The Midwest Clinic
An International Band and Orchestra Conference

Developing Student Portfolios in your Band Program

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:

Burrack, F. (2002). Enhanced assessment in instrumental programs. Music Educator's Journal, 88, (6), 27-32.

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.

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Music Portfolios

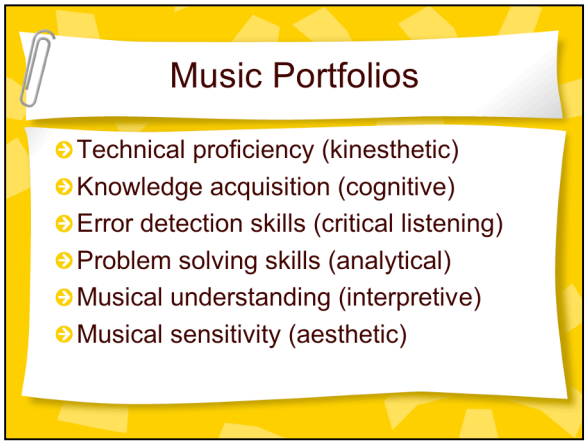
DEFINITION: A portfolio is a collection of student work that exhibits efforts, progress, and achievement. The portfolio is an attempt to capture a wider, richer context to achievement that holds long-range meaning to the learner.

WHAT DO PORTFOLIOS ACCOMPLISH?:

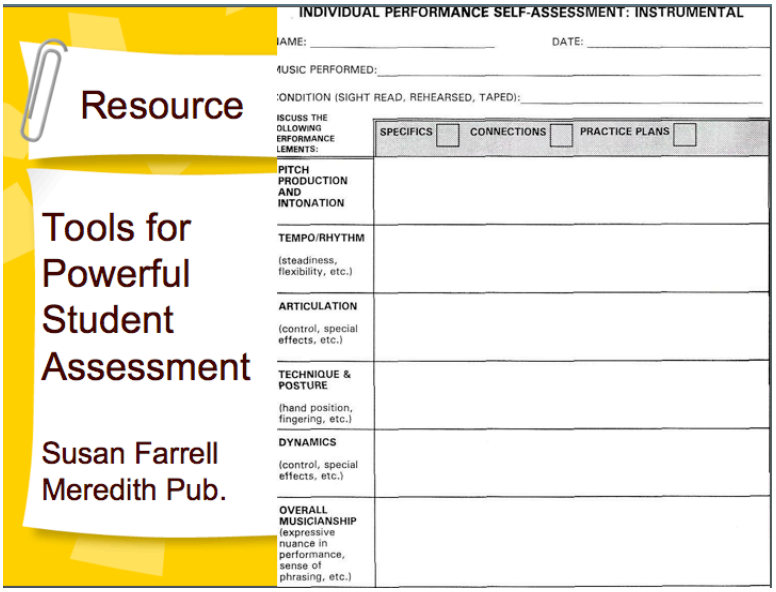
1. Portfolios encourage students to deepen musical understanding.
2. Portfolios provide incentive to enhance critical listening skills necessary for advanced musicianship.
3. Portfolios demonstrate that the student has engaged in self-reflection.
4. Portfolios contributes to student ability to make informed 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	Individual goals	Honors/awards
Group-assessments	Recordings	Pictures
Tests	Repertoire lists	Newspaper clippings
Journals	Peer critiques	Concert programs
Teacher evaluations	Student compositions	Records of lessons



