Woodwind methods courses require future music educators not only to learn how to play unfamiliar instruments, methods courses must also help young teachers learn how to teach the instruments they are learning how to play. Playing and teaching require different skill sets, and each requires practice to be effective.

This book is the perfect supplement for instrumental methods courses because it covers—in detail—how to teach beginners to play flute, clarinet, and alto sax. Each section addresses the challenges and goals of the first 5 days of instruction for flute, clarinet, and saxophone.

This book will help music education students learn how to teach essentials like:

- Instrument assembly
- A stable embouchure
- Correct playing position
- Correct articulation
- Characteristic tone quality
- A repertoire of three and five note songs
- Beat subdivision
- Beginning exercises
- Instrument care
- Many links to examples using QR codes. Scan this one to visit the book’s web site.

The web site for this book includes lots of helpful teaching demonstration videos, videos of great playing, as well as printable downloads of lesson plans, teaching checklists, and other useful materials.

www.TeachingWoodwinds.com

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This PDF is a sample to give you an idea of the quality of the book.

For more information, or to order copies, please go to

www.TeachingWoodwinds.com
Teaching Beginning Woodwinds

The first 5 Days

Loraine D. Enloe
Teaching Beginning Woodwinds
the first 5 Days

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### Extensions: Examples of Great Sax Playing

### Supplemental Material

#### Flute

#### Clarinet

#### Saxophone
Hello, and welcome to Teaching Woodwinds to Beginners: The First 5 Days. My name is Loraine Enloe and I’ve been guiding young music teachers not only through the challenges of learning new woodwind instruments for over 10 years, but I also help them learn what it means to teach the new instrumental skills they’re learning. We know playing an instrument doesn’t necessarily mean you’ll be able to teach it well, let alone teach someone how to teach it. That’s why this book was written.

Many woodwind technique courses for future music teachers do a fantastic job instructing young teachers about the instruments and how to play them, but few attempt to address the pitfalls, challenges and knowledge necessary to effectively teach the instruments to beginners.

Before we jump into the text, I’d like to take a moment to discuss some issues important to beginning music teachers.

This book is for any band director who will teach beginning woodwind players. The focus of the text is on helping teachers establish correct basics for their students: embouchure, playing position, and basic technique. Experience as a beginning band director is why I recommend starting initial instruction only on the flute and clarinet.

Many band directors choose to start only beginning flute and clarinet students during the first semester or first year of instruction. Saxophones are heavy; not easy to play in a controlled fashion for beginners; and, most importantly, very difficult to play in tune. Beginners are keenly aware when they do not sound as good as their peers and some quit out of utter frustration with the saxophone. For some teachers, a period of observation – perhaps the first semester of instruction - allows the teacher time to evaluate a student’s ability to hear pitch and intonation differences, as well as develop coordination on another instrument.

On a personal note, I have had great success teaching students, who want to play saxophone and percussion, on flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone so I can assess their sense of pitch discrimination and sense of a steady beat. I never lost a student because of my decision to start only flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone players. Students who are good candidates for saxophone or percussion will spend time over the holiday break working with the teacher to develop the necessary skills to catch up with the rest of the class and are quite proud to show off their new-found skills when the class meets again in January.

What’s Inside the Book

When starting beginning instrumentalists, teachers should set aside the week before school starts for like-instrument instruction. No note-reading, just sound-making: learning basics and getting some songs under the fingers by rote. This special week allows teachers to focus on teaching students just the basics; it gives students a chance learn correct embouchure, playing position, characteristic tone quality, articulation, instrument assembly, and proper instrument care, without the additional stress of having to learn to read music. Many noted pedagogues say music is learned best like language: by listening and mimicking, what we like to call “rote before note.”

Initial instruction is vitally important. It is far easier for them to learn correctly at the beginning rather than to have to re-learn the basics later. Often students, who have to correct embouchure problems can become easily frustrated and quit.

Using this material, by the end of the week, your future students students will be able to demonstrate

- A stable embouchure
- Correct articulation, with no movement in the embouchure
- Correct playing position with fingers hovering over open tone holes
- Characteristic tone quality
- Articulation
- A repertoire of three and five note songs (both sung and played)
• Beat subdivision using iconic notation
• Correct instrument assembly
• Knowledge of instrument care

By the end of the first week of instruction, students should be ready to begin work in a basal text such as Accent on Achievement or Jump Right In.

Throughout the initial week of instruction, teachers will need to continually reinforce these basics. Here is a synopsis the first week of instruction (45 minutes per class) for beginning instrumentalists:

• Day 1 — First Sounds: embouchure and air, beat subdivision
• Day 2 — First Song: instrument assembly, first three notes, articulation, instrument care; Hot Cross Buns (reinforce Day 1 concepts)
• Day 3 — Three Note Songs: Hot Cross Buns, Mary Had A Little Lamb (excluding sol), Au Claire du Lune (reinforce Day 1 and 2 concepts)
• Day 4 — Five Note Songs: Jingle Bells, Good King Wenceslas, Gently Brays the Donkey (round), Mary Had A Little Lamb (including sol)
• Day 5 — Grand Finale: A Concert For Parents and Teachers

In each chapter you’ll find sample scripts for teaching these concepts, provided to give you a guideline. It’s best if you use your own words, tailored to your own students and your own language, but if you’re stuck, use these scripts.

Using this text as a guide will help you establish a superb foundation, not only for your own teaching, but for your students’ musical ability as well. Actually having students to teach is important, of course, so I have included the next short section on recruiting potential good band members.

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SMART RECRUITING

I have to preface this advice by saying that my recruiting efforts are focused on two primary program goals:

1) Achieving balanced instrumentation, and
2) Putting the “right” student on the “right” instrument.

These instructions are based on starting beginners in the fall semester and conducting recruiting in the previous spring semester, usually in May. I only start students on flute, clarinet, trumpet, and trombone; however, I do take time over my December break to give instruction to students who have shown an interest in playing saxophone or percussion and who meet the criteria (see Introduction) to switch to those instruments. Investment of one’s personal time is a small price to pay for starting January with the best possible instrumentation. This approach has worked very well for me and using it, I was able to increase band enrollments every year.

In the schools where I taught, we started beginners in the fall of the sixth grade year. In January, I contact the elementary music teacher to set up sessions in April or early May when I can come visit the fifth grade music classes to recruit. I usually take up two classes for each fifth grade class: one session for the brass (trumpet and trombone) instruments and one session for the woodwinds (flute and clarinet). If the classes are large, with 20 or more students, I will double the number of sessions so that I can spend adequate time with each student.

Prior to the students arriving for our session together, I have both instruments available to demonstrate, I also have an audio recording of a brass section or a woodwind section playing as students arrive for our sessions. I have mouthpiece disinfectant spray and paper towels to clean the mouthpieces after each student’s effort.

As students come in, I have them sit quietly in a circle on the floor, I stand outside the circle and play both instruments so that students can hear the timbre and get an idea of the range. I do ham it up a little bit so that they can see the fun side of playing an instrument. Once I demonstrate, which takes about 5-6 minutes, I grab both mouthpieces, disinfectant, and towels, and come into the center of the circle. The elementary music teacher is my scribe for “best fits” because he/she knows each of the students and can write while I work with the students. I demonstrate making a sound on both mouthpieces and then say, “Now it’s YOUR turn!” The students are usually a little self conscious, so I try to start the process with one of the more outgoing students. I explain the steps to form the embouchure, show how to place the mouthpiece, and have each student attempt
to produce a sound. For instance, when working with the trumpet and trombone mouthpiece, I will have each student try both one right after the other so that I can see which is easier for the student. As I move around the circle, the music teacher takes notes on each student. I’ll use that information in a recruiting letter that I send out to the parents, telling them when and where our first band meeting will be and which instrument is most likely to be a good fit for their child.

