



Max McKee
Executive Director
(541) 840-4888



Scott McKee
Managing Director
(541) 778-4880



Paul Kassulke
Director of Operations
(541) 778-3161

Visit us @ www.bandworld.org

Another ABC Presentation

American Band College of
Sam Houston State University



**L.B.U.S.D.
TEACHER'S HANDBOOK
INSTRUMENTAL
MUSIC**

Elementary School Winds Edition



Written by Kevin Hamilton in fulfillment of Music 539 PA 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	3
<i>Common Concepts for Wind Instruments</i>	7
<i>Flute</i>	13
<i>Clarinet</i>	16
<i>Alto Saxophone</i>	20
<i>Trumpet</i>	24
<i>Trombone</i>	27
<i>Problem Solving Maps</i>	30
<i>Classroom Procedures</i>	32
<i>Concert Guide</i>	36

PREFACE

The purpose of this handbook is to provide instructional strategies, procedures, and standards for the elementary instrumental music teachers in the Long Beach Unified School District. It is the responsibility of each individual teacher to teach the fundamentals of every instrument regardless if the teacher can play the instrument themselves. The most critical concepts of the five elementary wind instruments; flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, and trombone, have been outlined for you in order to help direct your weekly lessons. All of these concepts can be taught with multiple approaches. Regardless of the method, these concepts must be taught. In a district with 68 music teachers and no music administrator, it is very difficult to have all the teachers on the same page. That is the challenge we face. But, by using and referring to this handbook and the expectations presented in it, it is my hope that all of our students will be reaching the same benchmarks as they progress from year to year on their musical journey.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

Begin by reading through the handbook, looking for any strategies that might help you teach more effectively. Mark those sections. Pay special attention to any critical concepts that you might not currently be teaching. If approached correctly, there is nothing in this handbook that your students should not be able learn.

Throughout the handbook, you will find sections labeled **Notes**. Use these sections to write down your thoughts and reflections about that particular section. After trying some of the strategies, note what worked well, what didn't, what could be done differently, and what questions arose as you taught a particular skill.

On a regular basis, review the sections marked **Critical**. These sections call attention to the most critical skills that the student musician must develop in order for them to progress to the next level of playing.

Pay special attention to all areas marked **Bad Habits**. Here you will find the most common bad habits on each instrument, and suggestions to combat them.

STANDARDS

In nearly every subject being taught today, there are clear standards that have been laid out for both teachers and students. Every 5th grade teacher in Long Beach can tell you what math skills the 5th grade student is expected to learn and be able to demonstrate by the end of the year. Music must take the same approach. The three standards that I've put before you were not developed by an administrator or a district consultant. Instead, they are what our students expect us to provide for them when they sign up for music. We must live up to these standards.

1. Continued Success in Music - Your number one goal should be to provide each student with the fundamentals of air movement, hand position, posture, and embouchure. If the student can master these critical concepts, then they can have continued success in middle school, high school, and beyond. Without these critical concepts, the chances of the student finding enjoyment in music and continuing on are dramatically decreased.

2. Enjoy the Process of Making Music - Your students should be excited to come to class each week. Elementary students love praise, challenges, friendly competition, problem solving, compliments, creating, improvising, showing off, incentives, etc. Use a variety of motivational tools when planning each lesson. You are expected to teach music in a way that engages the students, and leads to self motivation.

3. Appreciate the Skills of the Musician - Students that study music learn great life skills in the process; teamwork, focus, personal responsibility, and dedication to name a few. Make your students aware of the various "other" skills they are developing as members of a music group. Show them the skill and dedication that musicians have developed in order to become professionals. Your students will then develop a greater appreciation for all types of music.



WHAT SHOULD MY STUDENTS KNOW?

By the end of the first year, all students should be able to:

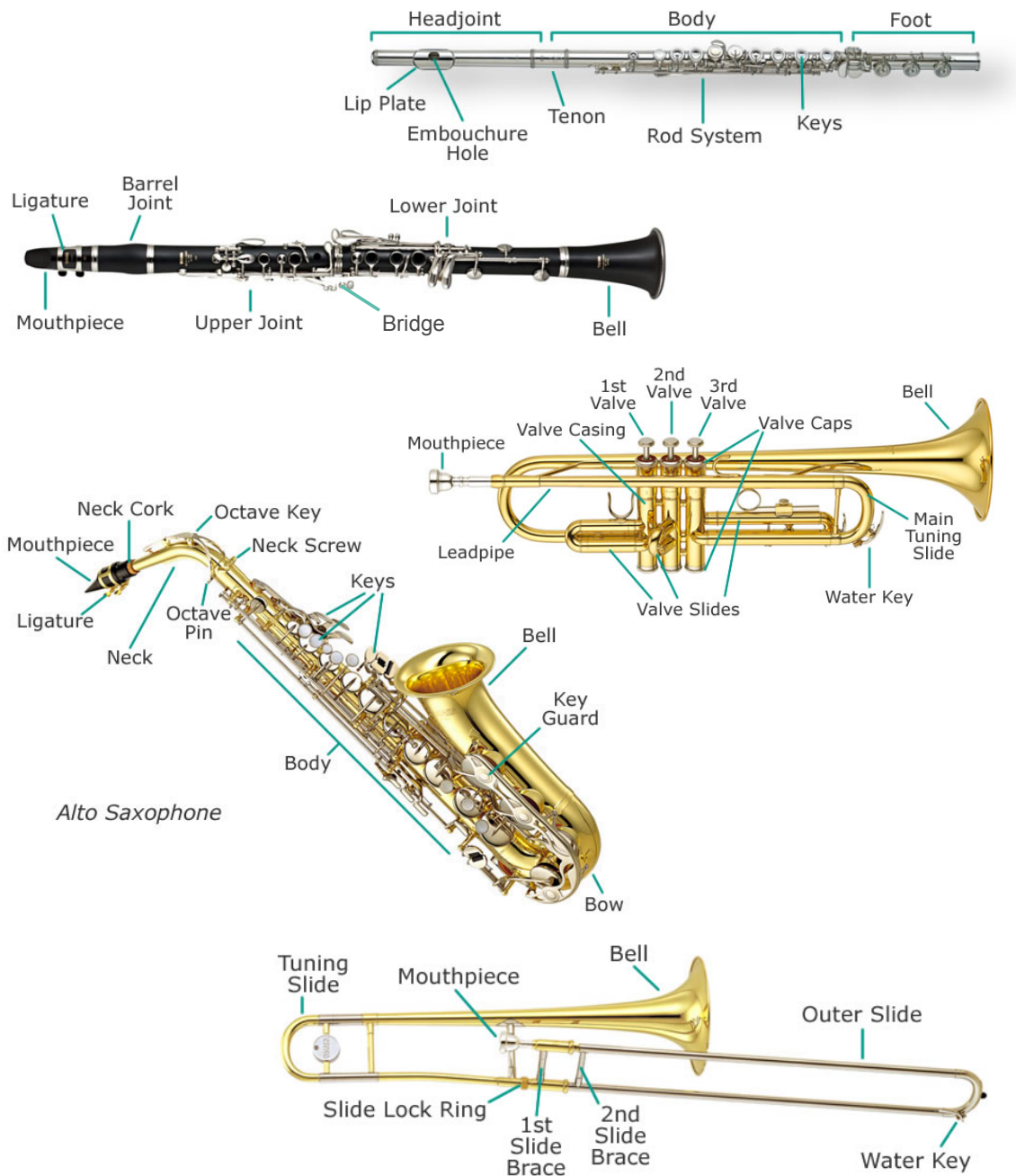
1. Sit with the correct posture when playing their instrument.
2. Correctly hold their instrument.
3. Play their instrument with the correct embouchure and air speed.
4. Play at least 6 different notes (Concert Bb, C, D, Eb, F, and G).
5. Identify and perform the above 6 notes on the music staff.
6. Define and perform whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and pairs of eighth notes.
7. Blow an 8 count air stream and correctly tongue a rhythm within those 8 counts.