Proficiency Assessment and Student Self-Assessment

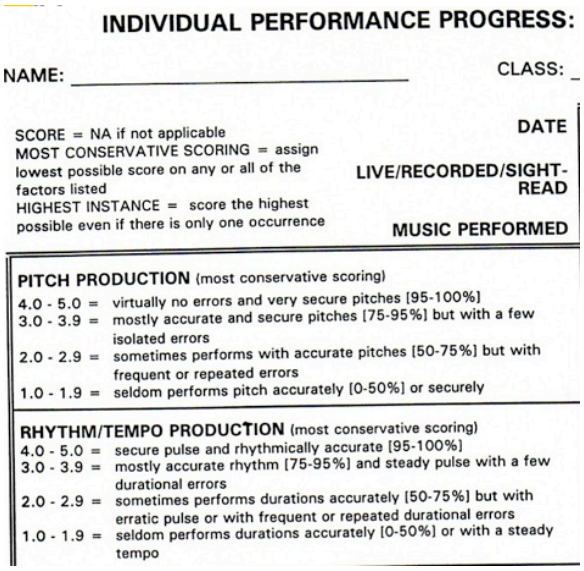


1.Assign specific scales, etudes, and sections from their pieces.
2.The student rehearses and record the required assignment. They were allowed to re-record the assignment as many times as they would like until they feel the recording is their best.
3.Once they have completed the highest quality recording 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

	4	3	2	1
Identification of Specific References	Accurately identifies specific references and identifies specific problems needing improvement	Generally refers accurately to musical elements and/or does not specifically identify problems	Refers to isolated musical elements and/or overly broad, sometimes inaccurate references	Does not refer to the musical or technical elements in the performance.
Suggestions for Improvement	Highly articulated revisions are linked to the specific observations	Revisions are suggested but not necessarily coordinated with the critical comments	Offers broad, superficial or unconstructive suggestions	No attempt to suggest revisions or how to improve the performance

Examples of Proficiency Rubrics



INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE PROGRESS:

NAME: _____ CLASS: _

SCORE = NA if not applicable
MOST CONSERVATIVE SCORING = assign lowest possible score on any or all of the factors listed
HIGHEST INSTANCE = score the highest possible even if there is only one occurrence

DATE
LIVE/RECORDED/SIGHT-READ
MUSIC PERFORMED

PITCH PRODUCTION (most conservative scoring)
4.0 - 5.0 = virtually no errors and very secure pitches [95-100%]
3.0 - 3.9 = mostly accurate and secure pitches [75-95%] but with a few isolated errors
2.0 - 2.9 = sometimes performs with accurate pitches [50-75%] but with frequent or repeated errors
1.0 - 1.9 = seldom performs pitch accurately [0-50%] or securely

RHYTHM/TEMPO PRODUCTION (most conservative scoring)
4.0 - 5.0 = secure pulse and rhythmically accurate [95-100%]
3.0 - 3.9 = mostly accurate rhythm [75-95%] and steady pulse with a few durational errors
2.0 - 2.9 = sometimes performs durations accurately [50-75%] but with erratic pulse or with frequent or repeated durational errors
1.0 - 1.9 = seldom performs durations accurately [0-50%] or with a steady tempo