One of the advantages of this recruiting strategy is that I am sitting at eye level with each student’s face and can see teeth, any malformations, or lip tabs (a small flap of skin in the middle of the upper lip), factors that often create barriers to playing a wind instrument. Lip tabs are very difficult to deal with particularly for young flute players, and for some trumpet players. If I notice a possible physical issue that will affect the child being able to make a sound, I will start with a mouthpiece with which the student will find success. For instance, if a child has a large lip tab, and we are working with brass instruments, I will present the trombone mouthpiece first or, with woodwinds, I will begin with the clarinet. The key is for the student to successfully make a sound on the first try. Then, if we can successfully work around any impediment, and the student can make a sound on one of the instruments, the student has a very positive experience.

A word of caution is appropriate here: making a sound and making a “good” sound are two different concepts. With the correct pedagogical knowledge on embouchure formation, these young, pre-band students can demonstrate characteristic tone right off the bat. When sitting on the floor with the students, you have a chance to interact with them, and not only provide good initial tone production instruction, but you will also establish that initial personal connection that is so important. You can’t afford to spend 20 minutes with each child on each of the instruments, but you can help students get a good sound the very first day by spending just 3 to 4 minutes.

It has always amazed me how excited students get when they first make a sound on an instrument they like. Pairing the student with the “right” instrument is important for student success, and in my case, helped me retain my students. Sometimes, no matter what you do, a student will walk away from band. I found I could eliminate one reason children quit band by focusing on student success. Nothing is more demoralizing for a young wind instrumentalist than struggling just to get a sound on the instrument, while the rest of the section moves on to instrument assembly and playing music. As most of these students are pre-teens, peer pressure and a desire to be successful can cause discouragement and frustration for those who may not progress as rapidly as others. Matching students with the right instruments is crucial! But even more crucial is helping students understand the value of figuring out difficult problems. Praise them for their effort, not for their “talent” or “gift.” Research has shown us that praising students for work and effort is much more effective than praising students for ability or “smarts.”

Students who don’t find initial success are likely to walk away from band within the first semester. Therefore, as the band teacher, you have to plan for student success and that process begins with smart recruiting.

Supplemental Material

QR Codes Link to Extra Content

QR codes are a kind of 3-dimensional bar code that tells your smart phone (or tablet) to go to a certain place on the Internet. Throughout this book, you’ll see a QR codes like the ones above and below that link to interesting and useful videos or web sites, or some other Internet resource. Want to try it? You’ll need an app for a QR reader and your device has to be connected to the Internet. Fire up the app, focus on the code below, and off you go. There are many free QR readers to choose from, but the best I’ve found is called Scan. You can get it online for Apple or Android smartphone and tablets at http://is.gd/puzuwa.

Here’s a QR code linking to http://www.TeachingWoodwinds.com. If you’re reading this in e-book format, click on the link address.
Lesson Plans

I am a music education faculty member who teaches students that lesson plans are “not optional.” I’ve included ready-made lesson plans you can use to satisfy your paperwork requirements and keep your administrators well-informed about the awesome job you’re doing! You can find further resources to make things easier on the website for this book: www.TeachingWoodwinds.com.

Teaching Checklist

In The Checklist Manifesto, Atul Gawande writes of the importance and usefulness of checklists for completing complex tasks. Although teaching beginning woodwinds usually isn’t as potentially life-threatening as the stories Gawande tells in the book, teaching woodwinds is a complex undertaking. A one-page checklist for each day is available in this book’s Extras section. You can download the PDFs for free at www.TeachingWoodwinds.com/resources.

Moving Forward

For the first few times you teach students, either during your degree or the first year on the job, consider recording yourself on video. This will give you great feedback that will dramatically improve your teaching. Watching yourself teach a couple times will give you and your future students immense benefits.

When you praise students, be aware that your words have great power and influence on student perceptions. Be careful not to praise students on talent or some kind of “natural” ability. Instead, praise students for effort, and stress that music talent is earned through practice and work. For more information about how mindsets impact student motivation and persistence, read Harvard psychologist Carol Dweck’s book Mindsets. To see how one’s theory of musical talent affects their motivation to learn, read the 2005 article in Psychology of Music, by Brett Smith: Goal orientation, implicit theory of ability, and collegiate instrumental music practice (Psychology of Music, 33(1), pp. 36-57).

Learning how to teach beginners embouchure, playing position, and techniques such as correct articulation will help all teachers, even those teaching more advanced ensembles at the high school level. Part of the job of “Band Teacher” involves identifying and correcting playing errors and the need for those skills never goes away. While being able to model characteristic tone and knowing all of the fingerings are great aspirations, these are not realistic expectations. Fingering charts are everywhere, readily accessible on the web and for mobile devices such as the iPad.

Knowing what a clarinet is supposed to sound like, and having instant access to representative media will serve to reinforce student understanding of tone quality when a teacher isn’t able to model perfect tone quality. In my experience, characteristic tone quality across the ensemble is the most important concept for beginners. Research by Gerringer and Worthy shows that our perceptions of tone quality influence our perceptions of intonation. Teaching beginners how to form a correct embouchure and efficiently deliver air through that embouchure is imperative.

I’ve spent a career focused on instilling “the basics” with middle school students, and continued that work by helping college music education students prepare to instill these basics in their students. I hope you find the information in this book both useful and helpful. Feel free to follow my blog or contact me through the web site with any questions or comments, and good luck!

Loraine D. Enloe
Some pages have been omitted from this preview.

For more information, visit:

www.TeachingWoodwinds.com
The clarinet evolved from single-reed shepherd’s instruments used in the Middle East. In the Baroque era (1600-1750), the clarinet’s closest kin was known as the chalumeau, an instrument that played well in the lower registers. Today, the clarinet’s lower register is still called the “chalumeau” register. The modern clarinet came into being in the early 1700s when Johann and/or Jacob Denner added a register key to the chalumeau. This new instrument played well in the mid-range and had a louder sound, so it was called a clarinetto (clarino=trumpet; etto=little). Clarinet design continued to be improved, especially by Hyacinthe Closé, who adapted Theobald Boehm’s flute fingering system to clarinet in 1839.

Examples of clarinet teaching demonstrations can be found at:
http://www.teachingwoodwinds.com/clarinet.html
Today students will learn to correctly form the clarinet embouchure and make their first sounds. They will also have their first lesson in beat subdivision. Set up your classroom before students arrive so there is sufficient space for students and for the teacher to move around to help all students. Teachers should be able to correctly demonstrate every activity for the students.

Teaching any wind instrument embouchure requires a concise method, with short, clear, step-by-step instructions. No lengthy explanations or theoretical concepts are necessary and will only serve to confuse a beginning player. Keep it simple.

**Set-up**

Place chairs in either two rows or a large semi-circle, depending on how many students are in the class. Each student should have a stand or share with only one other student. Music stands should be able to support the small, unbreakable mirrors. Wire stands won’t work for this. There should be a mirror available for every stand. Clarinet players’ chairs can be relatively close together.

You’ll need one reed for every student: Mitchell Lurie 2.5 clarinet reeds work well.

**Set-up**

Teacher should have a succession of 8 down and up arrows written across the board prior to students coming into the classroom. Above the arrows, the teacher should have two or more short and simple rhythmic patterns similar to the ones below:

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**Getting Started**

Clarinet students will begin their first lesson without any part of the instrument by first learning how to move sufficient air. Once they can do this, they can assemble the mouthpiece.

**Assembling the Mouthpiece**

The teacher should have a clarinet and reed available to demonstrate every step so students can see exactly how to put their instrument together. Students should come and sit down and place all cases label-side up in front of their chairs. As you pass out a Mitchell Lurie 2.5 reed to each student, talk briefly about reed care and how easy they are to break. If you have an old reed, demonstrate just how easy they are to break and that even a small chip will cause lots of problems with their sound. Then have students open the reed case and put the thinner part of the reed carefully in their mouth to soak. Explain why soaking the reed is important.

Next, clarinet students may open their cases and take out the mouthpiece and cap, the ligature, and the barrel. Have students remove the mouthpiece cap and place it in the case and close the case. Have them remove the ligature and then hold the barrel in the left hand and the mouthpiece in
the right and gently twist them together. If they do not move together easily, demonstrate how to put a tiny amount of cork grease onto the mouthpiece cork until assembly is easy. Too much grease on the cork may cause the clarinet to come apart, fall, and break.

