

# Protocol Analysis in Music Research

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A JOINT DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN DONCASTER COLLEGE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL



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# Background

- Introspection – ‘talk-alouds’
- Mathematical problem-solving; writing; learning programming language; pedagogical applications; production of ‘expert system modelling
- Ericsson & Simon (1993); Ericsson (2006)
- Concurrent or retrospective reporting

# Verbal protocol analysis in music studies

- Reitman (1960) – music composition
- Studies in music composition primarily
- Few studies in music performance ( e.g. Williamson, Valentine & Valentine, 2002)
- Jazz improvisation ( e.g. Mendonca & Wallace, 2004)

# Issues

- Objections ( e.g. Glass & Holyoak, 1986; Smagorinsky, 1994; Sloboda, 1995)
- Usefulness/validity of verbal protocol methodology
- (Green, 1995; Smagorinsky, 1994)
- Triangulation : Action protocols, interviews

# Process

- Task specification
- Data collection
- Data transcription
- Initial coding categories
- Theoretical framework
- Chunking of protocols
- Encoding of protocols
- Analysis?

# Methodological considerations

- Extremely time consuming
- Procedural considerations
- Output
- Free concurrent verbalisations
- Cognitive 'load'

# Finally..

“... the method of protocol analysis provides a tool that allows researchers to identify information that pass through expert performer’s attention while they generate their behaviour without the need to embrace any controversial theoretical assumptions...protocol analysis has emerged as a practical tool to diagnose thinking outside of traditional cognitive psychology and cognitive science”

Ericsson, 2006, p237

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