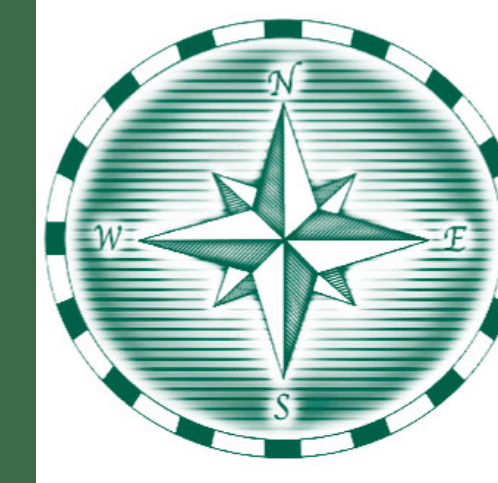


One More Step: An Epic Journey into the True Meaning of Rock and Roll

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Introduction

In an attempt to create a niche in their school's dichotomized culture of Athletics and Academics, six brave "alternative kids" compose a Rock Anthem. The community's initial reaction? Confusion. Uncertainty. But as the boys perfect their hymn, the cultural climate heats up.

The Research Question

How does composing a school anthem affect the sense of community of high school boys in Rock Band?

"That was the **awesome** part, 'cuz we're **music kids**. We don't really do sports. We don't really have the school behind us like when they do sports.... this gave us our **appreciation**."

Research Context

With a student body of anywhere from 540 to 600 male students, Delbarton is a private, all-male Roman Catholic college prep school in Morristown, New Jersey, that strives to educate its young men in mind, body and spirit.

Participants

They call themselves **AP Rock Band**, and they are the six most active members of our Rock Band Club. They are of varying levels of musical ability.



The Research Action

In honor of Delbarton's 75th anniversary, I asked the students to write the words and compose the music for a **rock anthem** celebrating the school, its **mission**, and in particular its **athletics** program. I discussed the project with the boys at the beginning of the school year, and left them to work on the anthem on their own, offering feedback periodically. They performed the song for the first time before their school at Delbarton's Pep Rally on October 10th. Over the Christmas break, I took the students to a studio where they finalized the composition, recorded various takes, and mixed together the final track.

AP Rock Band



Data Collection

Video, field notes, and interviews.

Data Analysis

By interviewing the members of AP Rock Band throughout the process, and noting the course of their sentiments vis-à-vis the school's cultural climate towards the anthem, I was able to find the 'real' lessons of the project.

"It sounds corny, but I realized in this project that **everything you make, everything you really create, you put a piece of yourself into it!**"

Key Findings and Discussion

- Sometimes 'community' can be an unfavorable or adverse element to the creation process.
- The true lesson for any MAKER is to stand by their product, even if the public isn't 'ready' for it.
- *Making* underscores individuality, not necessarily community.

"we've realized that it can be easy to change the song and try and please everyone....



...but a lot of us are proud of the song and we want to leave it the way we had it and not sell out."

Conclusions

While AP Rock Band had no trouble writing a brilliant 75th Anniversary Anthem for their school, their major obstacle became dealing with their community's slow acceptance of their work. However, this became a bigger lesson for them—not everyone in a community is ready to accept change, creativity, and something new. Conversely, by its very definition, this is what distinguishes a maker from his community: someone who makes has had to step out of the safety of the crowd to put his idea on display.

"You can't let...the negative minority...bother you: there will always be another opportunity to create."



Key Readings

Green, Lucy. (2008) *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy*. Ashgate,

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Further Information

This poster and further information is available at <http://www.theibsc.org/>.

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