By the end of the second year, all students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate numbers 1 - 7 above with greater proficiency.
2. Play with a characteristic tone quality.
3. Play low and high concert Ab, low and high A natural, concert Db and high Bb
4. Play simple songs in 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4 time signatures.
5. Play simple songs in the key of concert Bb and Eb.
6. Make up simple songs using different notes and rhythms.



INSTRUMENT DIAGRAMS



COMMON CONCEPTS FOR WIND INSTRUMENTS

AIR MOVEMENT

One of the most common problems with young wind players is their inability to move sufficient amounts of air through the instrument. As teachers, we tell them to “blow faster” and “use more air.” However, we will not get the results we want unless we first teach the students how to get more air into their bodies. Without a **deep** and **relaxed** breath, there will be no air to “blow faster” or “use more of.”

INHALATION

The Yawn - Breathing to play a wind instrument is very similar to yawning. When we yawn, our body naturally takes in a great deal of air in a relaxed manner. Students quickly grasp this concept. Translate this idea to music by teaching the students to speed up the yawn into one beat before playing.

Bad Habit - Students should avoid tension in the neck and shoulders while inhaling.

Imagery - Some students benefit by using imagery while inhaling. Tell your students to “fill up a balloon in your belly,” or “inhale all the air between you and your stand before playing,” or any other vivid image.

“An Active Breath” - Some students don’t understand that they need to take a breath that is different than a normal, everyday breath. Tell the students that they must take “an active breath,” in which they force air into their bodies. If you are a wind player, you might want to exaggerate your breath a little in order to get the concept across to your students. Otherwise, your students won’t believe that you are taking “an active breath” because it has become natural for you.

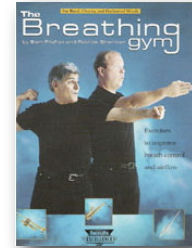
EXHALATION

Generally, blowing through any wind instrument can be taught the same way. The number one goal should be to produce an airstream that is fast, steady, and unrestricted. Encourage your students to imagine blowing air in a straight line, as if blowing through a long piece of pipe. Once your students can imagine this concept, you can affect the tone and range of the

notes by having the students imagine blowing through different sized pipes, skinny pipes for higher/brighter notes, and wider pipes for low/darker notes.

EXERCISES

Breathing Exercises - There are many different breathing exercises that can be done to maximize the inhalation of air prior to playing. The Breathing Gym by Patrick Sheridan and Sam Pilafian, has extensive exercises that have been shown to work well. However, beginners want to play. So keep the time spent on breathing exercises to a minimum.



In 4, Hold 4, Out 4 - A simple breathing exercise would be having your students take a “yawn breath” for 4 counts, hold the air in for 4 counts, and then hiss the air out for 4 counts. Tell the students that they have to breath during the entire 4 count inhale, and that they have to get all of the air out in the 4 count exhale (they will probably need to open their teeth slightly to get all the air out fast enough). Once they can do this, change the number of counts to mix things up.

Drinking Straw Exercise - See the section title “Drinking Straw Exercise” to further develop correct exhalation concepts for wind players.

FINGER HABITS

Critical - No matter the instrument, students must be constantly reminded to keep their fingers touching, or as near to the keys as possible. When the students fingers are far from the keys, I call it “flying fingers.” **Bad Habit** - “Flying fingers” can prevent a student from being able to play fast passages and scales with control and fluency. Another bad habit is “flat fingers.” Students should play with their finger tips on the keys, not the middle of their fingers on the keys (fig. Fh1).



POSTURE

Stretching - Take a minute to have your students stand and stretch their necks. Tilt the head to one side, the other side, and then to the front. Hold each stretch for 10 seconds or so. In a large class, this works well to focus everyone’s attention at the beginning of class.

DRINKING STRAW EXERCISE

This next section describes a method for teaching and reinforcing various aspects of the trumpet, trombone, and flute embouchure, while also developing a strong yet relaxed air flow. It will not hurt to have your clarinetists and saxophonists participate as well.

1. Give the student a regular sized drinking straw and have them hold it between their teeth, without pinching it shut (fig. DS1). Tell them that this is the approximate distance that their teeth need to be spread apart in order to play with a good sound. This concept is often overlooked when teaching embouchure, yet it is a critical concept.

2. While holding the straw between the teeth, have the student close their lips and blow fast air. Point-out to the student how freely the air flows when the teeth are spread apart. Also, focus the student's attention on the looseness of their neck and shoulder muscles. All musicians should avoid tension while playing.



Fig. DS1



Fig. DS2

3. Keeping the straw between the open teeth, have the student form the facial "M" or "B" shape. The center of the lips should not close completely, allowing air to pass through. Have the student focus on the firmness of the cheek and lip muscles while blowing through the straw (fig. DS2). Repeat this step over and over, building muscle memory in the looseness of the neck and shoulders, the space between the teeth and jaw, and the firmness of the cheeks and lips.
4. Now, translate this to the mouthpiece/head joint. Have the student hold the end of the mouthpiece with two or three fingers, take a deep breath, form the embouchure while placing the mouthpiece to the lips, and blow. **Critical** - More than likely, the student **will not get a buzz sound**, but rather the sound of rushing air. This is okay. If everything looks right (cheeks, lips, neck muscles, etc.), and the student is using fast air, simply have the student try again while pressing the middle of the lips more firmly against each other. It might take 4 or 5 attempts before a buzz is heard. However, once the student hears and feels it, they will be able to do it regularly.

CHANGING PARTIALS ON A BRASS INSTRUMENT

It is often very difficult for beginners to change partials on a brass instrument, especially going from low notes to high notes. Again, different approaches work for different students. Here are some exercises to help students change partials.

- **Increase the Air Speed** - For many kids, the only time they have been asked to blow fast air has been when they are blowing out candles on their birthday cakes. Giving them a visual can help a lot. **Raisin in the Straw** - Tell the student, “imagine that you have a tiny straw in your mouth with a big fat raisin stuck inside of it. Now, take a big breath and blow it out.” If this works, great. If not, provide encouragement and tell them that, “the straw goes all the way across the room and that your air has to blow faster to push the raisin all the way out.”
- **Change the Aperture Size** - Higher notes use a smaller aperture. If your student tries to blow faster air to play higher and the note only ends up getting louder, then they aren't changing the aperture size. Have them imagine that they are blowing out a single thread of air. Or tell them that they need to zip the corners of their lips up and form a tiny opening in the very middle. You can also draw a circle on a piece of paper and tell the student, “that's how big your aperture is.” Then draw a smaller circle and tell them, “this is how big I want it to be.”
- **Buzzing the Mouthpiece** - Have the student take the mouthpiece off and buzz any note. The goal is for them to buzz a different note, higher or lower. If they do, ask them what they did and have them do it again. Then have them go from buzzing the first note to the second note, up-down-up-down etc. Then see if they can make the notes farther apart, higher-lower-higher-lower. Put the mouthpiece back in the instrument and tell them to just concentrate on duplicating the high and low sounds of the mouthpiece. This will often result in the changing of pitches on the instrument.
- **Changing the Direction of the Air** - To play higher notes, have the student blow the air downward, into the bottom of the mouthpiece cup. Lower notes result from straighter air.
- **Tongue Placement / Syllables** - The speed and direction of the air can be greatly altered by the shape inside of the mouth. By shaping the mouth as if saying the syllable “ah”, the tongue and jaw will drop, making lower notes sound more easily. To get higher notes, use the syllable “ee.” This will raise the back of the tongue and cause the air to exit the mouth more quickly and in a downward direction.

