

Essentials of Clarinet Pedagogy The First Three Years

The Embouchure and Tone Production

Virtual Lecture Presentation
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DEFINING THE EMOUCHURE

What is the definition of embouchure?

- The embouchure refers to the position and use of the lips, cheeks, chin, and jaw (external), and the teeth, tongue, hard/soft palates, and throat (internal) when playing a wind instrument.

What is the purpose of the embouchure?

- The embouchure has one purpose which is to provide the means that will produce a beautiful clarinet tone. There are two parts to the clarinet embouchure that are equally important, the external and the internal. The purpose of the external embouchure is to seal the air and allow the reed to vibrate in a free, but controlled state. The purpose of the internal embouchure is to channel the air in a way that allows the wind to move fast from the lungs past the reed. Oftentimes, students focus on creating an effective external embouchure without enough consideration on the internal embouchure. The proper external and internal embouchure will promote optimum reed vibration and create a rich, musical tone through all the registers.

All of the embouchure exercises below are for a single lip with the top teeth on the mouthpiece versus a double lip embouchure where the top teeth are lifted off the mouthpiece. Single lip embouchure is more widely taught in the United States. I have found that having the top teeth on the mouthpiece gives the student more stability with their embouchure when playing in a high school marching band. The problem with playing single lip is that players tend to bite or clamp on the mouthpiece with their jaw. By lifting the teeth for double lip playing, it relieves the jaw pressure. The best solution is for single lip players to engage their lip muscles more as if playing double lip. The ideal embouchure position for single lip players is to keep the top teeth on the mouthpiece, the jaw dropped in a stable, open position, the lip muscles focused inward towards the mouthpiece, and the chin flat and pushing down.

EXTERNAL EMOUCHURE PARTS, PURPOSE, PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS

Lip Muscle

There are three parts of the lips to consider when referring to embouchure: upper lip, lower lip, and corners. However, these are all part of one lip muscle called *orbicularis oris*. It is a circular muscle that surrounds the aperture of the mouth and controls how we shape our mouth. The purpose of this muscle is to seal the air and to allow the reed to vibrate. The ideal embouchure is one where all parts of the lip come in to create a small aperture. Since lips vary in size and thickness, each student will have to find the best possible lip position. It is best to keep the lips snug against your front teeth and not reach out to the mouthpiece. Students should be able to form the embouchure without the mouthpiece present.

One problem that often occurs is that the muscles are too loose and not engaged. This causes altissimo notes to not speak, and pitch to be flat and not vibrant. The opposite problem also occurs where the upper lip and lower lip are pinching the mouthpiece. This causes biting, squeaks, air leaks out of the corners of the mouth, and the pitch is sharp.

Solution #1: Lip Muscle Awareness & Strengthening Exercises

1. Upper Lip

- a. Slightly open your mouth and put your thumb on the bottom of your top, front teeth
- b. Keeping your thumb on your top teeth, say “OO”
- c. Notice that when you say that, it activates the sides of your upper lip rather than the middle of your upper lip; also the corners of your mouth move in and the chin gets flat and pushes down

2. Lower Lip

- a. For a flat lower lip, rub the tip of your index finger across the lower lip as if you're using a lip moisturizer
- b. Notice how your lip curls over your bottom teeth and your chin goes flat and the chin flattens

3. Corners: to strength the corners of the mouth, try an exercise I call “Pinky Pushes”

Guy and Paglialonga both recommend The Facial-Flex Device to strengthen the corners of the mouth. This exercise can be used as a substitution for the device.

- a. Hold out your hands in front of your face with the palms facing towards you
- b. Make a fist with both hands
- c. Lift both pinkies up (they can be straight or slightly bent)
- d. Slightly open your mouth
- e. Put the pinkies in your mouth against the corners of your mouth
- f. Gently push your fingers towards the corners, creating a resistance.
- g. Squeeze the corners of your mouth into the center of your mouth and back to a resting state, feeling the gentle tug with your fingers
- h. Repeat the exercise several times. I've done this exercise two ways 1) the upper/lower lip muscles are engaged both going forward and going back; 2) the muscles are only engaged when pushing in; both seem to be effective
- i. Rest between several repetitions to allow oxygen to circulate in your muscles

Solution #2: OO-EE Embouchure Strengthening Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to strengthen all the muscles by keeping them engaged and pressed to your facial structure. It is important to only do a couple repetitions, then pause to allow the embouchure to rest. Tell the student that this exercise does not depict how we play, but is merely a training exercise.