Have students place the ligatures on the mouthpieces. Show students that the screws go on the flat side of the mouthpiece. Also point out that one end of the ligature is wider than the other, and the wide part goes on the mouthpiece first. Then tell the students to take the reed out of their mouth and place it flat-side-down on the flat surface (the rails) of the mouthpiece. They will need to slide the reed under the ligature, down the flat table of the mouthpiece, butt-end first. The reed should cover the opening in the mouthpiece and be squarely on the table, just barely under the top of the mouthpiece.

When aligned correctly on the mouthpiece, the tip of the mouthpiece can just be seen behind the contoured tip of the reed. At this point, the barrel, mouthpiece, ligature, and reed should be correctly assembled. Students are now ready to learn how to form the embouchure and make their first sounds.

**Suggested Script:**

T: Good morning, everybody! Clarinet players please take a seat and place your cases under your seats until everyone is ready. (Don’t begin until everyone is seated and quiet)

T: Take a reed off of your stand, open the plastic case, and place the thinner end of the reed in your mouth to soak. You may now slide your case out in front of you. Make sure that the instrument brand label is on top of the case and then carefully open the case. Take out the mouthpiece and remove the cap and put it in the case (Teacher models). Next remove the barrel and close the case (model). Holding the barrel in the left hand and the mouthpiece in the right, gently twist the two parts together (model). (If mouthpiece cork is dry, model applying a tiny amount of cork grease to the mouthpiece cork)

Teacher should walk around the section to make sure all are correctly assembled.

T: Now, take that reed out of your mouth. Holding the mouthpiece and barrel in your left hand, slide the ligature up so that you can slide the butt of the reed down onto the flat surface of the mouthpiece (model). Be careful of the reed tip as it breaks easily, which means you would have to purchase a new one. Slide the reed down until you can just see the black curve of the mouthpiece behind the curve of the reed tip.

Teacher should walk around to verify reed placement: straight and even on the flat portion of the mouthpiece and not too far forward or back in relation to the mouthpiece tip.

**First Sounds: Teaching the Embouchure**

One of the most important concepts for beginners is characteristic tone quality. Give them some examples to listen to by playing some of the clips at the end of this section, or play them this recording of Stravinsky pieces for solo clarinet, played by Gervasio Tarragona Valli (http://is.gd/apital).

Excellent tone quality is possible the very first day, given the right equipment and correct embouchure, like the one to the left. Beginning clarinet players should begin with just the barrel, mouthpiece,
ligature, and reed. Using only the mouthpiece eliminates additional struggles beginners have balancing an awkward new instrument. Using just the mouthpiece and barrel allows students to devote all of their attention to correct embouchure formation. Direct students’ attention to the small, unbreakable pocket mirrors on each stand.

**Suggested Script:**

T: Okay, everybody, we’re going to go step-by-step to make a sound on your clarinet and this is how to do it (teacher models while instructing):

T: First, place half your lower lip over your lower teeth. (Watch to make sure only half the lower lip covers the teeth. Also note: mouthpiece should be at a 45 degree angle from the body.)

T: Next, place ½ inch of the mouthpiece into the mouth and make contact with the upper teeth as in the picture to the right. (Make first contact with upper teeth – NOT lower lip)

T: Next, bring your lips forward like you are saying “Q” stretching your chin muscles downward, and make a seal around the mouthpiece.

(VERY IMPORTANT: make sure that the chin muscles are flat and not bunched up under the mouthpiece, which happens when students place too much lower lip over the lower teeth)

T: Now, blow as if saying “hee.” Move the air like you did earlier.

(As students blow, circle through the group to assess and help students if they’re having trouble. Check reed set-up first, then embouchures and air. See “Trouble-Shooting” below.)

(The back of the tongue must be arched high in the back of the mouth. Students should be able to feel their upper molars with the sides of the tongue if the tongue is in the correct position).

T: GREAT! I hear some wonderful sounds. Be careful not to puff out your cheeks or you just might sound like a goose!

**Trouble-Shooting Common Embouchure Problems**

Reminder: Make sure that mirrors are available for students to use.

There are a number of common errors that plague beginners. It is important that the teacher can quickly identify problems by sight and/or sound and provide immediate additional assistance. Always remember: Beginners DO want to sound good and they should sound good from the beginning, with a teacher’s guidance and reinforcement of the basics.

**Bunched Chin (Strawberry Chin) Problems**

An embouchure like that shown on the right is probably the most common problem for beginning clarinet players, known as “strawberry chin” because the dimpled texture of the skin on the chin resembles the surface of a strawberry. Fixing a “strawberry chin” requires consistent reinforcement. The clarinet player’s chin muscles should follow the contour of the chin bone structure; in other words, the chin muscles should be pulled down and convex. There should be muscle definition grooves on each side of the chin.
Once the student finds the correct flat chin, he/she should hold a sustained tone, with just the mouthpiece and barrel, as long as possible. Make sure that the student sees the correct chin in the mirror. He/she should then take a breath and hold the sustained tone again to teach those muscles to stay down in place.

Note: taking in too much mouthpiece (more than ½ inch) can exacerbate a “strawberry chin” and an excellent method to fix a stubborn chin problem is to have the student insert just enough mouthpiece into the mouth to just get the teeth on top of the mouthpiece – no more than that. The student should take a breath and hold a sustained tone as long as possible, making sure that the chin is down and flat and repeat the procedure. Any student who continues to struggle with a “strawberry chin” will likely have articulation and intonation problems, not to mention squeaking caused by a lack of embouchure stability.

Again, students often improve faster when they can see the results of a correct chin. Seeing the chin in the correct form helps reinforce muscle memory.

Too Much/Too Little Mouthpiece

Often beginners struggle with feeling that ½ inch of mouthpiece in the mouth. The result is that they insert too little or too much of the mouthpiece into the mouth. Both problems result in faulty tone quality, the most common being too much mouthpiece in the mouth, as shown in the picture to the right.

Smiling Problems

At one time, beginning clarinet players were taught to pull back the corners of the mouth, as if smiling, to form the correct embouchure. “Smiling” was one way to help young players get the chin muscles down and flat. However, when the corners of the mouth come back, the lower lip is stretched thinly. Research has shown a positive correlation between lip pad thickness and tone quality: a thin lip pad (smiling) results in a brighter sound than a thicker lip pad (bringing the corners forward as if saying “Q”).

Tongue Position too Low

When the back of the tongue is too low, the clarinet tone begins to sound hollow and the pitch can sound flat. Reinforce using the upper molars as a landmark for correct tongue placement: students should feel the upper molars with the sides of the tongue.

A Note for Students with Braces:

Braces are the bane of existence for wind instrument players. Young clarinet players can lessen their discomfort by buying some EZO “upper” denture cushions and cutting them into small ½ inch pieces. Once a ½ inch piece is cut, put the piece between the cheek and the upper gums to allow it to soften. Once it is pliable, bend the piece of denture cushion over the lower teeth where it covers the braces and provides instant comfort.

Troubleshooting Sound

No Sound

If the embouchure is correct, chances are that there are major problems with the reed. First, check to make sure that the reed is aligned properly on the mouthpiece. Pay particular attention to how far the
reed exceeds the end of the mouthpiece. The farther the reed extends past the end of the mouthpiece, the harder it is to play. In fact, when a student’s reed is too soft in a performance situation, have them move the reed farther up the mouthpiece until it extends past the end. This is an easy way to go up a number in reed strength without having to change the reed. The other possibility is that the student is trying to play on a reed too hard for his embouchure strength. Make the student take the reed off of the mouthpiece and look at the reed strength printed on the underside. Note: It is wise to check the status of your students’ reeds. Often times, if they are struggling with tone production, articulation, or intonation, it is because they are trying to play on a badly mangled reed. Also, checking reeds gives the teacher an opportunity to remind them all that quality reeds are necessary.

