



TECH TOOLS FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTION

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Does your principal or supervisor use jargon like engagement, data-driven, flipped classroom, or blended learning? Many music educators are aware of free online tools, but have not realized how to use them for student interaction in ways that administrators recognize as engagement (and all of those other buzz-words too).

This is a summary of a few free, online tools. This is not some all-inclusive list, nor a comprehensive how-to guide. Some of these tools are new to me, and some I've used before. Several of the suggested activities will work on several of these platforms. Please experiment, mix, and match. These tools can help you document student engagement, music metacognition, and help provide data about student progress. (And maybe put a smile on an administrator's face.)



Google Tools

(<https://www.google.com/docs/about>)

Many educators use *Google Docs* and *Google Forms*. If you haven't tried these tools for yourself, it's well worth investing a few minutes. Anyone who can use email and word processing can use these tools with students. The beauty of *Google Tools* is that students can use them during and outside of class, making them the kinds of tools you'll need to get started with flipped classroom and blended learning strategies. If your students have access to the Internet during class through iPads, Chromebooks, or their own devices, you can assign some students to work on a response journal, survey, or quiz, while you work with small groups or rehearse with just one or two sections.

Use Google Docs For

Student response journals. Rather than taking time in class or rehearsal to write on paper, students can share their views on what's going on in class or in rehearsal using a *Google Doc* which they share with you. Require students to put all of those docs in a folder, which is also shared with you. Voila: student journals that you can read and respond to online!

Cooperative activities. While having students listen to recordings of their own rehearsal, they can collaborate with members of their section to make a list of things that need improvement, as well as areas of growth and strength. This is just one idea. Opportunities for collaboration through *Google Docs* are endless.

Use Google Forms For

Student surveys and info collection. Rather than creating, making copies, and collecting a stack of papers, post a link to the *Google Form* online (or on the board, or with a QR code). When students fill out the form, *Google* turns their submissions into a handy spreadsheet for you. You can use the data right in *Google Sheets*, or copy it into *Excel*.

Quizzes. *Google Forms* are great for making quizzes or pre-tests. Simple questions might be, "How many sharps are in the E Major key signature?" or "Which type of note receives the pulse in cut time?" Quick and easy quizzes like this might even help with your SGO's.

Exit Tickets. Exit Tickets are short post-tests given at the end of class for formative assessment. Use a few simple prompts like: "Tell about one section in the music we rehearsed today that you feel we improved? What aspects were improved? What do we

still need to rehearse?" Student responses will document their levels of engagement and metacognition. Exit tickets can also use multiple choice questions. Consider using two multiple choice questions, listing the pieces you rehearsed as answer choices for both questions: "On which piece did you personally make the most progress today?" coupled with "Which piece do you most need to practice on your own?"

Today'sMeet

Today'sMeet

(<https://todaysmeet.com>)

Similar in some ways to *Google Docs*, *Today'sMeet* is an online forum. The teacher or session leader sets up a *Today'sMeet* forum, which displays much like a *Google Doc* or chat room window. Participants (students) join the *Meet*. Encourage students to log in with initials or first names so that you can identify who has commented, but privacy is protected. Be prepared to moderate the discussion to keep it on track, with consequences for the inevitability of a student posting something off-topic.

Use Today'sMeet For

Suggestion box. Open a *Today'sMeet* for rehearsal periods. Depending on your school's technology policy and your classroom management needs, allow time for students to comment on what they feel is going well (Clarinets: Nice work fixing the rhythm at measure 42), or areas where they need more support (Tenor section is dying on the high notes at measure 37). If you are in a school where every student has a school-issued device or a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) situation, consider allowing comment time during transition between pieces,

or allowing 1-2 minutes at the beginning or end of rehearsal for students to comment.