1. Say “OO” and tighten all the embouchure muscles; keep lips tight against your teeth, corners in and chin flat

2. Keep the muscles tight as you slowly move your mouth back to a smile position and say "EE" (Make sure the student knows that as clarinet players we never play with a smile position.)
3. Repeat only a couple of times keeping muscles tight as you go from one position to the next, then rest

Solution #3: Milkshake Straws Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to bring in corners, ease the upper and lower lips from squeezing, and reduce puffy cheeks. This exercise is best with a large drinking straw, but is also effective with a regular drinking straw.

1. Put one end of the straw in your mouth
2. Seal the other end of the straw with your finger
3. Close your mouth around the straw and suck in as if drinking a thick milkshake
4. Remove your finger; you should hear a pop sound
5. Repeat this exercise several times: notice how the corners of your mouth are in and the cheeks don't puff out; sometimes students have the tendency to extending lips forward on the straw, this should be avoided if possible
6. Next, do the same exercise blowing out instead of in; notice the shape of your mouth is the same as when you were sucking in through the straw
7. Repeat the exercise using mouthpiece and barrel with the reed in place
8. Cover the end barrel with with your hand
9. Sucking in and release your hand from the end of the barrel
10. Continue to suck in and then blow air through the mouthpiece making a sound

Solution #4: Building Muscles at the Center of the Lips Exercise (Embouchure Building for Clarinets, pages 18-19)

1. Crimp one end of a narrow-bore soda straw instead of a large drinking straw. Attach the two straws together, forming one long straw. Take about ½ inch of straw in the mouth and suck through it like sucking a milkshake
2. Blow through the straw and keep the lips in the same position as when sucking in
3. Inhale through the straw again, and this time pull the straw out quickly while continuing to exhale. Notice the small hole created where the lips come together
4. Exhale another breath without the straw while maintaining the same small hole
5. Apply this technique to the mouthpiece. Inhale through the straw then play a two measure passage

Solution #5: Double Lip Exercise

1. Form the embouchure the same as before, but without the top teeth touching the mouthpiece. This requires the lips to be more engaged
2. Play short lyrical passages in chalumeau and clarion registers
3. Notice how more active and engaged the lips have to be and how less active the jaw pressure is becoming; also listen to changes in the tone production; the tone tends to be darker and the changing intervals tend to be smoother due to less jaw pressure

4. Play the same passages with the top teeth touching the mouthpiece (single lip), but engage the lip muscles the same as playing double lip

Cheek Muscles

The cheek muscles should not puff out when making a sound on the soprano clarinet. Some players do allow air in their cheeks when playing larger instruments such as the bass clarinet and contra bass clarinet. However, it is important when playing smaller clarinets that the cheek muscles do not relax in order to channel the air higher in your mouth.

Solution #1: Balloon Exercise with Milkshake Straw

The purpose of this exercise is to engage the embouchure muscles, reduce puffy cheeks, instill proper tongue placement, and promote fast, focused air. Materials needed are a balloon and a mirror.

Supplies needed: balloon, straw, rubberband

1. Secure the balloon on the end of the straw with a rubber band
2. Blow the balloon only until the balloon fills without enlarging
3. Next, take a deeper breath, and blow past that point to make the balloon get bigger
4. Notice how this takes faster air and you have to push from your ab muscles
5. Pinch the balloon with your fingers, so the air doesn't blow back at you
6. Check the teeth/jaw placement to make sure that the teeth are not clamping and that the jaw is in the open position
7. If the cheeks are puffing out, check the tongue position raising it to the top teeth; this helps to channel the air above the cheeks
8. Repeat the exercise until the cheeks no longer puff out

Solution #2: Balloon Exercise without Milkshake Straw

1. Put the opening of a balloon in your mouth; for stability, hold it with your fingers, not your teeth
2. Repeat the same exercise as above