**Flat, Flabby Sound**

For some young students, the feeling of their upper teeth on top of the mouthpiece is uncomfortable. The vibration can cause some students discomfort. These students will cover the upper teeth with the upper lip (double lip, or French embouchure) or their teeth will “float” above the top of the mouthpiece to avoid contact. When this happens, there is little or no muscular support around the mouthpiece. An easy way to diagnose this problem is to grasp the barrel while the student is playing and see how much side-to-side movement occurs. There should be very little side-to-side movement. Students should think of the mouth muscles as a rubber band around the mouthpiece: snug, but flexible. This problem is easy to fix with a clarinet mouthpiece patch; a small piece of rubber or soft plastic will act as a buffer between the upper teeth and the top of the mouthpiece, thereby reducing the amount of vibration.

Another possibility is that the reed is too old or too weak. Reeds should last for a couple of weeks and then be replaced, as they break down from exposure to acid in saliva and general use. Also, it may be time to move to the next higher reed strength.

A third possibility for a flat sound is blowing too hard. When clarinet students blow too hard, the pitch drops dramatically and results in a flat and flabby sound. For brass players teaching clarinet, this is a common teaching mistake. When brass instrument tone lacks focus and/or is under pitch, the correction is to move more air through the instrument. Brass students are told to “blow harder.” However, when that same direction is applied to young clarinet players, the clarinets only play “flatter.” One can now understand why so many young bands struggle with intonation. Blowing harder is not a cure-all for students playing under pitch.

**Raucous or Harsh Sound**

When students put too much mouthpiece into the mouth, the result is a flat, raucous, and uncontrolled sound.

**Weak Sound**

Not enough air. The barrel and mouthpiece (and later, the instrument) should vibrate in the hand, and therefore resonate with sound. Also, a weak sound can result when the reed is old or too weak. Biting or tension in the upper lip will also diminish the sound. Taking in a tiny bit more mouthpiece into the mouth can also help to achieve a bigger sound.
**Teaching Beat Subdivision**

Teaching beat subdivision without traditional notation allows students to learn the feel and meaning of note duration in its simplest form. Otherwise, when the topic first appears in the basal text, i.e. “How long do you really hold a whole note?” Most students have no concept of “a beat” much less 4 of them. If teachers will begin by teaching students to tap their heels, and that there are two parts to each “pat,” students will be more likely to develop accurate rhythmic accuracy early in the learning process. Reinforcing concepts in these exercises throughout the student’s instruction will also help students develop rhythmic and sight reading confidence.

Teacher should have a succession of 8 down and up arrows written across the board prior to students coming into the classroom.

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**Suggested Script**

T: Let’s all tap our heels. Watch me and then join in. (Teacher models at a moderate tempo). Notice that when you tap your foot, it goes down and then up, doesn’t it? Let’s all say, “down,” “up,” “down,” “up,” “down,” “up,” “down,” “up” while we are tapping our heels. (Students tap their heels, repeating “down” “up.”)

T: Look up on the board. See the down and up arrows that go across the board? That’s what your foot is doing.

T: Now, let’s see if we can clap when your foot is down and then when your foot is up. Watch me and then join in (Teacher models at a moderate tempo, saying “down” “up” and clapping. Students tap their heels and clap on downs and ups.

T: Can you clap only when your foot is down? Watch me and join in. (Teacher models at a moderate tempo). Students tap their heels and clap only on “downs.”

T: Can you clap only on the “ups”? Watch me and join in. (Teacher models at a moderate tempo). Students tap their heels and clap only on the “ups.”

T: Now let’s try some different patterns. I will clap a pattern and you clap it right back to me. We will start with our heels down and up. (Teacher plays call and response game with a variety of short rhythmic patterns like those above. Balance challenge with success when creating patterns).

T: I am going to write some patterns on the board. The down and up arrows are your heel going down and up. The “C” tells you where to clap. Can we clap these rhythms without my help? Let’s see. (Teacher writes 2 short rhythm exercises on the board.) I am going to start us off tapping our heels and once we are moving along, I will say “one, and, two, and, ready, and, clap, and” then you all will clap the first pattern. (Teacher points out the first pattern and then begins the heel patting. Teacher assesses student learning.)

T: Now I will split you into groups of three (quickly count the students off by 3s, or by 2s if a small class). I will write three more patterns on the board (keep them simple with one difficult one at the end). With your partners, see if you can figure out these rhythms. (Teacher visits each group for assessment and encouragement). Alternative: have students create a rhythm of their own and perform it for the rest of the group.
Set up the room as in Day 1, with students in a semi-circle, Clarinet cases on the floor with the case latches right side up.

A quick review of material covered on the previous day is a good idea.

**Set-up**

Begin this lesson reviewing embouchure formation and tone production by assembling only the mouthpiece, barrel, ligature, and reed. Once students can all make a good, focused sound on the barrel and mouthpiece, it is time to assemble the instruments.

**Assembling the Instrument**

Have students bring the cases back out, with the brand name on top, and open the case to take out the mouthpiece cap and place it over the mouthpiece and reed. Once the mouthpiece is capped, the students may carefully lay down the mouthpiece and barrel next to the case.

The student should take out the lower joint and hold it in the left hand, careful not to crush or bend the long rods. Next, the student can remove the upper joint and hold it in the right hand. At this point, it is necessary to recognize the bridge mechanism and the key that raises the upper joint bridge mechanism so the upper and lower joints fit together correctly, without damaging the instrument as in the photo to the right.

The thickest part of the hand below the pinkie can be used to press the appropriate key to raise the bridge on the upper joint while the two parts of the clarinet are carefully twisted together. If the corks are dry, add a minimal amount of cork grease to facilitate assembly. If the bridge key mechanism is not raised on the upper joint during assembly, the upper and lower joint key work may jam, causing damage to the instrument.

Once the upper and lower joints are together, hold the lower joint in the left hand, still being careful with the long rods and keys, and take the bell out of the case with the right hand. Gently twist the lower joint and bell together, applying cork grease if necessary.

Remember, a little dab of cork grease is always better than too much; otherwise, your students’ instruments might fall apart and break against the floor because there is too much cork grease. Finally, the student should twist the assembled mouthpiece and barrel onto the upper joint. The teacher must model correct assembly so students will recognize and avoid chances to damage the instrument (photos).
Suggested Script

T: Let's begin today by reviewing what we learned yesterday. Take out your cases, open them, take out your reed and put the thinner side in your mouth to soak. Let's assemble our mouthpiece and barrel just like we did yesterday. (Teacher observes students to help with any problems). Now let's see how we sound today. I will demonstrate and you follow me (Teacher models embouchure and sustains a sound on the mouthpiece and students follow). Let's see who can hold their note the longest. I will say “One, and, two, and, here-we-go, and” and we will see who can hold their note the longest. Don't forget to take a big breath! (Teacher counts off “One, and, two, and, here-we-go, and” and students form embouchures and hold notes. Have students record their best times.


GREAT! Looks like you practiced last night. Thanks for your hard work! (only if warranted)

T: Now, let's assemble our instruments. First, bring your cases back out and open them. Take out your mouthpiece cap and put it over your reed. Lay down the barrel and mouthpiece next to your case (model, then observe and assist as needed, especially if it’s necessary to apply cork grease).

T: Take out the lower joint and hold it like so in your left hand (see picture to the left). Be careful not to put any pressure on the long rods or keys on this joint or you may break them.

Now, take out the upper joint with your right hand, using the lower part of your right hand to press down the key that raises the bridge. Once the bridge is up, gently twist the upper and lower joints together. If they don't twist easily, add a tiny bit of cork grease to the dry cork on the upper joint (model, then observe and assist as needed).

T: Now hold the upper and lower joints by the lower joint, again careful not to press on the long rods or fragile key work. With your other hand, take the bell out of the case and gently twist the bell onto the lower joint (model, then observe and assist as needed).

