
 - If loud, how does the volume affect the exchange of playing among members?
 - What causes the loudness? Alignment among the members? Chaos in the group? Other sources?
2. When sensing a *crescendo* or *decrescendo* in the sound of the team,
 - To what extent is it aligned with the task of the group?
 - Is it a sign of a swing in emotion or productivity or something else, such as movement in group development, morale, conflict, etc?

TEMPO

1. How would you describe the pulse of the group?
 - Fast or slow?
 - Powerful or weak?
2. Which groups in your class play at *allegro*, a fast tempo, and which ones play at *adagio*, a slow tempo?
3. What interventions or assignments do you offer that might slow or speed the tempo?

RHYTHM

1. What sort of a rhythm do you feel with this group? For example,
 - Swing, waltz, polka?
 - A Latin rumba, samba, or cha-cha?
 - A frenetic drum solo?
 - A gentle trot?
 - A military march?
2. Where does the rhythm seem to be coming from?
 - Who are the catalysts that are setting the rhythm?
 - What rhythmic elements is each bringing?
 - How would you describe the key players as rhythm instruments?
3. How would you describe the rhythm?
 - Is the rhythm syncopated or straight-ahead?
 - Could people dance to this rhythm? If so, what kind of dance is suggested?
 - How does it make you feel? Does it give you energy? Bring you up or down?
 - How would you describe the difference in rhythms among different groups in the class?
4. How do you get into rhythm with students?
 - In what ways is your own rhythm in sync or out of sync with the students' rhythm?
 - How long does it take the group to get into a rhythm together?
 - Is there room for incorporating alternative rhythms or are they rejected?
 - Are you willing to change the rhythm in class if something prompts that?

THE PLAYERS

1. To what extent do members serve as
 - Spectators?
 - Conductors?
 - Composers?
 - Critics?

2. What instrument or role does each student play and what does it signify?
 - Tuba?
 - Saxophone?
 - Flute?
 - Trumpet?
 - Drums?
 - Page-turner?
 - Audience?
 3. What do the students need most from you? For example,
 - To conduct?
 - To play louder?
 - To be a good critic?
 - To simply listen?
 - To give them space to play?
 - To go away?
 4. To what extent do you bring out the best music possible?
 - How do you get someone to step up and take solos?
 - To what extent do you let a student influence what you are playing or where you are taking the band?
 - How and when do you work in silence?
 - To what extent do you play what you want to play? Are the students hearing your best stuff?
 - What do you do when students play and no one listens?
-

Appendix B

Possible Interventions When Tuning Into the Teams

<i>Assessments of Elements</i>	<i>Possible Interventions</i>
Melody	
Melody is unclear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request that other students paraphrase existing ideas from their own perspective. • Quiet the team so each voice can be heard more clearly.
Melody is clear but repetitive, dull, and boring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the action and ask a focused question for reflection. • Offer your own voice, deliberately different from what you hear.
No one is singing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a solo performance from each member. • Make it a team goal to make sure every voice is heard.
Harmony	
Harmony exists among players.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If existing direction is interesting and fruitful, offer your appreciation as appropriate. • When there is “Groupthink” or not enough creative tension from too much harmony, challenge them with a new deliverable or divide into subgroups.
If a single voice dominates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the single voice facilitate the team and bring out the best from each member. • Create a safe space for themes to be offered, such as going around and inviting each player to contribute.
Dissonance exists among the players.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer your own strong voice to attempt to draw them into a new harmonic frame. • Ascertain if one theme can serve as a foundation for several of the others.
Dynamics	
Group is playing too loud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a conductor; try deliberately to bring the volume down. • Change the frame by asking the students to quietly write, reflecting in response to your question.
Group is playing too softly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When it indicates boredom, confusion, or lack of inspiration, change the pace, for instance, a skit, persuasive speech, or feedback session. • When it indicates lack of direction, encourage the group to redefine its purpose.
Dynamics are flat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remind the group of their goals and deadlines. • Be a critic, create a midsemester evaluation.

Tempo

Group is playing at a frenetic pace.

- Ask the group to slow down and describe what is going on.
- Introduce a topic that invites reflection.

Group is playing too slowly.

- When the tempo is deteriorating into undistinguishable pace, then lay down a new tempo (e.g., imagine you are drums or bass for the team)
- Break them into subgroups, with a deliverable with some time pressure.

Members fall out of step.

- Help them catch up by clarifying the framework being used.
- Stop the action and start afresh.

Rhythm

Rhythm is choppy or jumbled.

- Support the strongest rhythm you can identify through following it or directing attention to it.
- Offer a new, more pronounced direction.

Rhythm is boring or too predictable.

- Be unpredictable and create syncopation (vary your patterns).
- Add variety; for instance, get people doing different things.

Rhythm suggests movement or a dance that runs counter to the purpose of the moment.

- Ask the member with the strongest voice to pull the team together.
- Respond to and follow the rhythm of the quieter students.

The Players

Key roles are not being filled.

- Direct the students to assess their roles and consider taking on a new one.
- Invite the team to critique its own process and performance.

Certain players feel apart from the team or slotted into the wrong role.

- Ask those students what instrument they are being right now and describe what is working and not working with being those instruments.
 - Invite them to become a different instrument to enhance the performance of the team.
-

Note

1. The simplifying and powerful aspect of metaphor is illustrated by the report on the toys kept in the office of Michael Dell, known for his forceful management style at the company he founded: "The Fisher Price earthmover with cheery driver goes on Mr. Dell's desk if he gets too excited about an idea. Mr. Dell laughs heartily at the image of himself as the 'smiling bulldozer' but accepts the metaphor. 'These items help us to be more thoughtful managers,' he says" ("Where They Work," 2003).

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