Solution #3: Balloon Exercise with Mouthpiece and Barrel

1. Assemble the mouthpiece and barrel
2. Assemble the reed and ligature on the mouthpiece
3. Secure the balloon on the end of barrel
4. Repeat the exercise from Solution #1

Chin Muscles

A common saying for the chin is that you want a "flat chin." Of course, your chin won't be perfectly flat, but the term refers to the fact that we want the muscle to be engaged and pointed down. It is important that all the muscles around the mouth are engaged, and firmly on your facial structure, keeping the corners forward and the jaw in the opened position. Robert Marcellus described these muscles as a triangle where the three points are the two corners of your mouth and the point of your chin. (Embouchure Building, page 25)

Solution: Pointy Chin Exercise

1. Have student point their index finger up and place it on their chin
2. Say “OO” and notice how the chin goes flat and points down
3. Practice this in front of a mirror

Jaw

The purpose is to provide support under the lower lip. When lowering the jaw, it can be beneficial to line up the top and bottom teeth. This may involve moving the jaw forward.

Problems: A word of caution when telling young students to move their jaw forward because they can inadvertently move it too forward into an unnatural position. Another problem is by closing the jaw on the mouthpiece which presses the reed to the mouthpiece facing. This biting action causes pitch problems (usually sharp), squeaking, and doesn't allow the facial muscles to properly be engaged.

Solution #1: Two Step Exercise (from The Educator's Guide, p. 4-5)

1. Drop the jaw, creating an opening called the aperture (about the width of your finger)
2. Insert the mouthpiece/reed wedge into the opening created by the jaw and lips, without moving the jaw.

Solution #2: No-bite trainer (from Clarinet Secrets, p. 123)

1. Cut small rectangular or half-moon shaped pieces of a thick mouthpiece patch
2. Place the pieces on either side of the reed to create an elevated surface that is even with the reed
3. This solves the problem of biting and should only be used temporarily

INTERNAL EMOUCHURE
PARTS, PURPOSE, PROBLEMS, SOLUTIONS

Teeth

Single lip embouchure will have the top teeth on the mouthpiece and the bottom teeth have the lower lip between the teeth and the reed. A problem many students have is that they either put too much mouthpiece in their mouth (less common), or that they put too little mouthpiece in their mouth (more common). Phillip Paglialonga stated in his book “Squeak Big” that the lower lip placement, called the pressure point or contact point, should be placed just above where the reed and mouthpiece separate, called the Fulcrum Point.

Solution #1: Fulcrum Point Exercise (Squeak Big, page 10)

Even though this is an exercise involving the lower lip, it affects where the top and lower teeth are placed.

1. Slip a piece of paper between the reed and mouthpiece until it stops. This is where the reed and mouthpiece connect, called the fulcrum point.

2. Draw a line with a pencil across the reed where the paper stopped
3. Remove the paper
4. Line up the lower lip across that line, form the embouchure and blow

Solution Exercise #2: Upper-teeth Position Trainer (Clarinet Secrets, page 123)

1. Cut a thick mouthpiece patch in half widthwise
2. Secure the top half of the patch to the mouthpiece just under the tip
3. The teeth with rest on the mouthpiece just past the patch
4. This prevents the student from putting too much or too little mouthpiece in their mouth

Tongue

The purpose of the tongue is to guide the air through the mouth. I like to think that it acts as a rudder on a boat. Just as the rudder is the primary control surface to steer a boat, the tongue is the primary control surface to steer the air or “wind.” It’s position and shape determines the air speed and direction, thus contributing to the timber and musical tone. When the tongue is placed correctly and the soft palate is raised, the two affect what is called “voicing.” Voicing involves raising both the tongue and the soft palate which is discussed in the next section.

In Larry Guy’s book Embouchure building, he mentions that Alan Balter quoted Marcellus saying, “The best vowel to think of while you play is the umlaut Ü.” Distinguished modern pedagogue Larry Guy best described the vowel sound best by breaking it down to two parts: the French “tu” and the German umlaut “ü,” which is “OO” and “EE” combined. Basically, “OO” creates the lip position and “EE” creates the tongue position. Marcellus believed that the tongue should be in the talking part of the mouth and used the syllable “EH” as a common tongue placement in the mouth. He stated that, “if the tongue is dropped too low in the oral cavity, which is synonymous with an open throat, the wind slows down.” In the high register, he preferred Alexandre Selmer’s suggestion of using the syllable “EE” in the upper register.

