ORCHESTRA

Google Classroom and Add-ons for the Orchestra Classroom

by Sarah Duffy

There are seemingly endless technologies available for students and teachers today, so it can be challenging to sift through all of the options. Since many districts utilize Google, I am going to highlight a few features available through Google Classroom and some valuable add-ons or extensions. I won't go in depth with the nuts-and-bolts of *how* to use these features, but there are many wonderful tutorials available online. Hopefully this article will spark some ideas that you can try in your classroom this year.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom utilizes all of the tools in the Google Suite (docs, sheets, slides, calendar, gmail, etc.) to help you save time, paper, and energy. It is easy to create classes, distribute assignments, share information, and stay organized.

Many district learning platforms now sync with Google Classroom, so check if this is an option in your district. You can set up your classroom using information from your learning platform, or you can send out an invitation to all of your students. Guardians can also be included, so this is a great way to share information with families. Here are just a few ways you can use Google Classroom:

- Post all announcements and handouts. No more lost papers in backpacks!
- Concert reflections
- Practice logs—link in a google form
- Playing tests (video or audio, record in Google Classroom or link from another program such as Flipgrid, Seesaw, or Screencastify)
- Create online portfolios using Google Slides
- Listening assignments
- Alternative plans for unexpected sub days
- Link to information about local concerts and other events
- Have students upload a photo of themselves demonstrating their perfect instrument posture, bow hold, etc.

Autocrat

Autocrat is a document merge function add-on for Google sheets. You can create Google Docs or custom PDFs from your spreadsheet data. If you have any information living in a Google Sheet that you would like to share easily with colleagues, students, or families via PDF, Google Doc, or Google Slides, you can do this using Autocrat. This is the "mail merge" function for Google apps.

- Create a personalized progress report for students. You can email them to students and/or to parents, and you can also send a copy of the progress reports into a designated folder for each student.
- Create a Google Slide presentation from spreadsheet data—handy for making certificates or a "get to know you" presentation. Your students can complete a Google Form with their name and what they did this summer, and then you can easily turn it into a presentation to share with the class.
- Create a customized confirmation letter for students. I use this in my district for our summer orchestra registration process as a reminder for start date, class time and location.

Doctopus

Doctopus is an add-on that allows you to create Google Docs and share them with students. You can share one document with everyone where they can collaborate together, you can create an individual copy of the same document with each student (they can only see their own work, but they all get the same template), or you can create a differentiated document for each individual student (or a smaller group of students, such as a chamber ensemble or section). This allows you to customize information by section (such as measures for a playing test) or you can customize based on student needs. Maybe some students need to test at a slower metronome speed, or maybe you want to add an advanced challenge for some of your other students. You can customize this easily in Doctopus.

Doctopus is fully integrated into Google Classroom, so you can easily set up your document sharing through GC if you are using it. If you are not using Google Classroom, you can still use all of the features of Doctopus as an add-on through the google suite.

If you use rubrics to grade your students, you can easily grade them using Doctopus and Goobric (see below). Create your document, share with the students, and attach a goobric. After you "ingest" the assignment into Goobric, you can evaluate the students and email them their scores along with any comments. When I used this at the high school level for a chamber music unit, the students all had their scores and comments waiting for them in their email before they even sat down following their performance.

Doctopus will change your life! This is one more way to improve your workflow and end the constant paper chase with your students.

Goobric

If you grade using rubrics, Goobric is the add-on for you. In addition to teacher evaluation, you can also allow for self- or peer-evaluation. You create your rubric using Google Sheets, attach it to your assignment, and grade by clicking on the boxes in your rubric. You may also add comments, either typed or voice-recorded. The scores are then entered into a Google Sheet and you can choose to email the results out to students. The students will receive either a PDF or a Google Doc showing their scored rubric.

Your teacher-created rubric becomes a guide for the students so they know exactly what is expected from them on each assignment. You can submit multiple rubrics for the same assignment, which is helpful if you allow students to retake a test. This allows you to track student growth on a single assignment.

Self/peer evaluation tutorial: https://tinyurl.com/ya7sc3la

formMule

formMule is an add-on that will send targeted, personalized emails from a Google Sheet. You can run this manually or set it up with an autoresponder when a form is submitted. You can choose up to 10 different email templates based on the information provided, which is handy if you want something specific to go out to different instruments or to different class periods, ensembles, etc.

Tutorial: https://bit.ly/2QN9alM

- Automatically email student grades and comments from a spreadsheet you create. This is an excellent way to easily share immediate feedback on playing tests.
- Set up an autoresponder connected with a Google Form. When someone completes your Google Form, they will receive a customized email confirmation back from you that includes all of their information. This is handy for registrations, lesson sign ups, audition sign ups, etc.
- Share peer feedback with students that is collected via Google Form. Tutorial here: https://tinyurl.com/y9ah9g7n

Flubaroo

Flubaroo is an automatic scoring system that is helpful if you ever give a multiple-choice test. You set up your test in Google Forms and connect it with Flubaroo. It then sends the scores into a Google Sheet for you and it also emails the results to the students. http://www.flubaroo.com/

Additional Resources:

Facebook groups: *School Orchestra and String Teachers* (secret group), *GoogleClassroom for Music Teachers* (closed group). [If you would like to join a secret group, a current member needs to add you. Feel free to reach out to me via email or Facebook Messenger if you'd like to be added to the *School Orchestra and String Teachers* group: Sarah.Duffy@moundsviewschools.org. To join a closed group, you can search for the group in Facebook and request to join.]

New Visions CloudLab, home of Doctopus, Goobric, formMule, Autocrat, and more: http://cloudlab.newvisions.org/home

Google Classroom, Doctopus, and Goobric: The Ultimate Work-flow! by Oli Trussell and Kris Plummer (includes accompanying video guide). https://tinyurl.com/y75rfwhk

Teacher Tech with Alice Keeler https://alicekeeler.com/google-classroom/

Playing Tests for the 21st Century by Angela Harman at *Orchestra Classroom Ideas* (includes screenshots of a beginner playing test using Google Forms) https://tinyurl.com/ya9yz28b

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