Rhythm Teaching Sheets for Jazz Ensemble
By Jeff Waggoner

I wrote these after using Stephen Melillo’s Rhythm Sheets (go to stormworld.com for those and many other great compositions and teaching tools) with my concert band. I’ve also used Doug Beach’s Swing Rhythms (Kjos) with my beginning jazz groups. I found that some years my students needed more work on learning to identify common rhythm patterns. They are easy to use in full band rehearsal by simply setting a common pitch for the band to use to play them together. Based on my experience, I wouldn’t use more than eight bars or so of new material on any given day. While it may seem that the band is “getting” it, some of the students with poorer rhythm-reading skills will fall back on their strategy of just listening to other band members for rhythm cues when they become overwhelmed. At that point, you’re not gaining anything any longer!

I hope these sheets are helpful to you and your band!