TONGUING ON TRUMPET AND TROMBONE

Critical Tonguing should be taught on all instruments by the time the student is ready to play eighth notes. Some teachers choose to teach tonguing from the first note. If this works for you, great. However, this is probably easier to do in a private setting. Here's a process for teaching tonguing.

1. It's best to begin by demonstrating the way most beginners sound when they play quarter notes. Use your own instrument and puff each note without tonguing (start and stop the air). Then explain to the students that this way of playing is too much work and very tiring, and that you will teach them a new trick.
2. Next, demonstrate tonguing on your instrument by taking in a big breath and tonguing as many notes as you can, in various rhythms, until you run out of air. Immediately, the students will want to be able to do this too.
3. Now, have the students open their mouths and touch their finger to the back of the top teeth where they meet the gums. Tell the students, "this is the contact point for tonguing".
4. Next, have the students close their mouths and touch the same spot with the very tip of the tongue.
5. Explain that tonguing is the process of starting the air and separating the air by quickly closing and opening the air stream.
6. Ask the students to say "TEW". Use the syllable "tew" to keep the tongue off the roof of the mouth and the cheeks firm. Then have them say "tew" while blowing.
7. Now, have the students experiment with this on their instruments. Tell them that you want to hear a "pop" sound at the beginning of the note (over tonguing at this point is okay)
8. Listen to each student give it a try. Here are some possible outcomes and ways to fix them.

Possible Outcomes and Remedies

- Correct tonguing technique - Good job teaching this skill.
- "Thu" sound with no "pop" - Encourage the student to make sure the tongue hits the back of the teeth/gums.

- No Sound - The tongue is blocking the air stream. Describe to the student that the tongue needs to jump away from the teeth and go back down to the bottom of the mouth in order for air to flow.
- Buzz sound but no tongue used - Have the student make the “tew” sound without the instrument a few times. Once it seems natural, have the student recreate the feeling with the mouthpiece on the lips.

Imagery - **Spitting Seeds** - Tell the student that they are eating watermelon and trying to spit the seeds as far as they can. Get them to blow air after the tongue releases.

Notes - TONGUING ON BRASS

FLUTE

POSTURE

Flute players should sit forward in their seats with a tall but relaxed posture. It's important to keep the muscles in the shoulders and neck as relaxed as possible. The head can be slightly tilted to the right as long as the lip line is parallel to the body of the flute (fig. F1).



Bad Habits - Do not allow flute players to rest their right arm over the back of the chair (fig. F2). Watch out for students that tilt their head to the side (fig. F3). Beware of students that turn their head to the left shoulder instead of extending their arms to the right (fig. F4).



HAND POSITIONS

Right Hand - The right hand should be relaxed with the fingers curved as if holding a ball. The thumb should point forward (not in line with the body of the flute) and rest opposite the pointer and middle finger (fig. F5).



Left Hand - The left hand is not in an open position (fig. F6). The most important part of the left hand position is the shape of the base of first finger (fig. F7). **Critical** This is the part of the hand that supports the flute, **not the thumb**.



Bad Habits - A very common bad habit is “flat fingers” (fig. F8). Students should keep the cushioned tips of the fingers directly on the keys. Students with this bad habit will not be able to transition to an open holed flute down the road.



fig. F8

SUPPORT POINTS

There are four support points on the flute. The right pinkie, right thumb, base of the left pointer finger, and the bottom lip “snuggle spot”.

Snuggle Spot: Often young flutist don’t make enough contact between the embouchure plate and the skin under the lip. Teach this by placing the embouchure plate under the pink of the bottom lip, gently push the embouchure plate into the under lip skin, then wiggle it back and forth slightly. Now, release the pressure against face and check the alignment of the embouchure hole. That’s the snuggle spot (fig. F9).

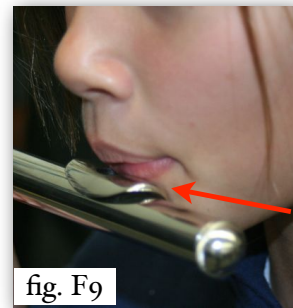


fig. F9

EMBOUCHURE (DVD)

1. To teach the embouchure, begin with the head joint alone. Have the student stand or sit tall with the head tall and eyes looking straight ahead. Without moving the head down, bring the lip plate to rest slightly under the bottom lip. Allow the lip to be loose. Move the head joint side to side,snuggling the lip plate into the skin below the pink part of the lip. Refer to this as the snuggle spot.
2. While holding the flute in the snuggle spot, have the student say the syllable “whee” while paying attention to the corners of the mouth. Teach the student to be able to form this shape without actually saying “whee” (fig. F10).

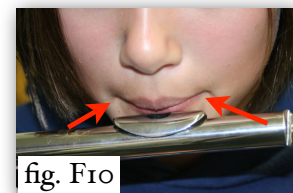


fig. F10



fig. F11

3. Have the student snuggle the flute, covering 1/4 to 1/3 of the embouchure hole with the bottom lip, make the “whee” lip shape, and then blow through the very center of the lips. It sometimes helps to start the air by using the “poo” or “too” syllable (fig. F11).

4. If the student doesn’t get a sound but the embouchure looks good, begin to focus on the air.

Sometimes the student is not focusing the air in the right direction and sometimes the

airstream is not small enough. This is a good time to get out a drinking straw for another demonstration.

Drinking Straw Demonstration (DVD) - Take a drinking straw and flatten out one end between your two fingers. Then, hold the flute head joint in front of you as if you were going to play. Next, take the rounded side of the straw and put it between your teeth. Finally, set the flattened end of the straw on the lip plate and blow through the straw. If you use the correct angle and cover the correct amount of embouchure hole, you will get a sound. This is a great way to illustrate to young flutists the amount of embouchure hole to cover and the direction that they need to blow to get the best sound.

TONGUING ON A FLUTE

Tonguing on the flute is very similar to that of the trumpet or trombone. (Refer to that section of this handbook to see the suggested method of instruction.) However, because the flute doesn't have the resistance the trumpet and trombone have, the flutist must position the tongue so that it completely blocks the air flow while tonguing, creating a more percussive attack. This can be achieved by tonguing slightly higher in the mouth. The trumpet/trombone recommended contact point for the tongue is behind the top teeth, where the teeth and gums meet. Flute players should start there and then gradually tongue higher, towards the top of their mouths in order to get a clearly articulated note.

Notes - Flute

CLARINET

POSTURE

The correct body position on the clarinet is the same as with the other instruments (fig. C1).

Bad Habits - The most common problems with clarinet posture are 1. The head is tilted down toward the mouthpiece, 2. The body is slouched, curving the back like the letter “C”, and 3. The student’s forearms are resting on their thighs (fig. C2). Don’t let these occur with your students. Most of the time that you see the student’s head tilted down, it is because they’ve gotten used to moving their head to the mouthpiece instead of moving the clarinet up to them. As a result, the student’s embouchure will usually be more similar to a saxophone player’s embouchure, where the mouthpiece enters at an 90 degree angle to the face (fig. C3).



HAND POSITIONS



Right Hand - Have the student stand up and hang the right arm down by her side. Then tell her to bend her elbow up without moving her hand. The right hand should be in a good natural position for holding the clarinet (fig. C4). The most important thing when placing the right hand is the thumb under the thumb rest (fig. C5). **Critical** The thumb rest must line up with the cuticle of the thumb nail, not over the knuckle or further towards the hand.

Left Hand - Many students have trouble using the register key when it's time to because they were incorrectly taught how to press the thumb key. Have the students turn the clarinet over so the



fig. C7

mouthpiece is facing away from them and the bell is on their stomach. Show them how to cover the thumb key so they can touch the register key with the tip of their finger. Tell them that it's just like using a remote for the TV. (Encourage them to practice covering and uncovering holes while watching TV. It will build muscle memory.) Next, have them curve their fingers to cover the holes, being careful not to touch the A flat key.

