

21st Century Skills in Music

Colorado's description of 21st century skills is a synthesis of the essential abilities students must apply in our fast-changing world. Today's music students need a repertoire of knowledge and skills that is more diverse, complex, and integrated than any previous generation. Music is inherently demonstrated in each of Colorado 21st century skills, as follows:

Critical Thinking and Reasoning – When students demonstrate musical knowing, they are able to integrate varying perspectives when expressing themselves in a variety of ways, creating new musical works and analyzing musical works. Producing a quality musical performance requires a synthesis of creative, expressive, and technical skill; self-adjustment; listening; and adjustment of tone, pitch, and volume to create a balanced and effective sound. Music constantly challenges students to use multiple processes and diverse perspectives when performing, analyzing, or making informed decisions.

Information Literacy – Musical knowledge acquisition requires students to analyze scores, performances, genre, and style. Source discernment is vital in these endeavors because it allows students to interpret musical messages differently including points of view. When students research music using inquiry through critical listening, describing, and evaluating, they become educated consumers and aficionados.

Collaboration – Music education requires students to collaborate within a variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. The synergy and discipline that musical ensembles foster create leadership skills and self-awareness. When students communicate the language of music to a variety of audiences through response to conductor's cues and interpretation, they demonstrate collective problem-solving skills that are readily transferred in all aspects of life.

Self-Direction – Students that participate in music develop self-discipline, persistence, and resilience. The ownership of their compositions and performances provides mastery of skills and a passionate work ethic to continually strive for excellence. Through improvisation and adaptability, students demonstrate initiative to use their interpersonal skills to influence others, identify and define authentic problems, and produce innovative and imaginative new compositions.

Invention – The diversity in musical style, form, and genre would not exist without the underlying promise of innovation and the possibilities of creating something new. Students integrate ideas to create original works through personal or group expression. They construct knowledge and challenge choices when arranging, orchestrating, improvising, and using technology to develop musical compositions.