T: We're almost finished! Now take the barrel and mouthpiece in your right hand and gently twist the barrel onto the upper joint, being careful to avoid the key work on the top of the upper joint. Align the opening of the mouthpiece, the side with the reed, with the back of the instrument, the side with the least keys. When you hold the clarinet correctly, you can see the thumb rest and you can see the clarinet reed on the mouthpiece. (Teacher should now verify alignment of reed)

Lastly, attach the barrel and mouthpiece to the upper joint. The opening of the mouthpiece will be facing you when it is aligned correctly. Hold the instrument on the more stable part of the upper joint, and not up higher, where you might damage the fragile trill keys.

Lift the bridge key during assembly
For students’ first note—middle C—the left hand thumb covers the top tone hole on the back of upper joint. The next three fingers cover the first tone holes on the front of the upper joint. The fingers should be lightly arched, as if shaping a C, if seen from the side. The fingers should also be relaxed.

On the lower joint, the pad of the right hand thumb should be flat against the instrument underneath the thumb rest. The thumb rest should sit on the thumb, contacting it where the skin of the thumb and the thumb nail intersect. The fingers of the right hand should also be relaxed and lightly curved in a “reverse C” shape. Fingers should not press any keys but should hover over the open tone holes of the lower joint.

Young students will often try to cover the tone holes with their fingertips instead of the pads of the fingers. Skin on the fingertips has little density or subcutaneous fat and is not effective at making a seal over the tone holes. Pads of the fingers are much better at sealing tone holes. Tell students, “Leaks cause squeaks,” and also explain that if the tone holes aren’t sealed, they might not get any sound at all. Listen and look to make sure there are no leaks around the tone holes. Better yet, have students team up and check each other. This will help them understand the concept, and will save you time.

In the picture to the right, notice the tips of the fingers are not able to cover the tone holes. There should a slight upward curve of the first finger, which will help students play the throat tones A and B♭. Also, notice that the right hand fingers hover over the lower joint tone holes.

**Suggested Script**

T: Now that we know how our instruments go together, we need to learn the proper playing position. I am going to demonstrate how to hold the clarinet and then you can do it, too. First, our right hand goes on the lower joint, so we place our right thumb below the thumb rest so that the place where the skin meets the thumbnail is centered on the clarinet thumb rest. (Teacher demonstrates and students imitate.)

T: The first three fingers of the right hand, beginning with your pointing finger, hover just above the open tone holes. (Teacher demonstrates and students imitate.)

T: The left hand always goes on top, closest to your face. Remember it this way: In the alphabet, the letter “L,” for left comes before “R,” for right, so left is always on top. Cover the tone hole on the back of the instrument with your left thumb and then cover the top 3 tone holes with the pads of your first three fingers, beginning with the pointing finger. It is important that you cover the tone holes
with the fattest part of your fingers and not the tips of your fingers. You have to completely seal the tone holes with the flesh of your fingers otherwise the clarinet will not make a sound when you try to play a note, or it will squawk.

(Teacher demonstrates and students imitate. Teachers watch and listen for correct for sealing of the tone holes and make sure students are not using their fingertips.)

T: Now, with our hands in this position – with the left hand thumb and fingers covering and sealing the holes, lets see if we can play that note.

(Teacher plays written middle C and students imitate. Teacher should watch for correct embouchure formation and correct thumb and finger placement, as well as correct playing position.)

T: OK. Let’s see how long we can hold our new note. I will count off just like I did earlier: “One, and, two, and, here-we-go, and…”

(Teacher counts off and students sustain the written middle C. Again, the teacher should help any students with embouchure or playing position errors.)

### The First Three Notes

Starting beginning clarinet players on middle C (written) and working up to the E above gives students a stable platform for the first simple melodies. The teacher should spend time playing and sustaining middle C until all students can play the note and hold it with characteristic tone quality and a stable embouchure. Once C is stable, raise a finger and move up to D, working to sustain the D with good tone and a stable embouchure. Finally, end the session on E above, by raising the next finger.

At this point in the instruction process, note names are not important: tone quality, embouchure stability, and correct playing position are the most important. Once the students can sustain C, D, and E (written), it is time to teach three note songs by rote.

### Suggested Script

T: Now that we can play with the thumb and first three fingers of the left hand covering the upper tone holes, let’s see if we can raise our third (ring) finger so we only have two of the upper tone holes covered. I will play the new note and then you play it back to me.

(Teacher demonstrates by playing written D above middle C. Students imitate. Note whether student posture, embouchures, and instrument position look like the examples shown on this page.)

T: Now let’s raise our second finger so that now we only have the thumb and the first finger tone holes covered. I will play the new note and you play it back to me.

(Teacher demonstrates by playing written E above middle C. Students imitate.)
TEACHING ARTICULATION

Teaching articulation follows naturally after teaching beat subdivision as teachers can teach young players to articulate on the “downs” and “ups” after reinforcing clapping patterns on the “downs” and “ups.” Begin the process by practicing clapping on all “downs” and “ups” and then practice 2 or 3 call and response clapping patterns. Finally, have the students substitute saying “dee” (clarinet), “du” (flute), and “dey” (saxophone) for clapping in the rhythm exercises. Next have students play and articulate those same patterns, beginning by articulating continuous “downs” and “ups” and then playing call and response rhythm patterns. Teachers can teach students to sustain notes through sets of “downs” and “ups” at this time to make longer note durations.

Clarinet articulation is best taught by having students start a sustained tone and then directed to lightly touch the tip of the tongue about ¼ inch back the tip of the reed while sustaining the tone. It is important to make sure students interrupt the vibration of the reed by lightly pressing the tip of the tongue to the reed, while the air never stops moving through the instrument. Nor should students pulse the air with the articulation: the air stream must fast, constant, and consistent. Using the “dee” syllable keeps the articulation soft while keeping the back of the tongue high. Shorter note values only require the student use enough tongue pressure to completely stop the reed from vibrating. Using the “t” tends to make articulation harsh. The movement of the tongue should be small. Any movement under the chin and along the jaw is indicative of excess movement. The jaw should be completely still.

Consider showing students this x-ray video of articulation on trumpet and horn. It’s a similar tongue motion for flute. Point out the speed of the tongue, and where it’s striking in the mouth. On the Web: http://is.gd/rofola

Continue to reinforce the beat subdivision and rhythm patterns now by playing them rather than clapping them.

TEACHING SONGS

When teaching beginners their first songs, begin by singing the songs with the correct words and starting on the correct pitches as would be played on the clarinet. Stanley Schleuter’s (1996) wonderful book, A Sound Approach to Teaching Instrumentalists, provides a long list of excellent simple songs for beginning instrumentalists (http://is.gd/bejivo). When teaching known songs on a new instrument, students quickly realize they don’t know how to separate, or put space between, notes, opening the way to teach articulation.

SUGGESTED SCRIPT

T: Now, class, we are going to play our first song, Hot Cross Buns but before we play this song, I want to make sure all of us know the song, so I’ll sing the song first:

(Teacher: make sure you’re starting on concert D. Note durations can differ and are the teacher’s choice; however, the teacher must be consistent throughout teaching the song and always model and have students tap their heels when playing. This is not the time to teach students note names. The note names below are for your reference only.)

T: Hot Cross Buns (concert pitch: D, C, Bb) (clarinet notes: E, D, C)
   Hot Cross Buns (concert pitch: D, C, Bb) (clarinet notes: E, D, C)
   One A Penny (concert pitch: Bb, Bb, Bb, Bb) (clarinet notes: C, C, C, C)
   Two A Penny (concert pitch: C, C, C, C) (clarinet notes: D, D, D, D)
   Hot Cross Buns (concert pitch: D, C, Bb) (clarinet notes: E, D, C)

T: Now sing with me: (have students sing the song with the teacher)
Now sing by yourselves (Students sing by themselves)

T: Okay, now let’s pick up our clarinets while I play this song. It starts on our highest note, with the thumb and first finger of your left hand covering the tone holes. Watch me while I play the song slowly for you and see if your fingers can follow mine exactly on your clarinets while you watch.

(Teacher models the song, but stops when he/she gets to “One a Penny”.)