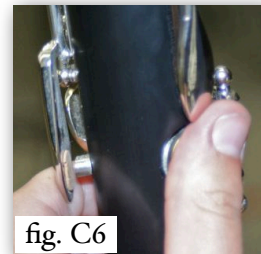


fig. C6

SUPPORT POINTS

The clarinet can be a difficult instrument for students to hold correctly. There are only two support points on the clarinet, the right thumb and the embouchure. Have your students practice holding the instrument with the right thumb and embouchure, while leaving their left hand in their lap. This is another “exercise” students can perform while watching T.V. The most common **Bad Habit** to look out for is students that support the clarinet with the side of their right index finger under the side keys.

One easy solution for those students that struggle to hold the instrument comfortably, is a neck strap. There are some neck straps on the market made just for clarinets. One neck strap that was recommended by Robert Spring of Arizona State University, is the Claricord.



EMBOUCHURE (DVD)

I recommend teaching the embouchure formation with the barrel, mouthpiece, and reed combination. Having the barrel attached makes it easier to hold and less painful to the ears. Begin by having your student stand and hold the mouthpiece combo straight out in front of their face. This will encourage them to hold their head straight. Tell them that you want them to keep their head completely still while they slowly move the mouthpiece towards their mouth. If their head dips down or moves towards the mouthpiece, stop them and have them restart.

Now, have the student open their jaw and say the letter “A”. Exaggerating the facial “A” syllable should cause the lower lip to flatten a bit and slightly cover the teeth. Once the student can do this, have them set the reed against the lip (again, without lowering the head).

Next, tell the student to close their jaw, contacting the top teeth on the top of the mouthpiece. Finally, have the student say the letter “Q”. The facial “Q” syllable brings the corners and top lip in and around the mouthpiece.

Practice these steps for a few minutes before trying to make a sound. When ready, have the student silently make the “A” shape, take a deep breath through the corners of their mouth, make the “Q” shape, and blow **at** the reed. I recommend telling kids to blow “at the reed” so that they don’t lower their head and try to blow down the clarinet.

The goal of this embouchure exercise is for the student to get a free-blowing, steady, squawk-like sound. The resulting pitch should be a top line F#. If the note is considerably lower, the student’s embouchure and/or air speed needs to be readdressed.

AIR SPEED

Critical The air speed of the clarinet should be fast and high pressured. This differs from the saxophone. If clarinetists aren’t forced to play with fast air early on, they will never be able to play in tune with the rest of the section.

GOING OVER BREAK

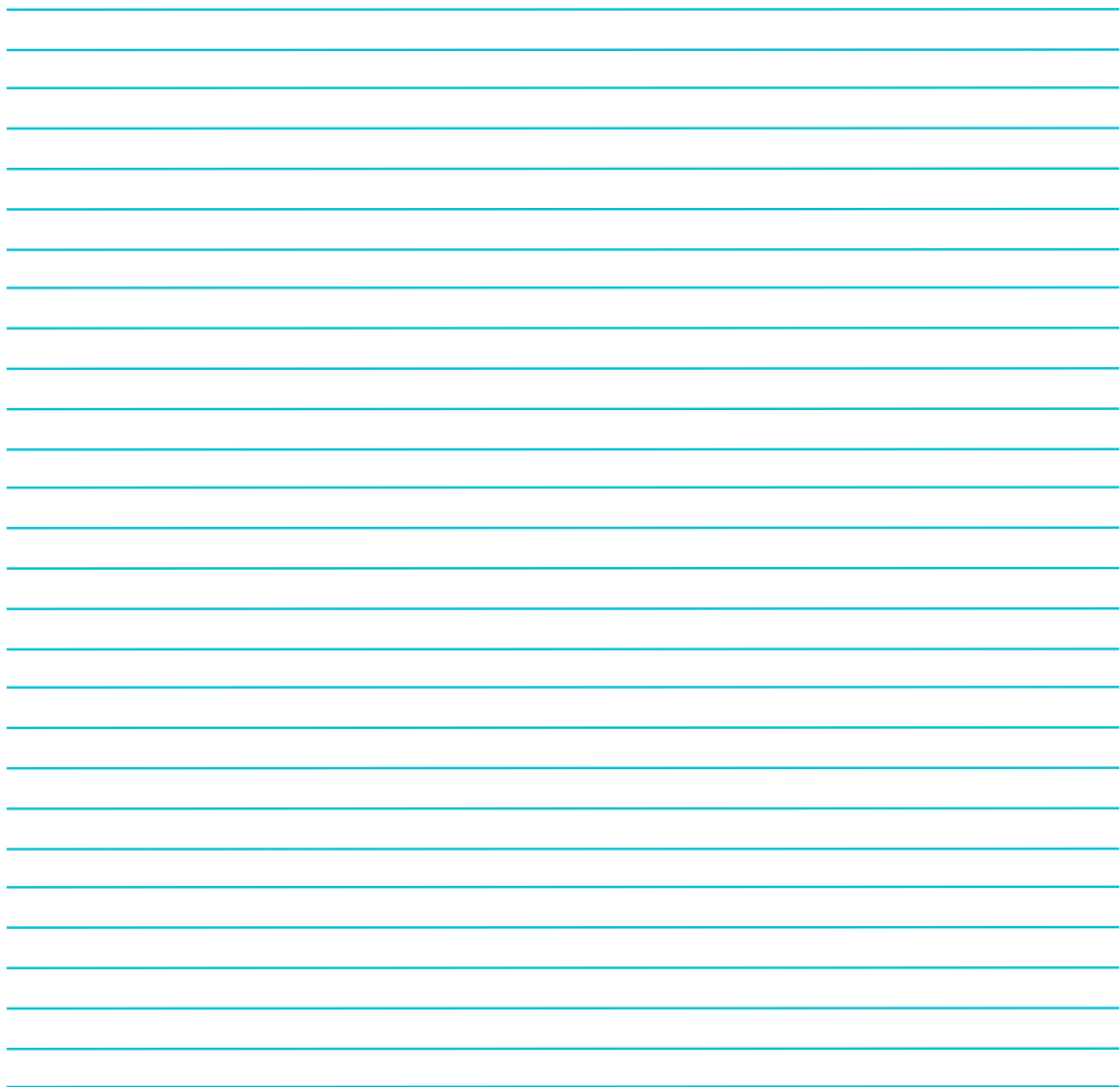
Some clarinet teachers encourage their students to practice crossing the break as soon as they have a good embouchure, steady tone, and can accurately cover the holes. Ray Chapa, a well known clarinet teacher and lecturer in Texas, teaches students to play over the break before they know what notes they are even playing. By using Suzuki-like methods, his students learn finger exercises in the lower, chalumeau, register and then practice those same finger patterns with the register key in the clarion register. By practicing playing in the clarion register, the students are strengthening their embouchure and technical ability.

In most beginning method books the clarion register is introduced in the last third of the book. However, I would encourage you to spark your students’ curiosity by showing and explaining the register key and break to all of your second year clarinet students. Many students enjoy the challenge of playing over the break and will learn it by themselves once you show them what it is. The easiest way to show students is for you to press the register key while they are playing a low C or G. If the correct note comes out, then you have done a good job shaping their embouchure. If not, then make sure the student is using the lips to add enough pressure around the mouthpiece.

TONGUING ON THE CLARINET

Tonguing on the clarinet requires the student to begin the note with the tip of the the tongue on the reed. Some teachers teach their students to contact the reed at the very tip, and others teach their student to contact the reed just under the tip. Tell your students that very little tongue is to touch the reed at all. I recommend using the syllable “tah” when teaching clarinetists to tongue. The “tah” syllable gets the tongue off the reed quickly and down to the bottom of the mouth.

