Evaluation Strategy

A young musician’s performance skills develop slowly over time. Students in school band programs usually begin in the 5th grade and gradually build new skills on previously learned ones. I decided to use this unit in junior high because the musicians at that level are ready to begin the simultaneous use of performance skills. The formative evaluation on this unit can be accomplished in a variety of ways. As students learn the various skills, techniques, and terms; they can be challenged immediately to demonstrate what they have learned. The immediate feedback can be in written or verbal form, along with demonstrations on their instruments. These new skills need to be reinforced on a daily basis because young musicians must put to use the skills they have learned in order for them to become part of their daily playing. Specific musical knowledge and skills will be forgotten otherwise. Certain skills such as scales need to be performed daily so that the physical and mental processes become natural, automatic and habit forming. The other area that needs emphasis is application. A second type of formative evaluation is assessing whether the students can apply the learned skills to pieces of music that the band performs. Some students can do this automatically and others will need more reinforcement and rehearsal time to accomplish this task. A third type of formative evaluation is whether the students can then apply this knowledge in subsequent pieces automatically in class rehearsal. Since instrumental music is a process of constantly building skills, I would also consider performances both formative and summative. They are formative for the students and teacher and summative for the audience.