T: I have a problem right here, don’t I? How do I separate those repeated notes? You have to use your tongue to separate the notes. All you do is lightly and quickly touch the end of your tongue about ¼ inch from the tip of the reed, while the air is still going just like we just learned. Let’s all play the lowest note, all fingers down on upper joint (written C) and as you hold the note, lightly touch the reed with the end of your tongue and then take your tongue off the reed as fast as you can. Remember to keep the air moving all the time.

(Teacher models articulation on four written middle C’s then students play it back to the teacher; repeat on D and E. Teacher watches students to make sure there is no jaw movement or movement under the chin, nor is there any embouchure movement).

T: Now, back to our song. It starts on the thumb and first finger on the upper joint. Put your fingers like mine and change yours, like mine, as I play the whole song. (Teacher plays the complete song).

Now, it’s your turn to play with me. We will start by tapping our heels. I will play a phrase and you play it back to me, until we play the whole song. (Teacher and students play the song together by phrases).

T. Now we’ll play the whole song together without stopping. (Teacher and students play song together).

T. Now you play the song without me: 1, and, 2, and, ready, and, play, and: (Teacher can reinforce with Curwen hand signs or pitch height hand signals, or other verbal cues to keep the group together).

Some additional three note songs:

Mary Had A Little Lamb
Au Claire du Lune
At Pierrot’s Door

The teacher should teach students to sing the songs with words before teaching students to play the songs.

**Instrument Care**

1) Always be careful when handling the instrument, because the rods and key work are fragile. Take particular care with the bridge keys and the long rods on the lower joint when assembling the instrument.

2) Be stingy with cork grease: use just enough to facilitate assembly and/or disassembly. Too much cork grease can cause the instrument to fall apart.

3) After playing, take the reed off the mouthpiece and put it back in the plastic case or a 4-reed case where it can dry.

4) Swab out the inside of the instrument to eliminate moisture inside the bore.
5) Swab out the inside of the tenon joints on both ends of the barrel, the upper end of the lower joint, and at the top of the bell as moisture tends to accumulate in these recesses as in the picture to the right.

6) Never clean out your mouthpiece with a brush. Submerge the entire mouthpiece in a glass of full-strength white vinegar and let it sit overnight. In the morning, take a Q-tip and clean out the inside of the mouthpiece (you'll find all kinds of nasty gunk), and then thoroughly rinse the mouthpiece with warm (NOT hot) water. Allow the mouthpiece to air dry.

7) Never get the rest of the instrument wet. You will ruin the pads and could damage the key work.

8) Do not put fuzzy pad-savers inside the instrument because the fuzz gets in the mechanism and will cause problems.

9) Do not lay the instrument on a music stand as it will get knocked off and broken. Also, don't put the clarinet on a chair where it will be sat upon and damaged. If you must leave your instrument, put the mouthpiece cover over the reed and either lay the instrument next to your chair where it should be out of the way of others, or put the instrument on a stand made for instrument. When the instrument is on an appropriate stand, water will drain down the instrument and will not collect on fragile pads.

10) Reed instrument players should buy reeds by the box. In doing so, they should play on a different reed every day, which allows for even wear and reed consistency.

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**CLARINET: DAY THREE**

The third day is an opportunity to review and hone the skills covered so far, and to use them in creative ways, if possible. After a brief review from the teacher, split students into groups of two or three so they may play, create and help each other review the material from the previous lesson. Ask students to use the three notes they’ve learned and explore how those notes sound together.

Composition can start very young if you keep it simple, say, by using only the three notes your students just learned. For an excellent book on this subject, written for teachers, check out Maud Hickey's *Music Outside the Lines: Ideas for Composing in K-12 Music Classrooms*. It’s an excellent teaching resource for helping students create compositions. On the Web: http://is.gd/jicoku

The teacher should also teach additional 3 note songs that utilize G, A, and B. Teach the songs by rote: singing each song with words; modeling each song; teaching each song by phrase in “call and response” fashion; playing the song with the students; and finally, have students play the song without the teacher as a group and ask for volunteers to play alone.

Teaching notation can be a lot more fun and informative if you first have students invent their own notation for the songs they’re playing and composing. This gets students to begin thinking about how to notate the sounds they’re creating. Once they’ve grappled with these issues on their own, introducing standard notation makes a lot more sense to them. Read Uptit’s *Can I Play You My Song* for great examples of how this approach helps students learn to read music. On the Web: http://is.gd/ihuqwu

Consider video-taping performances not only as a way for students to assess their own learning a week or a month down the line, but also as a way to connect with parents. The free app called “Coach’s Eye” was developed for sports but will work great for instrumental learning, too. You can draw on video, record commentary, and share privately. It’s a great tool! On the Web: http://www.coachseye.com/
Some pages have been omitted from this preview.

For more information, visit:

www.TeachingWoodwinds.com
EXTENSIONS: EXAMPLES OF GREAT CLARINET PLAYING

Good models are absolutely crucial to developing musical skills. Below are links to some great examples of clarinet playing. Encourage students to seek out examples of clarinet playing they like. Download and print this page for your students: http://www.TeachingWoodwinds.com/resources

CLASSICAL CLARINET

Han Kim was 11 years old when he performed this video recording of Solo de Concours by Rabaud. http://is.gd/uvuxac


Karl-Heinz Steffens plays the Weber Concerto No. 1. http://is.gd/utugik

Sabine Meyer performs Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet in A Major (K581). http://is.gd/izinez

Sharon Kam plays the Mozart clarinet concerto on a basset clarinet, which has extra keys for lower notes. http://is.gd/anusin

JAZZ CLARINET

Artie Shaw performs part of his concerto. Skip to 1:20 for a great shot of his fingering, and stay to the end for a super-high note! http://is.gd/pipuza

Eddie Daniels performs the jazz standard, Stompin’ At the Savoy. http://is.gd/obodad

Victor Goines talks about New Orleans jazz and creole clarinet playing and plays examples. http://is.gd/enifub

ROCK CLARINET

Chris Taylor plays clarinet (and flute and sax) in the Brooklyn indie band Grizzly Bear. Taylor uses electronics to make his clarinet sound super low. http://is.gd/irequc

KLEZMER CLARINET

Helmut Eisel plays Klezmer in Bavaria. The klezmer clarinet is slightly different from the classical clarinet. http://is.gd/vipeyu

BASS AND CONTRABASS CLARINET

Eric Dolphy was a jazz musician who sometimes played bass clarinet. Here he plays God Bless the Child. http://is.gd/omecep

Sqwonk is a bass clarinet duo that plays many styles of music. Here they do JS Bach’s organ piece, Toccata and Fugue. http://is.gd/uduruc

Marco Antonio Mazzini plays contrabass clarinet with the Kinsa Trio, a piece called Himno al Sol. http://is.gd/exigok

IF IT SOUNDS LIKE A CLARINET...

Linsey Pollack plays Mr. Curly, a hose with a clarinet mouthpiece. It sounds like a bass clarinet. Then he plays a feather duster, also with a clarinet mouthpiece. http://is.gd/ejinaw
Some pages have been omitted from this preview.

For more information, visit:

www.TeachingWoodwinds.com
The resources in this section will help you focus more on teaching and less on paperwork. All materials here are licensed with a Creative Commons license. Included in this section are:

- Single-sheet checklists to guide you through the lesson when you’re in front of a class.
- Lesson plans for each of the 5 days.
  - Includes space for adapting the lesson for Individualized Education Plans (IEP)

Printable PDFs of all supplemental material in this section are freely available for download at www.TeachingWoodwinds.com/resources
Supplemental Material: Clarinet

Get the free, printable PDF of all supplemental material found in this section at www.TeachingWoodwinds.com/resources
Lesson Plan: Clarinet Day 3

Concepts: melody, rhythm, articulation, and muscle memory.

Skills: playing, listening, singing

Objectives:
- Students will learn at least two three-note songs
- Mary Had a Little Lamb, Au Claire du Lune, or At Pierrot’s Door
- Students will play the instrument more to improve technique and continue characteristic tone.