Notes - Clarinet

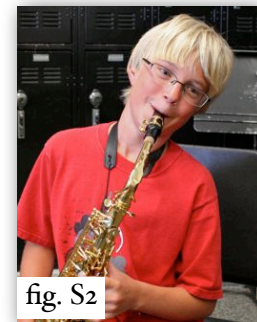


ALTO SAXOPHONE

POSTURE

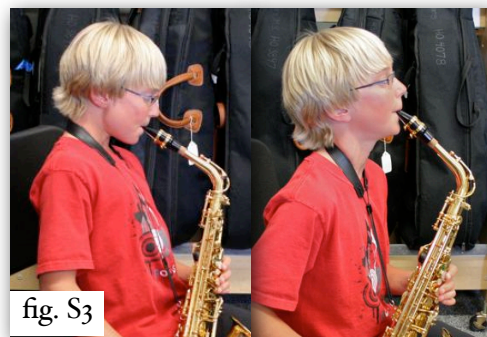


Saxophone players should sit forward and tall in their chairs (fig. S1). Because the saxophone is heavy, kids will tend to slouch or lean to the left in order to counter the weight, thus creating bad posture. It is critical that the student have a functioning neck strap in order to maintain good posture. **Bad Habits** - Students will often tilt their head to the left while playing the saxophone (fig. S2). Teach your students to instead turn the mouthpiece to the right so that the head can remain straight.



NECK STRAP SET-UP

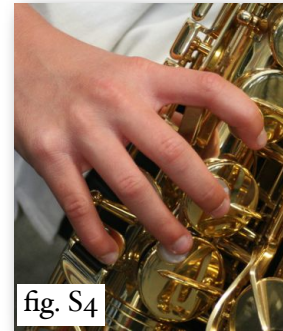
Students should put their neck strap on prior to putting together the instrument. Have your students raise their neck straps before hooking the sax on. It is much easier. I tell my students to sit tall and raise the neck strap until the hook is at their belly buttons. After hooking the sax on, teach them how to check if their strap is the correct height. Begin by having the student sit very tall in their chair with the sax down at their side. The next step is to slide the sax forward on the side of their leg until it is near the right knee (fig. S1). Then, without moving the head an inch, tilt the mouthpiece toward the body. If the mouthpiece hits below the mouth, raise the neck strap. If it hits the child above the mouth, then lower the strap. **Bad Habits** - Many young students would rather scrunch their neck down or tilt their head back than raise their neck straps (fig. S3).



HAND POSITIONS

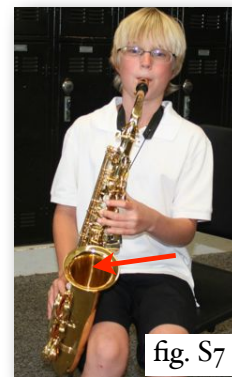
Right Hand - The right hand thumb tip should be under the thumb rest, not the base of the thumb. The fingers should be spread like large crab claws in order to avoid hitting the alternate F# key (fig. S4).

Left Hand - Critical The left thumb should rest at an angle so that the tip can still press the octave key when needed. Like the right hand fingers, the left hand fingers should be open to avoid hitting the palm keys.



TO THE SIDE OR IN THE FRONT

I strongly favor teaching young students to hold the sax on the side of their leg rather than between their legs. The side of the leg in combination with the neck strap helps support the weight of the instrument. Also, by sliding the sax forward, towards the knee, it improves the angle the mouthpiece enters the mouth. This extra support helps keep the weight off of the bottom lip thus allowing the reed to vibrate better and create a better tone.



EMBOUCHURE

One would assume that the saxophone embouchure is very similar to that of the clarinet. They are similar, however, there are some very distinct differences.

First of all, the saxophone mouthpiece enters the mouth at nearly a 80-90 degree angle to the body. The clarinet mouthpiece angle is more like a 30-45 degree angle to the body. So, on the saxophone, air is directed between the reed and tip of the mouthpiece, where as on the clarinet, air is directed more at the reed.

Secondly, the bottom lip of the sax embouchure can be less firm than the bottom lip of the clarinet embouchure. It should be like a pillow just slightly covering the bottom teeth. The top teeth should rest on the top of the mouthpiece approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch from the tip. **Critical** - the student should avoid letting the reed push down into the bottom lip.

Third, the lips on the sax embouchure should have an “O” shape. Pressure should be even around the mouthpiece like a rubber band. The clarinet embouchure is flatter.

When starting the embouchure, have the student form their mouth as if saying “O”, in a perfect circle. If there is no sound, have the student make the “circle smaller” and try again.

AIR SPEED

Critical - The air speed of the saxophone should be wide and warm. This differs from the clarinet. The clarinet uses a higher pressure, more concentrated air stream, like a spray can. Sax players should think about filling the entire instrument with air.

TONGUING ON A SAXOPHONE

When tonguing on a saxophone, the tongue should contact the reed where it naturally does when the student whispers the syllable “tah”. Students should not think of the tongue as a hammer, instead they should think of it as a valve that opens and closes the air column.

MAKING STUDENTS PLAY CLARINET FIRST BEFORE ALTO SAX

I have heard many teachers say that they only allow students to play saxophone if they have played clarinet first. I understand that you don't want 20 saxes in your beginning woodwinds class, but don't have the rule because you think clarinet will make the student a better saxophone player. Imagine that you wanted to play checkers but I told you that you had to learn chess first. It makes no sense. They are two different instruments and saxophone is the easier one. I understand recommending clarinet to a student that is very small and would have trouble holding the sax, or putting a limit on the number of saxophones that you are able to have in the class. But, if one of our goals as elementary music teachers is to make our students successful, shouldn't we allow kids to begin the easiest instrument if they are able to get one.

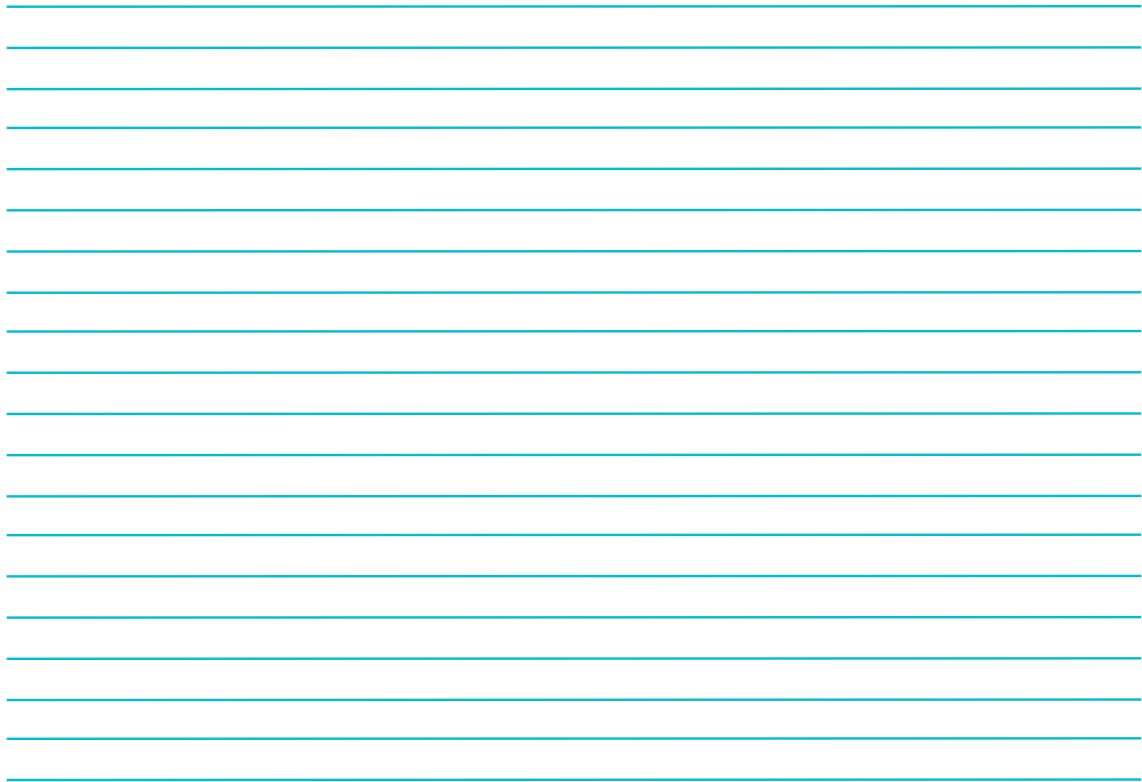
Why is sax easier? - First of all, to play sax you simply have to be able to reach the keys. You don't have to worry about air escaping underneath the finger tips like on the clarinet. Also, the octave key makes a lot more sense to a student than a register key. Finally, the sax embouchure is easier and more relaxed than the clarinet embouchure.