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

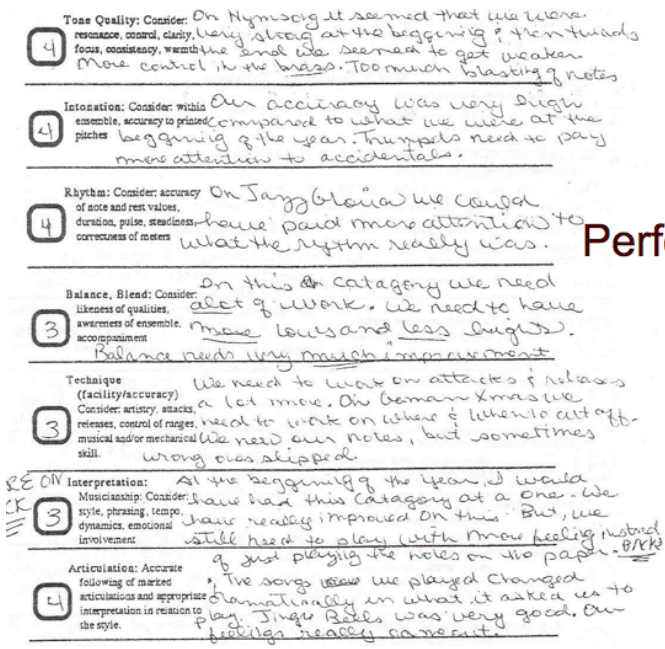
_____

INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMANCE GRADING RUBRIC

Rating	NOTE ACCURACY	PITCH	RHYTHMIC ACCURACY	TONE QUALITY	ARTICULATION (Style-Delivery)	EXPRESSION (Musicality)	OTHER (fingering, sticking, memorization, etc.)
10	Notes accurately performed throughout.	Pitch is centered; Pitch and intervals are accurate throughout.	Tempo, meter and rhythm accurate and secure	Focused production, placement, resonance and volume, free of visible tension, solid support. Registers even throughout.	Attack, release, delivery are properly executed as indicated in music or appropriate for style, standards and cultural traditions.	All aspects of musical expression (phrasing, breathing dynamics; intensity, pedaling etc.) properly executed; Reflects understanding of musical structure; Communicates emotional content	
8	Inaccuracies minimally interfere with overall performance	Basically good tonal center; occasional wrong or "out of tune" notes.	Nearly accurate, a minimal amount of imprecise rhythms. Consistent tempo and meter.	Focused tone production, some unevenness in registers/resonance, occasional lack of energy and volume.	Articulation is mostly appropriate for music performed.	Most aspects of musical expression are properly managed, though at times inconsistent.	
6	Minor errors that interfere with the overall musical communication	Poor tonal center; "many out of tune" or wrong notes interfere with musicality.	Inconsistent rhythms though consistent tempo and recognizable meter	Inconsistent production, energy, resonance & volume. Some tension in physical appearance.	Musical performance lacks articulation needed to properly communicate music at hand.	Musical expression is less adequate and inconsistent; a lack of sensitivity in musical expression	
0	Numerous errors that result in ineffective musical performance.	Unsatisfactory: Lack of tonal center results in ineffective musical performance.	Tempo/meter inconsistent; imprecise rhythms.	Performance lacks focus, volume, resonance and energy.	Performance inappropriate for musical style, standards and/or cultural traditions.	Overall lack of musical expression	

Found at http://www3.ksde.org/outcomes/famusicstd.pdf

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.

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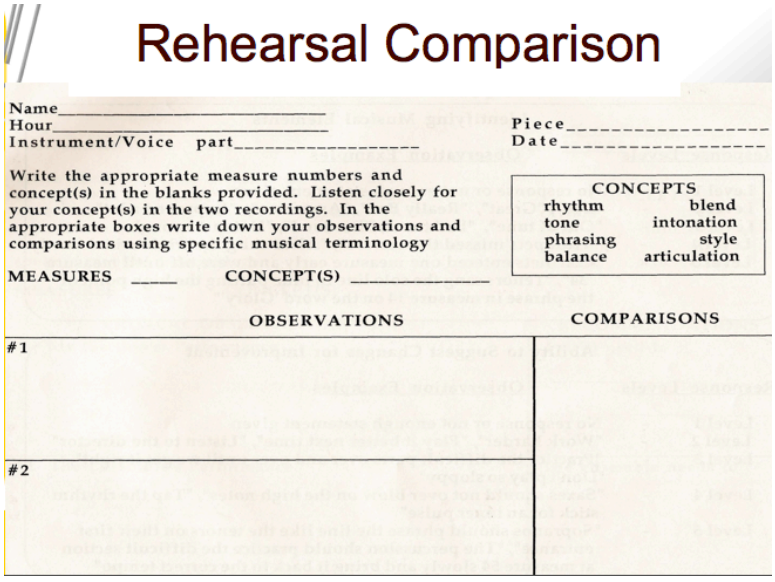