Materials: Clarinet (one for each student and for teacher), Mitchell Lurie 2.5 strength reeds, Chairs, Stands (for every student or every pair of students), cork grease.

National Standards: 2: Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music. 5: Reading and noting music.

Class/Grade/Age Level: 5th/6th grade

Adaptations for Special Learners (Coordinate with IEP committee)

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Procedures:

T: Good morning class. Today we will be learning another song; (insert new song name). To make sure we all know the song I will sing it first with words (Teacher sings song, using Curwen hand signs). Now you sing it.

S: [Students sing the song and as they do use Curwen hand signs to help them with pitch relationships]

T: Now we will learn to play this song on our clarinets. First I will play it section by section and review the fingerings. Then we will play it slowly as a class. (Teacher plays the song in sections, reviews fingerings, and models the song fingerings, while the class matches the fingerings)

S: [Students play the new song]

T: (Once the students have learned this song repeat the same steps and teach them at least two new three-note songs)

S: [Students learn additional three note songs]

Closure:

T: You have developed quite a repertoire of new songs. Can you think of any other songs that would use these same three notes?

Assessment:

1) Were all students able to play the new three-note songs with characteristic tone?
2) Were all students able to play the new three-note songs with a steady beat and correct rhythm?
3) Were all students able to play the new three-note songs with correct fingerings?

Extensions:

Teach what you have learned to a parent or a friend. Show your parents the parts of the flute and how to clean it. Lesson Plan:
CONCEPTS: Melody, rhythm, articulation

SKILLS: Singing and playing.

OBJECTIVES:
• The students will learn two more notes (written F and G)
• The students will learn at least two five note songs
  • “Jingle Bells”
  • “Good King Wenceslas”
  • “Gently Bray the Donkey” a round! (good test of musical independence)
  • “Go Tell Aunt Rhody”
  • “Ode to Joy”
  • “When the Saints Go Marching In”

MATERIALS: Chairs, piano, clarinets (one for each student and one for the teacher).

National Standards: 1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music. 2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.

Class/Grade/Age Level: 5th/6th grade

Adaptations for Special Learners (Coordinate with IEP committee)

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PROCEDURES:
T: We are going to add two new notes to our vocabulary today. We will start with just the left-hand thumb (written F) and I’ll play that note. (Teacher models written F)

T: Now I’ll play the note and you play it back to me. (Teacher plays written F again)
S: [Students play back written F]

T: Now we will lift the left thumb and, at the same time, cover all the tone holes on the lower joint with the index, middle, and ring fingers of our right hands. I’ll play it first (Teacher models written G)

T: Now I’ll play the note and you play it back to me. (Teacher plays written G)
S: [Students play back written G]

T: Now we are going to do a new twist on old song, “Mary Had A Little Lamb” with all the notes, including sol.
T: We all know the words to this one; let’s all sing it together the way we know it:
T/S: Sing together: “Mary Had a Little Lamb” (starting on concert D)

T: Now I will play it for you, and you can finger along with me while I play. When I get to the new part, watch my fingers and see if you can catch what I do differently. (Teacher plays song slowly while students finger along)

T: This is what is different: mi-sol-sol (Teacher sings “little lamb” and fingers new notes, written E, G, G)

T: You sing and finger the new notes with me. (Teacher and students sing and finger “little lamb”) Let’s do that one more time.
S: [Students sing and finger written E, G, G]

T: Now we will play the entire song together, slowly. Don’t forget to put your right hand fingers down for the highest note. One, and, two, and, ready, and, play, and … [Teacher and students play entire song together]
Clarinet Day 1: Teaching Checklist

Model first: Students “do” second, with teacher oversight and assistance

**Preparation:**

- Print up as many copies as necessary of the links to good performances. The printable PDF of that page can be found online at http://www.teachingwoodwinds.com/resources
- Place chairs at least two feet apart, situated in a half circle, two rows if necessary.
- Place a stand for every chair.
- Place a Mitchel Lurie 2.5 reed on each stand.
- Place an unbreakable mirror on each stand.
- Write arrows (icons, not eighth note notation) across the board, down/up arrows under each.
  - Below that, write groups of short written rhythms in iconic (ti-ti) notation, with down/up arrows under each one. See the lesson plan for suggested rhythms, and notations, and “c’s” for clapping.
- Provide clarinets for each student.
- Be sure to have cork grease available.

**Activities:**

- Direct students to come in and place instruments under seats.
- Take a reed of the stand, place shaved end in the mouth to soak. At the same time, make sure cases are right-side-up, open the case and remove the mouthpiece, ligature, mouthpiece cap, and the barrel.
- Remove the mouthpiece cap and ligature.
- Gently twist the mouthpiece and barrel together.
  - If students are struggling to attach the mouthpiece to the barrel, chances are that the cork is dry. This is common particularly with new instruments. Demonstrate applying a tiny amount of cork grease to the mouthpiece cork. A minute amount of cork grease only.
- Show students how to put the reed on the mouthpiece. Tell them to be very careful not to push on the fragile reed tip.
- Take students through the process step-by-step. Watch to make sure that the reed is not crooked on the table.
- Move around to check students’ work to insure that all are successful.
- Teach embouchure.
  - Place half the lower lip over the lower teeth.
  - Place ½ inch of the mouthpiece into the mouth and make contact with the upper teeth first.
  - Bring the lips in to make a seal around the mouthpiece, as if saying, “Q”
  - Make sure the chin muscles are flat, pointed and not bunched up under the mouthpiece.
  - Strawberry chin occurs when students roll the entire lower lip over the lower teeth.
  - Blow like you are saying, “hee.”
  - Students do not actually say, “hee,” but blow air while the inside of the mouth is in the “hee” position.
  - Teach students to be “detectives” because you cannot see inside their mouths. If the inside of the mouth is in the correct shape, students should be able to feel the upper molars with the sides of the tongue.
  - A spread, unfocused sound usually means one of the following:
    - The student is puffing out the cheeks.
    - The tongue position is not in “hee” (too low).
    - The upper teeth are not in contact with the top of the mouthpiece.
    - The upper lip is curled under the upper teeth.
    - The upper teeth are “floating” above the top of the mouthpiece.
  - Gently move the barrel while the student is playing. ALWAYS tell students before you do this.
  - If you cannot move the mouthpiece at all, the student is biting, using excessive jaw force.
- Model heel patting, calling attention to down/up motions and have students do the same.
- Clap just on downs and have students do the same.
- Clap just on ups and have students do the same.
- Play 2 measure call and response clapping games.
- Clap the first line of continuous iconic notation on the top row of the board, calling attention to down up arrows and have students do the same.
- Clap each short iconic notated rhythms have students do the same.
**Clarinet Day 2: Teaching Checklist**

Model first: Students “do” second, with teacher oversight and assistance

**Preparation:**

- Place chairs at least two feet apart, situated in a half circle, two rows if necessary. Allow room to walk around and help each student.
- Place a stand for every chair.
- Place an unbreakable mirror on each stand.
- Provide clarinets for each student.
- Be sure to have cork grease available.