HOW MUCH AIR IS TOO MUCH AIR

As I mentioned earlier, the sax uses a slower and warmer air stream than the clarinet. Use the following exercise to check if the student is using too fast of an air stream.

1. Have the student play a second line G. Tell the student to keep this air speed the entire exercise.
2. Reach behind the sax and press the octave key for the student. The upper octave G should sound.
3. Then release the octave key. If the note does not return back to the lower G, tell the student to use slower air and repeat the exercise until the high G returns to the lower G when the octave key is released. That is the air speed the student should use all the time. Octave slurs are one of the best exercises for young sax players.

Notes - Saxophone



TRUMPET

POSTURE

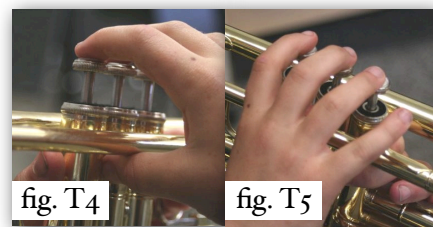
Trumpet players should sit forward in their seats with a tall but relaxed posture (fig. T1). It's important to keep the muscles in the shoulders and neck as relaxed as possible. The angle of the trumpet to the body will be determined by the teeth and lip shape of the student. Therefore, trumpet angles will vary from student to student.

Bad Habits - Discourage trumpet players from resting their elbows in their sides or on their legs. Combat this by raising the student's music stand and/or giving them frequent reminders. Also, look out for extremely high or low trumpet angles (fig. T2 and T3). Most likely the student is moving their neck, which is bad.



HAND POSITIONS

Right Hand - Begin by placing the thumb tip between the first and second valve casings, directly under the lead pipe. Curve the rest of the fingers, as if holding a baseball, and place the finger tips on the valves (fig. T4). The right pinkie should be placed **on top** of the pinkie ring (fig. T5). Tell your students that if they keep their pinkie on top of the ring, they will be able to move their fingers faster and more smoothly. The ring is only to be used if they need to hold the instrument up with one hand while they turn pages.



Left Hand - The left hand position can vary slightly from student to student depending on their hand size. The basic position should have the thumb placed behind the valve casings, the three fingers curved around the opposite side, and the pinkie resting naturally below (fig. T6). Advanced elementary students should place their ring finger in the tuning slide ring and



“kick” (extend) the slide on 1/3 and 1/2/3 valve combinations to lower the pitch.

EMBOUCHURE FORMATION

There are many methods to teaching embouchure formation for the trumpet. Unfortunately there is not one “magic method.” Some students will get the correct results from the first method you teach and others will not. It is important that you have a few tricks up your sleeves in order to get each student to a place where they have the fundamentals of a good trumpet embouchure. Those fundamentals are...

1. Generally have the mouthpiece split 50% on the top lip and 50% on the bottom lip.
2. A firm lip shape that will hold strong while air is forced through.
3. A space between the teeth for air to flow through.
4. **Critical** - a tight seal of the cheeks to the gums in order to avoid air pockets, “puffing cheeks” (fig. T7) **Bad Habit** - Students that are allowed to puff their cheeks will have a difficult time breaking that habit. Never allow students to puff their cheeks.



TEACHING THE EMBOUCHURE

Here are a few approaches to teaching the embouchure.

“M” Syllable

1. Have the student press their lips together as if saying the syllable “M”. Look for a straight line where the lips come together with very little of the pink part of the lips showing. Also, look to make sure the student maintains a firmness of the lips while shaping the “M” syllable (fig. T8).
2. Now, try to get the student to blow air through the very center of the lips while maintaining the firm “M” lip shape (they should not be making the “mmm” sound). If the student can do this, have the student increase the speed and amount of air they are blowing.
3. Take the mouthpiece and set it against the students lips with 50% on the top lip and 50% on the bottom lip (fig. T9). The student can now feel where the mouthpiece should contact the lips. Also, have the student put equal pressure on each lip. This will dictate at what angle they will play the trumpet. If possible,



have a couple of hand mirrors for the students to look at while forming their embouchure.

4. Have the student blow fast air through the “M” shape with the mouthpiece against the lips. It’s okay if the student doesn’t get a buzz sound right away. Encourage the student to blow faster air while at the same time firming the lips together. A buzz should eventually be produced.

Why it works - This method works because it is systematic. Simply asking the student to put the mouthpiece up to their mouth and blow might result in a buzz sound, but it won’t necessarily be correct. If the student continues to buzz the mouthpiece without the correct embouchure, they are forming very strong habits that will prevent them from being a successful trumpet player.

Notes - Trumpet

TROMBONE

POSTURE

Trombonists should sit tall and forward in their chairs (fig. Tb1). **Bad Habit** - Like the saxophone, the trombone is another instrument that will cause kids to want to turn their necks when they play (fig. Tb2).



fig. Tb2



fig. Tb3



fig. Tb4

Beginning trombonist will also tend to point their slides over their right knee so as to help them reach the further positions (fig. Tb3). Set your students up right by having them sit tall and straight and not letting them slouch (fig. Tb 4). Encourage them to sit as if the instrument was not even there.

Obviously, kids with shorter arms, might struggle reaching 6th and 7th position. There are a couple of options.

First, you can just ignore the pitch problems and let them reach as far as they can.

Second, show them how to move the slide out with just the finger tips (fig. Tb5), and third, you can encourage them to choose a different instrument. If the student really likes low instruments, you can encourage him or her to play the baritone. The switch from baritone back to trombone can be made quickly once the student is taller.



fig. Tb1

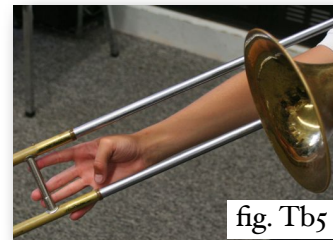


fig. Tb5

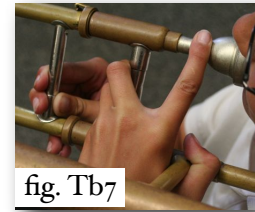
HAND POSITIONS

Right Hand - On trombone, the right hand (slide hand) is the most critical in terms of correct position. The slide is to be held between the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand (fig. Tb6). The fingers should pinch the slide not wrap around or grab it. While pinching the slide, the back of the right hand should face the director and the wrist should be loose and flexible.



fig. Tb6

Left Hand - Begin the left hand by making an “L” with the thumb and pointer finger. Place the thumb under the bell brace and the pointer finger up along the 1st brace or by the shank of the mouthpiece (if the student’s fingers are long enough). The other three fingers can wrap around the 1st brace (fig. Tb7). But, be careful not to put the fingers on the inner slide or they can get pinched.