Musical Interpretation. Play two or more examples of a piece you are currently rehearsing. Ask students to comment while listening. Prompt them to note differences of interpretation using appropriate music vocabulary, and to share the aspects they like/dislike. Consider this use of *TodaysMeet* shared note-taking and interaction simultaneously. Students will be engaged in music listening while having a silent conversation online. Afterwards, you will have a written record of their thinking



Poll Everywhere

(<https://www.polleverywhere.com>)

A free K-12 educator subscription to *Poll Everywhere* provides 40 responses per poll (40 students per class). Students can use their phones to respond using text messaging, *Twitter*, or internet. *Poll Everywhere* also works with tablets, laptops and Chrome-books. Polls can have multiple choice, open-ended, and clickable-image types of questions. *Poll Everywhere* will work for some of the same activities as *Google Forms*. If you would like to upgrade, the \$50 paid annual subscription provides the advantage to automatic grading, record keeping, and censoring.

Use Poll Everywhere For

Pre- and post-tests. Document student assessment of their own performance with daily or weekly polls; or create self-assessment polls to use when first learning a new piece, then again closer to concert time. Students should be involved in documenting their own learning and growth. Polls also work for written assessments like music theory quizzes. With the upgrade to the paid subscription, you will have automatic grading and the kind of record keeping needed to support your SGO.

Surveys. Any time you need to collect information, know how many slices of pizza to order, vote on something, or need student input and buy-in, a quick poll can gather information quickly, then tally it for you.



Kahoot!

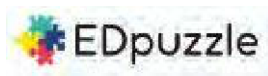
(<https://getkahoot.com>)

Kahoot! is a free, online quiz game, with pre-made games for note reading and key signatures. *Kahoot!* users create quizzes, and share them online for others to use. Teachers can create a free account. Students sign in to answer with any internet-connected device, and do not need to create accounts. *Kahoot!* shows a leader board for each quiz, so the competition among students can be fierce. Points are awarded for both speed and accuracy. Students love it!

Use Kahoot! For

Testing days. In the age of PARCC, we all seem to have many days with missing students, or when we have to “be quiet.” *Kahoot!* quizzes can keep students engaged in musical thinking.

Reviews. Is it concert season, or are you approaching end-of unit test in a general music class? Quiz your students on the facts about music they are performing, concert expectations, and etiquette. You can even have students submit questions with possible answers and distractors for an end-of-unit review.



EDpuzzle

(<https://edpuzzle.com>)

Do you use online videos of exemplary performances with your students? *EDpuzzle* allows you to edit the videos to shorten them as needed, and to embed questions that students must answer before the video will continue playing. I haven't used this with students yet, but I can't wait!

Use EDpuzzle For

Flipped classroom and blended learning. Videos can be a great resource. *EDpuzzle* allows teachers to locate and re-use ANY video, not just from *YouTube*, then edit them to select just the segment needed. The icing on the cake is the question-embedded feature. The video stops while students

are viewing, and students must answer the question before the video will continue. This feature is perfect for flipped classroom activities--students do this work outside of class, then class time is spent exploring, expanding, and applying those ideas. In addition, *EDpuzzle* allows for the kind of differentiation expected for blended learning. Likewise, differentiation is needed in typical mixed-instrumentation ensembles. Customize the questions for different student groups based on instrument, reading level, or other needs.

Sub plans. Don't leave your students with “just a video.” *EDpuzzle* will give you details about how much they were engaged with the video through online responses--no photocopying, reading, and grading question sheets!

Make-up assignments. Most every ensemble director who includes performances in the grade formula has been faced with creating a make-up assignment. Every teacher who has a student on home instruction faces a similar problem. By using *EDpuzzle* to embed questions in a video of the repertoire being prepared for concert performance, the make-up assignment can be related to the missed live experience in a meaningful way.

Final Thoughts

Don't spend hours trying to figure everything out on your own. Ask your colleagues from all disciplines how they use technology. You never know what ideas you may pick up and be able to apply in your music classroom. If you teach in a collegial environment, you are likely to find someone (even a student) who will walk you through a technology platform you haven't used before. If you're reluctant to ask for help or are pressed for time, search for a tutorial video on YouTube. (I do that all the time!)

Thanks to Brad Campbell from Cinnaminon High School for sharing this paraphrase of Pete Carril (famed Princeton basketball coach) at the South Brunswick Technology and Learning Conference: “The smart steal from the strong.” Among teachers, the “strong” are happy to share, and they are flattered when you “steal” ideas and run with them.

