

## All-State: Yes, There's an App for That!

presented by Sarah Duffy — reported by Kathryn Buccola

Technology is becoming more and more important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. Many public school districts have technology strategic plans with goals to eliminate traditional textbooks. The orchestra classroom is not exempt. Facebook, Twitter, Google Educational Apps, and many more are popular educational tools that can be used in the orchestra classroom.

Sarah Chelgren Duffy is a past president of MNSOTA and currently directs the orchestras at Edina High School. Edina High School was a BYOD (bring your own device) school this past school year and Duffy participated in a technology cohort through Hamline University that explored the many uses of technology in education. Duffy presented a session at the 2014 MNSOTA All-State Teacher's Workshop called *Yes, There's an App for That* where she exhibited the many technology tools she uses in her orchestra classroom. The following is a report on the technology Duffy uses in her classroom and how I have used, or would like to use, that technology or similar technology in my classroom.

Many educators have adopted the SAMR Model to help determine how technology can best be used in the classroom. Technology should not be used in education just for the sake of using technology. It should have an education purpose. The SAMR Model helps determine the use of technology for a given task. SAMR stands for Substitute, Augment, Modify, Replace. Ideally technology should enhance your task by making the task easier or allowing you to do something that was not possible before.

Many educators have PLCs or Professional Learning Communities. These are usually groups of colleagues who meet together regularly to discuss issues in their profession. Now with the use of technology, we have PLNs or Professional Learning Networks. Professionals do not need to be in the same physical location to discuss issues. Facebook groups like *School Orchestra and String Teachers, v.2* and Twitter help connect orchestra teachers together to help mentor each other.

Twitter can be used in the classroom to communicate with students and parents about news and updates in the classroom, concert announcements, and share photos. TweetDeck is a Twitter platform to help organize tweets and different twitter accounts

you are following. In the Facebook group, *School Orchestra and String Teachers, v.2*, orchestra teachers around the United States post questions they have or share interesting stories they have encountered. When teachers post questions they often get many comments that help them with their problems.

I am have never used Twitter, however I can see how it would be a great com-



Sarah Duffy

munication tool for quick announcements to students and families. It could also be a great resource to find out new ideas about music education and string teaching. I am a member of the Facebook group, *School Orchestra and String Teachers, v.2*. It is interesting to read the questions posed to the group and the comments people make.

The amount of technology available for educational uses is continually increasing. Google is leader in the field of technology for education and they have a suite of applications commonly called GAFE (Google Apps for Education).

Google Sites is a free and reasonably easy way to create websites. Many school districts have begun to use these to communicate with students, families, and the community.

Every teacher in my school district is required to have a Google Site, although I admit I have not used it to its full potential. I foresee myself using it more as more technology is used in my classroom to keep parents informed of the activities in my classroom and organize resources for students and parents

gClassFolders is a free Google add-on that allows teachers to create folders for each class and an assignment folder for each student. Integrated with Doctopus, another free Google add-on, it allows you to share a document with individual students, groups of students, or your whole class.

Goobric is also a free Google add-on. Goobric adds grading options to Doctopus assignments. The teacher can score student work, and then Goobric will email the results and comments directly to the students. The scores go directly into a spreadsheet.

Flubaroo is another free Google add-on. It scores student work automatically. Using Google forms, the teacher can create an assignment, an answer key, grade it, review student answers, and email grades.

Google Classroom is a new Google application not yet available for use that integrates gClassFolders as well as many of the other add-ons commonly used.

Before Sarah Duffy's presentation I did not know about any of these Google Apps for Education. I am excited to try them, especially to be able to make a folder of each student's work and create rubrics that will send the results directly into a spreadsheet and to the student. This is something I am highly interested in doing in my elementary orchestra classrooms.

Kahoot! and Socrative are online student response systems. Teachers can create quizzes, discussions, and surveys and students can use any device that has a browser to participate.

In one of the elementary schools I teach at all students have an iPad. I could use Kahoot! or Socrative during tuning time to review vocabulary or pose multiple-choice questions about note names. However, I would not be able to do this at my other three elementary schools unless we checked devices out from the media center.

AutoCrat is a mail merge tool for Google Spreadsheets. This tool helps in the classroom when you assign something using Google Forms that might have a long answer. Google Forms uses a spreadsheet to report the data collected from the forms. To read each long answer more easily, Autocrat merges each into a new document or folder.

I could see using this tool in my classroom when I ask students to do a survey or self-reflection about their performance at a concert. If a part of the reflection required a long response, it would be much easier to read when each response is separated into a different document.

Audioboo is a free recording program that is supported by any device—computers, tablets, or smartphones. A teacher can assign a playing test and have students use

Audioboo to record their test and send the URL to the teacher. This way each recording is in the same format and the teacher can guarantee the relative quality of the recording.

I can see using this in my classroom during class to record group and individual performances. I could then email the recording to parents as a showcase of student progress. Students could also listen to their recording and do a self-evaluation of their work.

Remind is a free tool that allows teachers to send reminder text messages to students and parents on their cell phones. You can schedule messages to send at a later date and you can attach photos, documents, presentations, and PDFs. It allows teachers to send messages securely from their own device. Phone numbers are private. People join by using a code.

I have not used this tool before but I recently heard about it and was planning on implementing it this school year to remind parents about concerts.

ScreenCast-O-Matic is used to create and host screencasts online. It allows teachers to share directions on how to do something on a computer while showing the computer

screen and listening to a recording of your voice giving verbal directions. It is great for showing students and parents how to set up a component of technology like audio recording at home or signing up for something like Remind.

I could see myself using ScreenCast-O-Matic to narrate a PowerPoint presentation about what orchestra in elementary school is like. This could be a great tool to inform parents about the string program and could perhaps even take the place of information meetings.

QR Codes are like bar codes. They are a machine-readable code consisting of an array of black and white squares, typically used for storing URLs or other information for reading by the camera on a smartphone. An orchestra teacher might use them to link to their class website. URL shorteners like Google URL Shortener and Bitly, are useful when you want to print a link to a website, but the link is extremely long. A URL shortener will shorten the link so it is easier to share.

I have seen other teachers use QR Codes to link to interesting facts on bulletin boards. I hope to use a QR code this fall to link to my contact information page on my

class website. I plan on posting the code by the door of each of my orchestra rooms, so if a parent walks by and wants to contact me, they can just scan the QR code.

SignUp Genius is a free web based service that allows parents and students to sign up for certain events. It's a great tool to sign up for extra curricular activities, auditions or volunteering needs.

I have used SignUp Genius before to sign students up to play at special events. It is easy to set up, and parents can choose the time they want their student to participate. The website then also sends those that have signed reminder emails. With this tool I no longer have to keep track of permission slips or wait for slips to be turned in.

What seemed like complicated technology in the past is becoming easier to use due to new developments, as well as its gaining popularity in classrooms. Teachers are sharing what they know with other teachers. With the use of technology, a new era of implementing education has begun.

*Kathryn Buccola teaches at Woodbury Elementary School. †*