Rehearsal Comparison

Name_____
Hour_____
Instrument/Voice part_____

Piece_____
Date_____

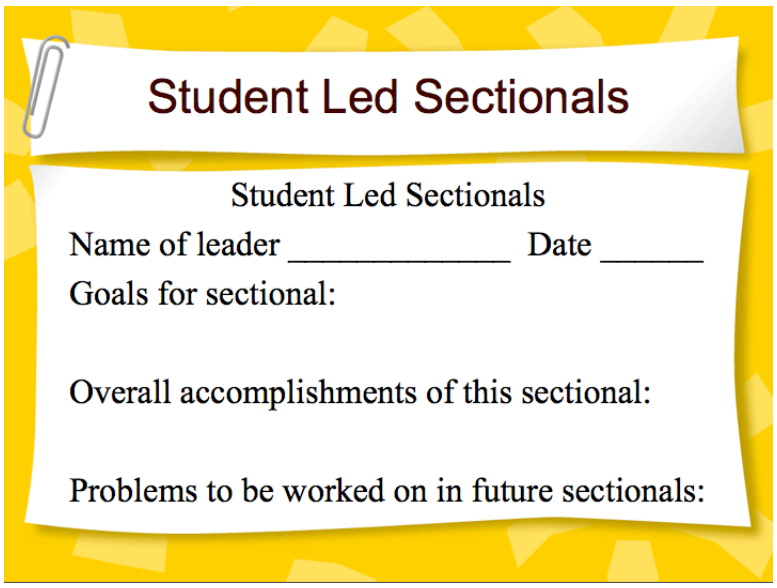
Write the appropriate measure numbers and concept(s) in the blanks provided. Listen closely for your concept(s) in the two recordings. In the appropriate boxes write down your observations and comparisons using specific musical terminology

MEASURES ____ CONCEPT(S) _____

CONCEPTS
rhythm blend
tone intonation
phrasing style
balance articulation

	OBSERVATIONS	COMPARISONS
#1		
#2		

Rehearsal Comparison attributed to Dennis Darling, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa



Student Led Sectionals

Student Led Sectionals

Name of leader _____ Date _____

Goals for sectional:

Overall accomplishments of this sectional:

Problems to be worked on in future sectionals:

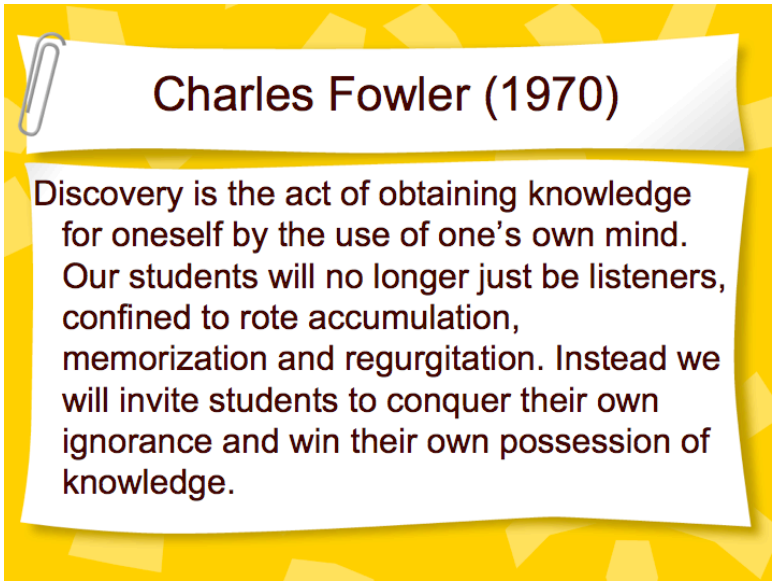
How to maintain a portfolio?

- ✓ 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, jazzband participation, per community performance, chamber ensemble participation, student conducting, research paper, written program notes, letter to composer, peer teaching, etc.)

General Notes