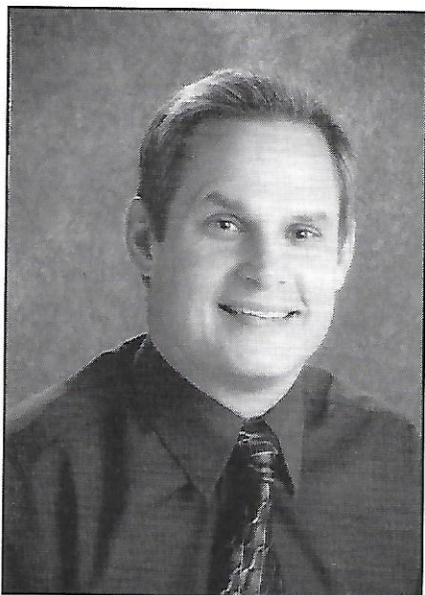


# 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS IN MUSIC ENSEMBLES

By Anthony Susi

“How do I incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills into my performing ensemble?” This was the burning question I focused on last year and found several solutions but for the sake of brevity, I will share one that is free and has been very effective for me. I have always administered individual quarterly performance assessments but these were done during class time because I was the one doing the evaluation. It was one way to motivate my students to practice their parts but it took away valuable rehearsal time and didn't necessarily improve their ability to detect flaws in their own performance. SMART music and iPad software are two elements that enable students to complete their quarterly performance test from home instead of during class, *but* they would need to be purchased for each student and the assessment is done by the computer.



My solution to this dilemma was, first, to research free recording apps for a variety of handheld devices so students could easily record their assignment from home and e-mail it to me. It's important to find apps that record in a mp3 or mp4 format rather than with a .wav extension; they are much smaller files and won't fill up your e-mail inbox. For the few that only have a computer at home without a mic, I purchased inexpensive clip-on mics

with an 1/8" jack that students can sign out as needed. Our music department had collaborated to design a performance assessment rubric last year, so I posted it on our band website. I also posted on our website what song and measures/passages each grade level band and instrument had to record and evaluate for their quarterly "Spot Check". Then I set up a free email address, exclusively for students to email their recordings and rubric to me.

Prior to assigning the first "Spot Check" to be completed from home, I consistently addressed the musical terms used in the scoring rubric during group rehearsals whenever there is a performance discrepancy, so students can begin to correctly identify the musical element in question. I also played a few individual recordings from previous Spot Checks and projected the scoring rubric on the screen and we evaluated them together to establish what a "4", "3", "2" or "1" in each category sounds like. Students also need to identify what measure(s) were incorrect in each category so they know what, specifically, they should practice. I would recommend

giving a quiz on these concepts to check for student understanding.

It's important to email your feedback directly on each student's scoring rubric to guide their ears when there are elements they overlooked. This takes your time outside of class, but you will find it takes less time each quarter as the students' self-assessments become more accurate.

Here are the criteria for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills that this assignment will meet:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Information, Communication and Technology Literacy
- Initiative and Self Direction
- Productivity and Accountability.

I sincerely hope this will assist you not only with gathering data for your SMART goal(s) but, more importantly, in helping your students to become more independent musicians.

*Anthony Susi is presently the band director at Captain Nathan Hale Middle School in Coventry, CT.*

## STEPS TO RECORDING & GRADING SPOT CHECKS FROM HOME

### **FOR IPHONE or IPOD TOUCH:**

Stock App (already on your device) called "Voice Memos"

- 1) Hit Red Button to Record and Hit Red Button again to stop.
- 2) Click "Done"
- 3) Rename the file using your LAST NAME, FIRST INITIAL (ex. Susi T)
- 4) Select your recording file and hit share button (icon of box with upward arrow)
- 5) Select "Mail" and send to: [susimusic1@gmail.com](mailto:susimusic1@gmail.com)

### **FOR IPAD:**

Go to "App Store" and download FREE App. called "Voice Record Pro"

- 1) Hit Red "Record" Button and press Red "Stop" Button to end.
- 2) In My Recording, hit "Title" and rename : LAST NAME , FIRST INITIAL (ex. Susi T)
- 3) Select your recording file and hit share button (icon of box with upward arrow)
- 4) Select "Mail" and send to: [susimusic1@gmail.com](mailto:susimusic1@gmail.com)

### **FOR ANDROID PHONE or TABLET:**

Go to "Play Store" and download FREE App. called "Hi-QMP3 Voice Recorder" OR "Miidio Recorder"

- 1) Hit Red "Record" Button and press "Stop" Button to end.
- 2) Select file and rename: LAST NAME , FIRST INITIAL (ex. Susi T)
- 3) Press File name to "SHARE" and choose "E-mail"
- 4) Send to: [susimusic1@gmail.com](mailto:susimusic1@gmail.com)

### **FOR WINDOWS PC or Laptop:** (with built in mic, skype mic or external microphone)

Select "Programs" at bottom left.

Highlight "Accessories", then "Entertainment" from Drop Down menu

Select "Sound Recorder"

Press Red "Record" Button and press square button to stop.

Under "File", click "Save As" and name file LAST NAME, FIRST INITIAL (ex. Susi T)

Send as attachment along with Rubric from band webpage to [susimusic1@gmail.com](mailto:susimusic1@gmail.com)

### **FOR SPOT CHECK RUBRIC & MEASURES:**

Log onto CNHMS Band Webpage: <https://sites.google.com/site/cnhmsband> (save to Favorites)

Under "Contents" on Left side of home page, click "Band Related Forms"

Click on document "Spot Check Measures 3Q" to find out what measures/passages to record.

Download Spot Check Rubric (either "Winds Rubric gr. 6-8" or "Perc. Rubric") by clicking "down" arrow across the right side of the page.

Listen to your home recording and fill out/highlight rubric and save as LAST NAME, First Initial & title and email file as attachment to [susimusic1@gmail.com](mailto:susimusic1@gmail.com)

You MUST include Comments and identify specific measures for anything lower than a "4".

### **FOR FREE METRONOME or TUNER:**

iPad, iTouch or iPhone – Go to "App Store" and download FREE "Tuner Lite" or "Metrotimer"

Android – Go to "Play Store" and download FREE "Soundcorset" Metronome & Tuner all in one!

For just a Sound Generator try "Pitch Perfect", for just a Visual Tuner try "Fine Chromatic" and for just a metronome try "Slick Metronome".