Student self-assessment and portfolios are useful to enhance band students’ critical listening skills, analytical skills, and student self-monitoring of proficiency and aesthetic development. The strategies presented have been applied in several school band programs across the Midwest and are a result of a nine-year longitudinal study applied throughout an entire instrumental music program. Student self and group assessments are an effective means through which instrumental music teachers can assess students in an authentic context and students can monitor progress in portfolios. More information can be found in the following article:


Through self-assessments and progress portfolios, students develop a deeper musical understanding than is often achieved without such a process. As a motivating tool, the act of self-assessment provides an incentive to enhance critical listening skills provided by the focus of the assessments. Categories in the assessments provide direction in student listening contributing to informed musical decisions by helping students focus on the concepts around which the music had been created and will be performed.

An effective learning environment is established through the assessments offering enhancing student awareness of, and sensitivity to compositional elements with the music that is initially inaccessible. Many students are not aware of many technical and expressive aspects in their playing until they listen to and assess themselves. This enhanced awareness presents the students with the opportunity to construct meaning of particular occurrences and, through further rehearsal, apply isolated observations to the musical whole. Self-assessments enhance student ownership of the music learning.

Progress portfolios provide the documentation through which students can experience, monitor, and discover progress in musical understanding, critical listening and analytical skills, and aesthetic sensitivity. Enhancement of these critical attributes is often not immediately obvious unless the student is exposed to progress over time which is a strength of progress portfolios.

Music Portfolios

DEFINITION: A portfolio is a collection of student work that exhibits efforts, progress, and achievement. The portfolio is an attempt to capture a wider, richer context to achievement that holds long-range meaning to the learner.

WHAT DO PORTFOLIOS ACCOMPLISH?:
1. Portfolios encourage students to deepen musical understanding.
2. Portfolios provide incentive to enhance critical listening skills necessary for advanced musicianship.
3. Portfolios demonstrate that the student has engaged in self-reflection.
4. Portfolios contribute to student ability to make informed musical decisions.
5. If graded, portfolios must include criteria used for assessment and makes student accountable for musical learning goals.
6. Portfolios can encourage students to develop abilities needed to become independent, self-directed learners so they can take ownership of their musicianship.
7. Portfolios can provide a lasting record of students’ progress and accomplishments toward becoming a creative, expressive musician.

CONTENTS: Portfolio contents reflect some balance between the goals of a band program and the interests of the individual learner.

- Self-assessments
- Group-assessments
- Tests
- Journals
- Teacher evaluations
- Individual goals
- Recordings
- Repertoire lists
- Peer critiques
- Student compositions
- Honors/awards
- Pictures
- Newspaper clippings
- Concert programs
- Records of lessons

Music Portfolios

- Technical proficiency (kinesthetic)
- Knowledge acquisition (cognitive)
- Error detection skills (critical listening)
- Problem solving skills (analytical)
- Musical understanding (interpretive)
- Musical sensitivity (aesthetic)
Proficiency Assessment and Student Self-Assessment

1. Assign specific scales, etudes, and sections from their pieces.
2. The student rehearses and record the required assignment. They were allowed to re-record the assignment as many times as they would like until they feel the recording is their best.
3. Once they have completed the highest quality recording possible, then they listen and assess their performance on a form similar to this one.
   a) Students must address each element and
   b) State specific problem (place and description), how to fix, and goals for improvement.
4. They hand in the recording and the self-assessment (cassette tape or CD or if they are using a computer to record, you could have them save it on a flash drive) and you listen, provide feedback, and assign a proficiency grade and an assessment grade using a rubric. (see Farrell book or make your own)

Example of a scoring rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of Specific References</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accurately identifies specific references and identifies specific problems needing improvement</td>
<td>Generally refers accurately to musical elements and/or does not specifically identify problems</td>
<td>Refers to isolated musical elements and/or overly broad, sometimes inaccurate references</td>
<td>Does not refer to the musical or technical elements in the performance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions for Improvement</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly articulated revisions are linked to the specific observations</td>
<td>Revisions are suggested but not necessarily coordinated with the critical comments</td>
<td>Offers broad, superficial or unconstructive suggestions</td>
<td>No attempt to suggest revisions or how to improve the performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of Proficiency Rubrics

In addition to pitch and rhythm, the other categories now shown in this example are articulation, dynamics, phrasing, and expression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE PROGRESS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCORE = NA if not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOST CONSERVATIVE SCORING = assign lowest possible score on any or all of the factors listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGHEST INSTANCE = score the highest possible even if there is only one occurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSIC PERFORMED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PITCH PRODUCTION (most conservative scoring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 - 5.0 = virtually no errors and very secure pitches (95-100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 - 3.9 = mostly accurate and secure pitches (75-95%) but with a few isolated errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 - 2.9 = sometimes performs with accurate pitches (50-75%) but with frequent or repeated errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 - 1.9 = seldom performs pitch accurately (0-50%) or securely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHYTHM/TEMPO PRODUCTION (most conservative scoring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 - 5.0 = secure pulse and rhythmically accurate (95-100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 - 3.9 = mostly accurate rhythm (75-95%) and steady pulse with a few durational errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 - 2.9 = sometimes performs durations accurately (50-75%) but with erratic pulse or with frequent or repeated durational errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 - 1.9 = seldom performs durations accurately (0-50%) or with a steady tempo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students Assessing the Large Ensemble

In my band I would record the concert rehearsal two weeks before the performance, have the students write their observations and set improvement goals for the ensemble. Time would be provided for students to share their observations in each category. I would compile the student observations and the final two weeks of rehearsal would be focused on the student goals. This provides student ownership of the rehearsal and a unique engagement during this critical rehearsal time.
**Rehearsal Comparison**

How to maintain a portfolio?
- Students should maintain a portfolio - not the teacher
- Select a filing cabinet
- Place an enveloping folder for each student
- Students add required components
- Add concert programs
- Add newspaper articles, pictures, misc.

The Final Product
- Keep each year organized with title page per year
- Create a cover
- Add envelop for recordings
- Have all contents bound
- Give as gift upon graduation
GRADING: The portfolio can be used in the grading plan. An idea could be applied as follows:

**25% - Lesson Grade** (includes scores from individual lesson achievement rubrics and student goal setting form)
**10% - Ensemble Participation** (includes comparison forms, journals, student self-reflection of participation/accomplishments, teacher observation of participation, attendance record)
**15% - Technical Proficiency** (recorded excerpts assess with proficiency rubric)
**10% - Self-assessment** (Student self-assessment of recorded excerpts scored with rubric)
**10% - Performance Critique (Scored with rubric)**
**10% - Service** – (attendance record of required events)
**20% - Projects** – (2 projects selected from: solo performed at festival/concert, jazz band participation, per community performance, chamber ensemble participation, student conducting, research paper, written program notes, letter to composer, peer teaching, etc.)

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**General Notes**

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Charles Fowler (1970)

Discovery is the act of obtaining knowledge for oneself by the use of one’s own mind. Our students will no longer just be listeners, confined to rote accumulation, memorization and regurgitation. Instead we will invite students to conquer their own ignorance and win their own possession of knowledge.