EMBOUCHURE



The embouchure on the trombone can be taught the same way as the trumpet. The main differences would be more relaxed lip muscles and a wider space between the teeth. Also, while the trumpet mouthpiece is generally split 50% on the top lip and 50% on the bottom lip, trombone should be split 66% on the top lip and 33% on the bottom lip (fig. Tb 8). **Bad Habit** - Every cartoon that your students have ever seen with a trombone or tuba player in it



has shown them puffing their cheeks while playing. **Do not** allow your students to puff their cheeks while playing. If they start to puff their cheeks, tell them to “make the air from their lungs go straight into the mouthpiece without stopping in their cheeks,” or “keep your cheeks firm, against your gums and teeth, like you are eating sour candy.” If your student is very resistant, take the mouthpiece and trombone away and have them practice the straw exercise over and over until they get used to the feel of the air going straight into the straw without puffing out the cheeks. Tell them that they must practice in front of a mirror until they can buzz the mouthpiece without their cheeks puffing. It’s helpful to have some hand mirrors in your classroom for these instances.

EXERCISES

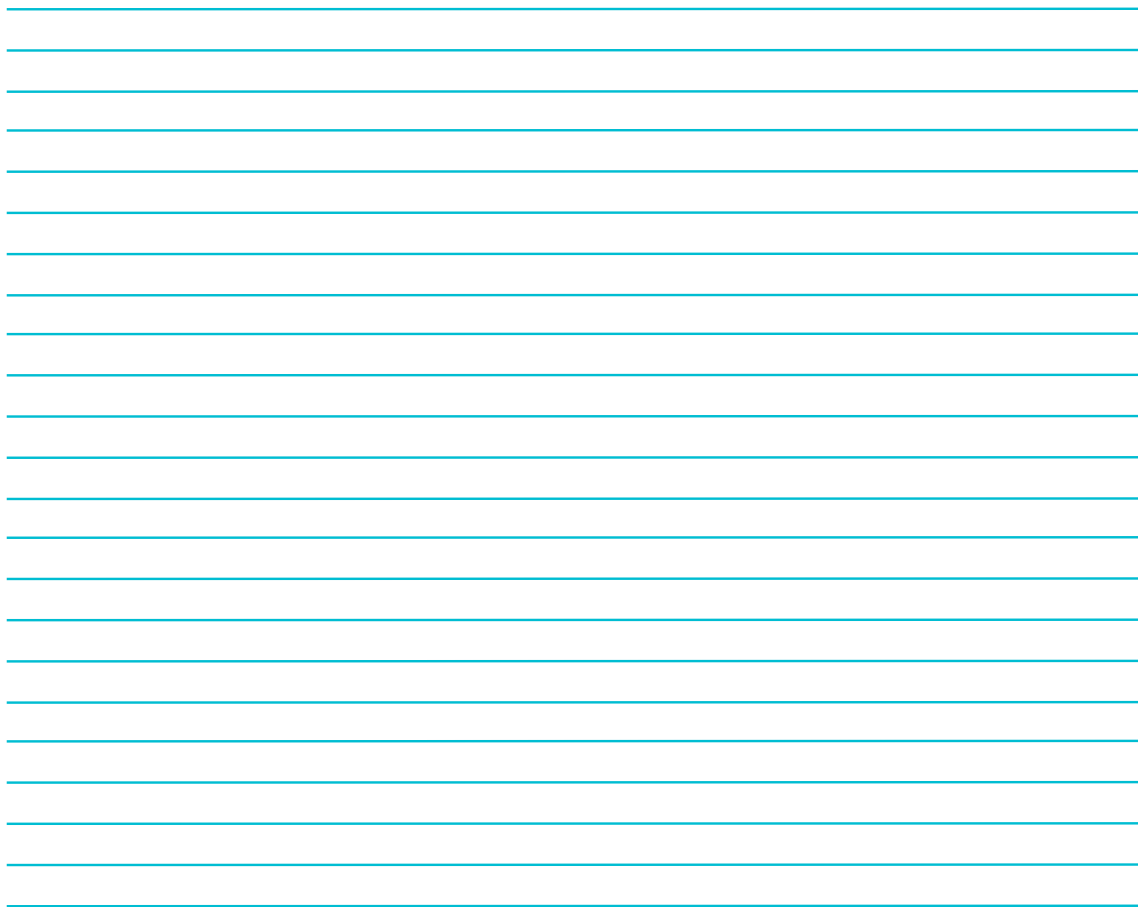
Mary Had a Little Lamb - A simple approach to teaching the positions is to use the tune Mary Had a Little Lamb. Once the students can play an F or Bb in 1st position, have them sing Mary Had a Little Lamb beginning on that first note (F or Bb). Then tell them that they are going to play it on their trombone by moving their slide out for the different notes. The goal is for them to use their ears to correctly move from 1st position to 3rd position and then to 5th position. Go back and forth, singing vs. playing, while trying to get each pitch

correct. Once they can play each note in tune, reveal to them that they are playing 1st, 3rd, and 5th position.

Next, start them in 2nd position, on a third space E, and repeat the process for positions 2, 4, and 6.

Snapping Positions - The first 4 positions that students will learn in the method book are usually 1st, 3rd, 4th, and 6th. You can easily make a game out of them by calling out a position and having them show you that position as fast as they can. Gradually get faster and try to trick them, they'll have more fun. You can even let them call out the positions for each other. While they are doing this, stress to them to "snap" to each position as fast as possible without going past the position and needing to come back to it.

Notes - Trombone



PROBLEM SOLVING MAPS

Use the following charts to help you assess different problems that may arise with each instrument. The common problems are outlined in black. Any block directly under that problem is a possible cause for that problem. Notice that some causes can lead to multiple problems.

FLUTE			
NO TONE / RUSHING AIR	SOME SOUND, MOSTLY AIR	HIGH-PITCHED "WHISTLE" (OVERTONE)	FLAT PITCH
Air is going across hole	Too large of an aperture	Too much air	Rolled in too far
Lower lip not on hole	"Splitting" the tone	Head joint rolled in too far	
Corners of lips are not pulled together		The aperture hole is covered too much	

CLARINET				
NO TONE / RUSHING AIR	SQUAWK, FLAT PITCH	SQUEAKS, HIGH SQUEAL	STOPPED OR INTENSE AIR	THIN, SHARP PITCH
Insufficient pressure against the reed			Too little reed in mouth	
Too much reed in mouth			Too much lip pressure	Tight, closed throat
The reed is too hard	Insufficient air speed	Clarinet angled too far from body	Stopped: The reed is too soft	The reed is too hard
	The reed is too soft		Intense air = the reed is too hard	

SAXOPHONE				
CHOKED SOUND	WOBBLY SOUND	ROUGH SQUAK	HARD TO BLOW / LEAK	WEAK AND NASALLY SOUND
Too much pressure from lower lip	Upper lip is touching mouthpiece instead of teeth	Too much mouthpiece in mouth	Poor pads and/or keys	Air stream is too slow
Too much mouthpiece in mouth		Reed is too stiff		
Reed is too thin, closed				

TRUMPET			
NO TONE / RUSHING AIR	AIRY TONE	TIGHT, THIN, PINCHED TONE	STOPPED (NO SOUND)
Too much pucker in lips ("oo" shape)			Too much mouthpiece pressure toward lips
Lips are not together		Tight, closed throat	
Dry lips / mouthpiece	Teeth are closed	Tense, excessively pursed lips (biting)	
Insufficient air speed			

TROMBONE			
PINCHED SOUND	FUZZY SOUND	DIFFICULTY WITH UPPER REGISTER	DIFFICULTY WITH LOWER REGISTER
Throat is closed	Aperture too large	Mouthpiece is too low	Mouthpiece is too high
Teeth are closed	Mouthpiece is pressed too hard on lips	Lips are too puckered	Lips are too tight
Insufficient air		Lips are too loose	Aperture is too small

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

TAKING ROLE

It is important that you take role each day. The school district wants to know how many students are participating in the music classes. This data is critical to the justification of funding elementary music in Long Beach.

