BEGINNING CLARINET
Embrace the Challenge!
TMEA - FEBRUARY 16, 2019

Philosophy of Beginning Band

No Bad Habits!
The most important goals of beginning band
1. Kids have a great attitude about band
2. A great sound.
3. A great sound.
4. A great sound.
5. Everything else.

Clear and consistent articulation
Adequate dexterity on the instrument
Solid rhythmic foundation
Understanding of music notation
Ability to sightread

Philosophy of Pacing

Go as slow as possible first semester,
as fast as possible second semester.

Teach to the bottom from August - Thanksgiving
Teach to the middle from December - Spring Break
Teach to the top from Spring Break - End of year

Supplies to Order

• Mirrors
• Mouthpiece patches
• Pencil grips
• Band-aids
• Avery dots
• Silver/black sharpie
  for labeling reed guards
Reed Guards
Number reed guards to help students rotate. Students always need 4 good reeds.

The Milkshake Face
10 Year Old Beginner- 1st try

Normal Face
2nd Try at Milkshake Face
3rd try At Milkshake Face
Putting on the Reed

Flat Side Against Mouthpiece

Lining It Up

Thin line of black
Thin line of reed
Ligature screws go on the right
First Sounds

Remember the milkshake face!

3 Steps - No Instrument

Open  Click  Milkshake

With Mouthpiece & Barrel

Open  Click  Milkshake

Blow!
Day 1 – Get a sound
Day 2 – Start working on getting up to pitch
Let’s talk about squeaks...

Checking Individuals
I hold barrel

Up to Pitch
Anchor
Head up
Think EEE
Angle of the mp/bar (keep in)
Direction of air (next slide)
**Up to Pitch**

- Air across reed
- Fast, cold air
- Mirror up high
  Stands up high

**Look for Muscles**

**Mouthpiece Only**

Why? It tells you more than Mouthpiece/Barrel

Reminders:
1. Mouthpieces are expensive!
2. Be sure they keep the angle the same
3. Pitch should be between a C/C#
4. If they are low, see this podcast for how to fix: [http://crossingthebreak.com/playing-clarinet-up-to-pitch/](http://crossingthebreak.com/playing-clarinet-up-to-pitch/)
5. Make a big deal about being up to pitch. Celebrate!
“Earning” the instrument

90% rule - 90% of the students can demonstrate 90% mastery, 90% of the time
Sometimes 80%

I have the class “earn” their UPPER joint ONLY by everyone being up to pitch on mp/barrel (not mouthpiece – we’re still working on that.)

Lots of I Play, You Play

This is when the kids start taking instruments home

MUST use a mirror 100% of the time (hold or on stand)

Resistance is tripled – whole new feeling

GFEDC & Left Hand Position

Finger Drills

Start with fingers only – no playing
Thumb (next slide)
Pads of fingers (not tips)
Pinky on C# key (Avery dot/touch the dot)

Use finger ‘number’ Open, thumb, 1, 2, 3 and note names GFEDC interchangeably
Three possible thumb positions:

- Tone hole only (thumb barely touches register key)
- Thumb plays register key only (still hovers right above tone hole)
- Thumb covers tone hole and pushes register key at the same time

Simplified:
The thumb ALWAYS touches register key.

Reading Music & Note Name Games

Yes, I teach theory!
Note name games, races
Rhythm grids (daily) & games
I’m focusing on clarinet in this clinic, but I absolutely commit class time to theory and reading!
When it’s time to read music, they’re prepared.

FREE - https://goo.gl/aoDV9A
I wait a long time to teach tonguing in order to let embouchure muscles get as strong as possible.

Use a signal for tonguing. If out of rhythm, they can't 'prep.' This helps keep air flowing. Fast tonguing helps with this also.

Start tonguing on MP/Barrel (later MP only) to monitor pitch.

Compare to talking, articulating
Top top of the tongue to the tip of the reed
One taste bud
Snake tongue
Tinkerbell
Hot stove
A picture not a video

Rolling to A

Wrong
Correct
The Trick

Red tarnish on my A key from where I touched it

Earning the Bottom Joint

Perform Waterfall GFEDC slurred 90% rule - INDIVIDUAL

Assembly

Bridge Key
**Right Hand Position**

Bandaid shows them where contact should be made – 1 day only

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**Bottom Joint**

They should still be playing on upper joint only for most of class!

- Lots and lots and LOTS of I Play, You Play
- Right hand descending by rote (on warm-up later)
  - Watch their posture/head position
  - Don’t let them look down
  - Walk behind and check thumbs

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**Bb, A, G – Right Hand Position**

Why is that 6th finger is so tricky?

Feel the bottom of the hole

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**Earning the bell**

Perform Lower Waterfall

C Bb A G F E

90% rule – INDIVIDUAL

There is NO rush to add the bell!

It barely affect the instrument until low E. Make them work!

It will pay off when they start crossing the break.
Starting in the Book

I try to teach everything before they get to it in the book. The book is ‘supplemental’ to my teaching. I love it for sightreading, fun songs, motivation and review.

The First Warm-Up

All 4 warmups FREE at: https://goo.gl/aoDV9A

The Chromatic Scale

Naming Pinky Keys

clarity, consistency, naming out loud, enharmonics
FREE - https://goo.gl/aoDV9A
More ‘rolling to A’ lines
More jumps
More low notes

Crossing The Break
All the hard work should already be done!

Starting Scales

Scale Nicknames
The Second Warm-Up

All 4 warmups FREE at: https://goo.gl/aoDV9A

Building From a Great Foundation

Episodes 41-46 Finishing Strong in Beginning Clarinet Class
41 Beginning Spring Warm-up
42 Multi-Octave Scales and Chromatic
43 Differentiation in Beginning Band
44 Teaching Band Through Games!
45 Rhythm Tips for Maturing Beginners
46 Finishing This Year and Planning for Next Year

Episodes 21-26 - Intermediate Clarinets
21 Tone (& Tuning)
22 Tonguing
23 Increasing Range
24 Scales (Chromatic & Fingering patterns)
25 Warm-ups & Alternate Fingerings
26 Practice Tools/Preparing for Auditions

Continued Support

http://bit.ly/Facebook-CrossingTheBreak
https://www.facebook.com/groups/beginningbandengagement/

Thank You!