Problems that result in poor tongue placement are flat throat tones, grunts at the beginning of notes in the upper clarion register, altissimo notes won’t speak. As a result of improper tongue placement, students tend to bite to control the response in the altissimo register rather than raising the back of the tongue.

Solution #1: Vowel Exercise (Educator’s Guide, page 3-4)

The sides of the tongue should always be in contact with the upper back molars. Explore different tongue positions in order to find the correct tongue position.

1. Say the vowels A-E-I-O-U, slowly moving from one vowel sound to the next. Notice the different positions of the tongue.
2. Say the words “key” or “cake.” This requires lifting the tongue up and back in the mouth with the middle of the tongue arched.
3. Say the word “kick” and hold the “k” position at the end of the word.

Solution #2: OO-EE Lips-Tongue Placement Exercise (This is different from the OO-EE Embouchure Strengthening Exercise.)

1. Slightly open your jaw and form your lip muscles to say "OO"
2. Relax your mouth and repeat several times without changing the jaw position
3. Next, insert a drinking straw in your mouth and hold it at the same angle as the clarinet with the top teeth lightly on the straw
4. Seal the air around the straw and say "OO"
5. Keep the muscles engaged and pull the straw out
6. Relax your mouth and repeat the exercise
7. Next, apply the exercise using the mouthpiece and barrel. With the mouthpiece in your mouth, say "OO" to form the lips around the mouthpiece
8. Next say "EE" to place the tongue high in the mouth so that it touches the top back teeth (Note that if you're teaching this to a beginner that is in sixth grade, they are usually 12 years old and may not have their "12 year molars" in yet)
9. Keeping the embouchure in position, blow air through the mouthpiece, then pull the mouthpiece out while still blowing air. If the student is clamping with the jaw, this will be difficult
10. Turn on a tuner and blow cold, fast air to make a sound; it should show a concert F#
11. Practice this several times in front of a mirror

Solution #3 Walking Down and Walking Up

1. Starting on open G, walk down the clarinet to low E without dropping the tongue
2. While keeping the "OO" external embouchure and the "EE" internal embouchure, add the register key to the low E to play a B, and walk up to high C



Solution #4 Three Registers Exercise-Fred Ormand Method (Embouchure Building, pages 58-59)

This exercise helps to set the middle of the tongue to the back of the mouth.

1. Say "EE" to set the middle of the tongue high in the mouth
2. Add a whispered "H" or a very gentle "ha-a-a-a" and shift to a "he-e-e-e" position
3. Repeat several times
4. Repeat with the mouthpiece inserted
5. After saying "he-e-e-e" play a lower C
6. While playing that note, the instructor should press the register key to play the clarion note at an unexpected time
7. Student should keep blowing while the instructor adds the Ab throat tone key to play the altissimo note

Solution #4 C to G Descending and Ascending

1. Play lower C and add register key
2. Walk the fingers down to B without lowering the tongue or soft palate
3. Play low C, add register key and walk fingers up to high C



Solution #4: Whistling Tongue Placement Exercise

Whistling puts many parts of our mouth together to form the perfect embouchure: jaw is open and slightly forward, the corners of the mouth are drawn in, the tongue is lifted to the top teeth and the soft palate is raised. Bringing all of these together through whistling is like “the perfect storm.” According to John Weigand’s dissertation, Robert Marcellus took this concept to the next level by stating that proper tongue placement could be determined by whistling different pitches.