The other main reason for taking role is to monitor your students' progress. If you have a student that is frequently absent, you need to contact the child's parent or classroom teacher to try and remedy the situation. It is in everyone's best interest that you address these issues as soon as possible.

One of the quickest ways to take role is to have assigned seating and a seating chart. This way you can quickly check off who is missing.

ENTERING THE CLASSROOM

Every elementary school music room is different. Many schools use the auditorium stage for rehearsal, others have classrooms or portable rooms. Whatever your classroom situation, you need to establish a procedure for your students to follow upon entering the room. Consider the following points when designing your own procedure.

1. What type of environment do you want to work in? Kids can adapt to and be comfortable in very structured classrooms as well as more independent classrooms. Whatever type of classroom you want to have, establish it from day one. Teachers that decide to establish structure in a class that was originally unstructured will have a year long struggle.
2. Start on time. Don't wait for students that arrive late from their regular class. You want the students to know that your class is just as important to you as their regular class is to their regular teacher. Late students should be instructed to come in quickly and quietly.
3. Maximize music time. Design a procedure that gets the instruments out and assembled as quickly as possible. Here are a list of a few strategies you can try.
 - I. Instruct sax and clarinet players to come in and soak their reeds in their mouths while they assemble their instruments. Sax players should begin by putting on their neck straps.

- II. Have all of the wind students assemble their instruments, without mouthpieces, as soon as they enter the class. This way you control when the students begin warming up.
- 4. **Bad Habit** - Do not encourage sax and clarinet players to leave their reeds on their mouthpieces between practice sessions. Reeds need to dry out to avoid growing mold. Part of playing the sax and clarinet is learning to put on reeds quickly.

Notes

SHOWING UP WITHOUT AN INSTRUMENT

Students that forget their instrument should still attend music class. These students need to watch the lesson in order to have a chance at success the following week. When students are sent back to class for forgetting their instrument, there can be negative results for your music program. Some of these results are listed below.

1. You will have to re-teach what the student missed and possibly more. Students that miss a lesson not only lose out on the new material, but also have a harder time remembering content from the previous week.
2. Students will forget their instrument on purpose. This happens when students feel that they are missing out on something “better” in their regular class, like P.E., art, a special project, recess, etc. By having the students attend music class, you are teaching them the importance of upholding a commitment.

Administrators, classroom teachers, and parents might view the music program as insignificant or expendable. Imagine if a student showed up to a math lesson about measuring angles without a protractor. Would the classroom teacher tell the student to sit in the hall?

Of course not, they would expect the student to pay attention because the lesson is important. If you dismiss students from lessons for forgetting their instrument, what you are saying about your lessons? If you give the impression that your classes are insignificant, what's to keep others from feeling the same way.

Notes

DEALING WITH CLASSROOM TEACHERS

On occasion, you may run into a classroom teacher that doesn't particularly enjoy sending his or her students to music. Often, these feelings stem from the pressure of raising test scores. Teachers are expected to show improved test scores from year to year regardless of the level of students they happen to teach. Plan a time to meet with the teacher to discuss your concerns. Explain to them that you take your teaching as seriously as they do and that you feel each student deserves a well rounded education. If the teacher is still uncooperative, it is probably best to discuss the conflict with the school principal.

Other times, you will encounter teachers that habitually send their students to music class late. Teachers often lose track of time and don't realize it until one of the students speaks up. Others, don't send their students to music until the exact time your class is scheduled to begin. By the time the students grab their instruments and books and walk to your class, they are 5 minutes late. Send a polite note asking the teacher to send his or her students so that they arrive at the start time. Again, meet with the teacher first. If the tardiness continues, speak to the principal.

DEALING WITH BROKEN INSTRUMENTS

Because you have limited time with each class of students, do not spend a great deal of time trying to fix a broken instrument. Instead, have the student follow along and do the fingerings. After class, send the student home with a copy of this form.

REQUEST FOR INSTRUMENT SERVICE

Students - Please put this form in your homework folder and give it to your parents when you get home.

To the Parent/Guardian of _____,

Your child's instrument is not working correctly. Please take it to a repair shop immediately. Bring this form along with you to give to the technician.

- Check/replace leaking pad(s)
- Replace cork(s)
- Fix bent key(s)/bar(s)
- Free stuck slide(s)
- Repair sticking valve(s)
- Remove dent(s)
- Check/lubricate slide
- Repair damaged spring(s)
- Other _____

For information on common maintenance and care, check your student's method book or visit www.musiccenters.com/care.html

CONCERT GUIDE

THE FIRST CONCERT

The goal of the first concert is provide your students with a chance to show their families what they have learned during the first part of the year and to motivate your students to practice. Don't be overly concerned with how the students sound. At this point, you should be more concerned with how they are creating their sound, holding their instrument, sitting while playing, and focusing on the music.

HINTS FOR A GREAT CONCERT

1. When you send home a concert information flier, inform the parents about the importance of attending the concert and the role live performance has in learning an instrument. **Critical** - Be sure to also include a list of the songs/exercises that the children will be performing. This way, the parents can support their child's preparation for the concert.
2. Make sure your concert is advertised in the PTA newsletter. It's a good way to keep your program visible.
3. Encourage kids to prepare solos. This is a great way to motivate students. By choosing a handful of students to play solos, you are rewarding them for their hard work while also showing the rest of your students, and their parents, what is possible when regular practice and hard work are put in.
4. **Critical** - Make concert programs. In order to keep your students in music, you want them to have fond memories of their concerts. Kids get so excited just seeing their name on a piece of colored paper.
5. Make sure your audience has a place to sit. If there is standing room only, schedule your concert differently. Consider having your string classes at one time and your winds later in the evening. No parent wants to stand in the back.
6. During the concert, tell the audience why you are playing a particular song/exercise. What are the children learning from this song? What skills are involved in performing this song? Better yet, have individual students announce the songs and additional information. The students will have a great sense of pride doing this and the parents will be super impressed.

7. Plan for a photo opportunity. At the end of each group's performance, have each row of students stand up so that the parents can get a good picture of their child. Taking a minute to do this shows the parents that you care about their desire to get that great picture of their child on stage with their instrument. You'll win many parents' hearts with this simple gesture.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT MY BEGINNERS TO DO ?

First of all, realize that the parents of your beginners aren't expecting their child to sound like a pro at the first concert. It's very likely that you've only had 8 to 10 meetings. But, here is a list of things that parents can and should witness at the first concert.

Correct posture – Have your students sit with good posture from the very first day.

Correct hand and body playing positions – Students should be able to adjust their instruments, neck straps, mouthpieces, music stands, etc. so that their body is tall, straight, and relaxed while playing.

Focus and Discipline – The students should be focused on making music while on stage. Teach the students proper concert etiquette.

Music Making – Pick 4 or 5 songs/exercises that cover the first part of the year. Don't be afraid to play songs with 2 or 3 different notes. If they are performed with focus, discipline, and good playing position, your audience will be happy.

FINAL CONCERT

The main goal of the final concert is to show your audience the progress the students have made since the first concert. It's important that the songs are more advanced and that the technique and tone of the group has improved.

ADDITIONAL HINTS FOR MAKING YOUR FINAL CONCERT GREAT

1. Recognize your outgoing students. At some point in the concert, thank the students for their hard work and commitment during the past year or years. Tell the audience how much you would like for them to continue their music education in middle school.
2. Thank the parents in the audience for supporting their child's music education and recognizing the importance of music and the arts.
3. Recognize the administrators for their attendance and/or support throughout the year.
4. Thank the teachers for sending their students to you each week for music lessons. Many teachers have a difficult time sending their students out of the class due to the tremendous pressure put on them to raise standardized test scores.

Notes - Concerts