**Activities:**

- Teach instrument assembly.
- Students bring cases out in front, right-side up and assemble the mouthpiece and barrel (help if needed).
- Cover mouthpiece and set aside. Take out the lower joint and hold it in the left hand.
- Be careful not to put any pressure on the long rods or keys on this joint.
- Teach students how to assemble the lower and upper joint. Watch to see if they don’t twist easily, and if necessary, rub in a tiny bit of cork grease to the dry cork on the upper joint.
- Take the barrel and mouthpiece in the right hand and gently twist the barrel onto the upper joint, being very careful to avoid the key work on the top of the upper joint.
- Align the opening of the mouthpiece, the side with the reed, with the back key work of the instrument. Make sure that when you hold the clarinet with the keys facing away from you – you can see the thumb rest, you can see the clarinet reed on the mouthpiece.
- Teach playing position. Check right thumb; right hand fingers hover over lower joint tone holes.
- Teach fingering low C. Make sure students make a good seal over the tone holes.
- Play low C. Check embouchures first and fix any problems; if problems continue, check fingers.
- Count off and see how long students can hold low C.
  - If the sound is flabby, the tongue is likely too low.
  - A student blowing very hard will blow the tongue flat, so check to make sure the student is not overblowing.
  - Remind them to blow, “hee.”
  - A student with too much mouthpiece in the mouth will have a flabby, and out-of-control sound.
  - Check to make sure the muscles are supporting the mouthpiece by seeing if you can move the instrument left to right while the student plays. WARN THE STUDENT FIRST.
- Weak tone (not the same thing as flabby) indicates lack of air.
- Teach D by raising the left ring finger.
- Teach E by raising both the left ring and middle fingers.
- Sing “Hot Cross Buns” with the words, starting on concert D/written E, phrase-by-phrase by rote call and response.
- Play “Hot Cross Buns” for students up to “One a penny” and ask students about the problem of separating repeated, like notes.
- Teach articulation with the instrument:
  - The tip of tongue touches the face of the reed, about 1/8th of an inch in from the reed tip.
    - A clicking sound means the student’s tongue is touching too close to the tip of the reed.
    - A “thuddy” sound means the tongue is touching too far away from the tip of the reed.
    - A muddy sound means that the tongue is not contacting the reed but is likely touching the roof of the mouth or that the middle of the tongue is touching the reed (anchor tonguing).
    - Students should blow a steady airstream throughout, never stopping the airstream.
  - Play “Hot Cross Buns” phrase-by-phrase by rote call and response.
  - Play “Hot Cross Buns” together.
  - Students play “Hot Cross Buns” without the teacher.
**CLARINET DAY 3: TEACHING CHECKLIST**

Model first: Students “do” second, with teacher oversight and assistance

**PREPARATION:**

_____ Place chairs at least two feet apart, situated in a half circle, two rows if necessary. Allow room to walk around and help each student.

_____ Place a stand for every chair.

_____ Place an unbreakable mirror on each stand.

_____ Provide clarinets for each student.

_____ Be sure to have cork grease available.

**ACTIVITIES:**

_____ Teach three additional songs by rote, call and response.

______ “Mary Had a Little Lamb” (no mi-sol)

______ “At Pierrot’s Door”

______ “Au Claire du Lune”

_____ Students should be able to play each song as a group without the teacher.

_____ Reinforce correct basics. Look for the following:

______ Flat, pointed chin.

______ Corners of the mouth in towards the mouthpiece.

______ No puffed cheeks.

______ Correct playing position.

______ Correct articulation

______ “Dee” syllable

______ Tongue touching the reed face 1/8” from the tip.
Clarinet Day 4: Teaching Checklist

Model first: Students “do” second, with teacher oversight and assistance

Preparation:

_____ Place chairs at least two feet apart, situated in a half circle, two rows if necessary. Allow room to walk around and help each student.
_____ Place a stand for every chair.
_____ Place an unbreakable mirror on each stand.
_____ Provide clarinets for each student.
_____ Be sure to have cork grease available.

Activities:

_____ Teach written F.
    _____ Teach students to hover fingers over open tone holes.
    _____ “Flying” (too high) fingers contribute to slow technique.
_____ Teach written G.
    _____ Cover right hand tone holes to bring pitch down on the first of the throat tones.
    _____ Written G, G#/Ab, A, and A#/Bb tend to be sharp, particularly on beginner clarinets.
    Put the “right hand down” helps bring the pitch down.
_____ Play E to G.
_____ Sing “Mary Had a Little Lamb” with words, using mi-sol.
_____ Play (and students finger along) “Mary Had a Little Lamb” and stop to focus and teach mi-sol.
_____ Play the entire song together.
_____ Students play the song without the teacher.
_____ Learn a new song (sing/play). See lesson plan for new songs.
CLARINET DAY 5: TEACHING CHECKLIST

Model first: Students “do” second, with teacher oversight and assistance

PREPARATION:

_____ Place chairs at least two feet apart, situated in a half circle, two rows if necessary. Allow room to walk around and help each student.
_____ Place a stand for every chair.
_____ Place an unbreakable mirror on each stand.
_____ Provide clarinets for each student.
_____ Be sure to have cork grease available.

ACTIVITIES:

_____ Teach instrument assembly.
_____ Students bring cases out in front, right-side up and assemble the mouthpiece and barrel (help if needed).
_____ Cover mouthpiece and set aside. Take out the lower joint and hold it in the left hand.
_____ Be careful not to put any pressure on the long rods or keys on this joint.
_____ Teach students how to assemble the lower and upper joint. Watch to see if they don’t twist easily, and if necessary, rub in a tiny bit of cork grease to the dry cork on the upper joint.
_____ Take the barrel and mouthpiece in the right hand and gently twist the barrel onto the upper joint, being very careful to avoid the key work on the top of the upper joint.
_____ Align the opening of the mouthpiece, the side with the reed, with the back key work of the instrument.
_____ Make sure that when you hold the clarinet with the keys facing away from you – you can see the thumb rest, you can see the clarinet reed on the mouthpiece.
_____ Teach playing position. Check right thumb; right hand fingers hover over lower joint tone holes.
_____ Teach fingering low C. Make sure students make a good seal over the tone holes.
_____ Play low C.
_____ Check embouchures first and fix any problems; if problems continue, check fingers.
_____ Count off and see how long students can hold low C.
_____ If the sound is flabby, the tongue is likely too low.
_____ A student blowing very hard will blow the tongue flat, so check to make sure the student is not overblowing.
_____ Remind them to blow, “hee.”
_____ A student with too much mouthpiece in the mouth will have a flabby, and out-of-control sound.
_____ Check to make sure the muscles are supporting the mouthpiece by seeing if you can move the instrument left to right while the student plays. WARN THE STUDENT FIRST.
_____ Weak tone (not the same thing as flabby) indicates lack of air.
_____ Teach D by raising the left ring finger.
_____ Teach E by raising both the left ring and middle fingers.
_____ Sing “Hot Cross Buns” with the words, starting on concert D/written E, phrase-by-phrase by rote call and response.
_____ Play “Hot Cross Buns” for students up to “One a penny” and ask students about the problem of separating repeated, like notes.
_____ Teach articulation with the instrument:
_____ The tip of tongue touches the face of the reed, about 1/8th of an inch in from the reed tip.
_____ A clicking sound means the student's tongue is touching too close to the tip of the reed.
_____ A “thuddy” sound means the tongue is touching too far away from the tip of the reed.
_____ A muddy sound means that the tongue is not contacting the reed but is likely touching the roof of the mouth or that the middle of the tongue is touching the reed (anchor tonguing).
_____ Students should blow a steady airstream throughout, never stopping the airstream.
_____ Play “Hot Cross Buns” phrase-by-phrase by rote call and response.
_____ Play “Hot Cross Buns” together.
_____ Students play “Hot Cross Buns” without the teacher.
This PDF is a sample to give you an idea of the quality of the book.

For more information, or to order copies, please go to

www.TeachingWoodwinds.com
Woodwind methods courses require future music educators not only to learn how to play unfamiliar instruments, methods courses must also help young teachers learn how to teach the instruments they are learning how to play. Playing and teaching require different skill sets, and each requires practice to be effective.

This book is the perfect supplement for instrumental methods courses because it covers—in detail—how to teach beginners to play flute, clarinet, and alto sax. Each section addresses the challenges and goals of the first 5 days of instruction for flute, clarinet, and saxophone.

This book will help music education students learn how to teach essentials like:

- Instrument assembly
- A stable embouchure
- Correct playing position
- Correct articulation
- Characteristic tone quality
- A repertoire of three and five note songs
- Beat subdivision
- Beginning exercises
- Instrument care
- Many links to examples using QR codes. Scan this one to visit the book’s web site.

The web site for this book includes lots of helpful teaching demonstration videos, videos of great playing, as well as printable downloads of lesson plans, teaching checklists, and other useful materials.

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