1. Chalumeau Register: whistle a clarinet pitch throat tone Ab
2. Clarion Register: whistle a clarinet pitch middle line B
3. Altissimo Register: whistle a clarinet C#

Soft Palate

The soft palate is the muscular part at the back of the roof of the mouth behind the hard palate. It participates in the function of speech, breathing, and swallowing. The soft palate should be lifted to create a more vibrant and resonating sound. Larry Guy mentions in his book on Embouchure Building that Ralph McLane called it his “sound box resonator.” Raising this soft tissue will also assist with the altissimo notes. When clarinetists refer to the term “open throat,” it is referring to this part of your mouth. This term can be misleading because students could think that they are supposed to open their throat in an unnatural way. Instead of using the term “open throat,” you could use the term “cathedral ceiling.” Just like the cathedral ceiling is arched, so should the roof of the mouth. Imagine that the floor of the cathedral is like your jaw and doesn’t move, but the roof raises up to be arched. This creates a more resonating sound and allows the head to act more as a resonating chamber.

A common problem students have when trying to learn the altissimo register is that they won’t speak. Also, many times students have difficulty playing wider intervals or their sound is lacking tonal color. These are all due to the soft palate not being raised high enough.

Solution #1: Yawning

1. When we yawn fully, the soft palate rises and the tongue lowers.
2. Try yawning with the lips closed and notice how the roof of the mouth is still elevated.
3. When yawning, bring the back of the tongue up from the dropped position to the top molars. Since when we yawn, the tongue lowers, after yawning, try to keep the soft palate elevated while lifting the back of the tongue. This is more like a “half yawn” and makes the tone more resonant.

Solution #2: Tucked Upper Lip Exercise (Embouchure Building, page 76)

1. Place the thumb against the upper teeth

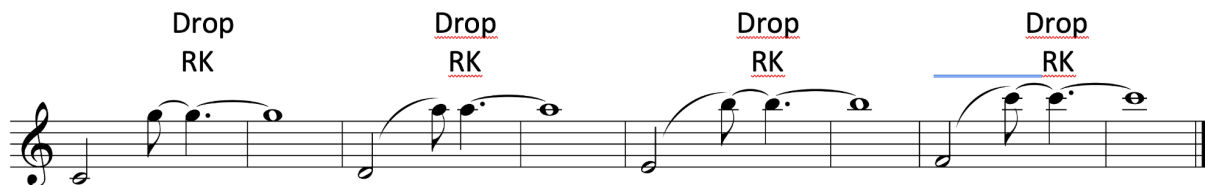
2. Tuck the upper lip against the upper teeth
3. While yawning, press down with the upper lip against the thumb
4. After the yawn, maintain the raised soft palate by continuing to press down with the tucked upper lip against the thumb

Solution #3: Octaves Exercise (Embouchure Building, page 16)

1. After practicing the above exercises, play two octaves as half notes starting on low F (low F, 1st space F, top line F)
2. Practice in front of a mirror to be aware of the upper lip which needs to stay in place and the chin which needs to stay firm and pointed.
3. Keep the soft palate lifted throughout
4. Repeat on G, A, B, and C

Solution #3 Register Slurs/Drop The Register Key Voicing Exercise

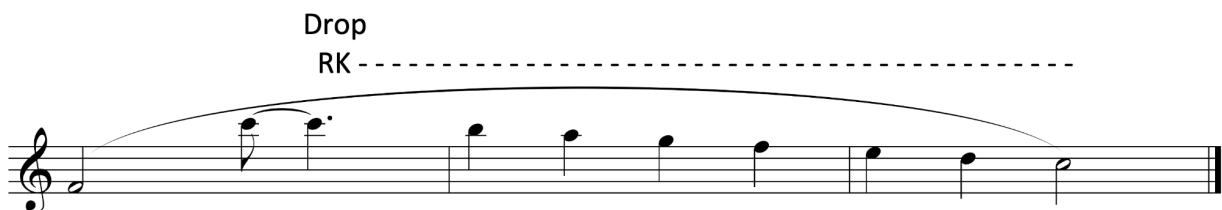
1. Play a low C to G register slur
2. Right after the G speaks, release the register key (still keeping the thumb hole covered). Your goal is to maintain the G without using the register key. (Note: if you're using a tuner, it will probably be slightly under pitch.) If embouchure, tongue position and air support are working properly, the G should sustain.
3. Next, use the same exercise for D to A, E to B, and F to C



Problem Solving: Don't slow down air speed. If you're not able to sustain the note without the register key, try holding the note longer before releasing the key. Watch the pitch on the tuner. Remember corners in and back of tongue high. After maintaining good pitch, then drop the register key.

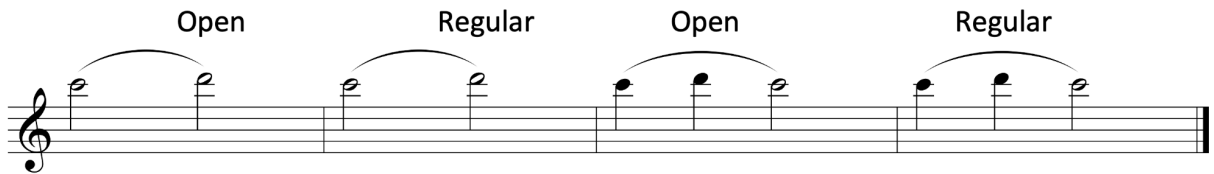
Solution #4: C Scale Without Register Key

1. Play a thumb F to high C
2. Drop the register key as in the previous exercise
3. Go down the C scale and see how low you can go without the register key and the note still comes out. Goal: try to play down an octave. Usually the pitch drops to the lower note before you get there.



Solution #5 High C to D Voicing Exercise

1. Using a tuner, play a high C
2. Remove the left-hand thumb completely. This should produce a high D, NOT an open G. After you're successful with the open fingering high D, go back to a high C.
3. If it doesn't speak, arch the soft palate.
4. Next, try alternating from C to open D, to C to regular fingering D. Goal: Try to get the two D fingerings to feel and respond the same. Using a tuner will help with this exercise. The more you do this exercise, the more similar the two Ds should sound with pitch and tone.

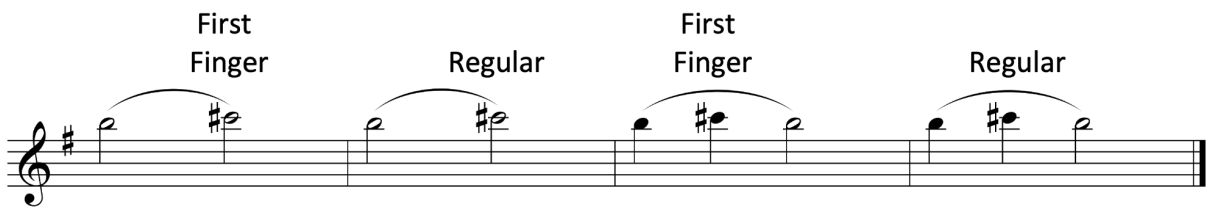


Problem solving:

If it doesn't speak at first, play a high D with the register key only. This means you're only removing your thumb off the tone hole. (This works very well on bass clarinet.)

Problem solving: The open D should be played without the register key and thumb hole. The high D should be played with the right-hand E-flat key (for tuning). If you're still having problems playing high D with the regular fingering, try half-hole. (Half-hole is where the first finger of the left hand covers part of the hole instead of lifting all the way off.)

Solution #6 High B to C# Voicing Exercise



Throat

The throat should stay in a relaxed, open state, free of any tension. A problem that often occurs with young students is tension in their throat. A tight throat will give a pinched, thin tone whereas a throat that is too open will give a spread, unfocused tone. Also, watch out for students who control the start and top of air by their throat.

Solution: Downward Glissando Vocal Exercise

1. Open your mouth
2. Sing a downward glissando in a relaxed style as if just in your breath.
3. Notice if there is any tension in the throat. Try to relax those muscles.

4. Repeat several times

Apply All Embouchure Concepts: Two-note Register Slurs (Chalumeau - Clarion)



Three-Note Register Slurs (Chalumeau - Clarion - Altissimo)



Problem solving: use the E-flat tuning key on high D and higher (don't use it on C-sharp). To help notes to speak, try the half-hole technique. Avoid biting harder to get high notes to respond!

Note that there are many different fingerings for high G. At first, practice this using the fork key and side key. Then try using different high G fingerings. G is actually part of the overtone including high C#. More advanced players can practice playing high C#, then lift the third finger in the left hand to play a high G.

RESOURCES

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The First Three Years of Clarinet Study: Rhythm
Dr. Ellen Kaner

While rhythm is an important element in learning to play an instrument, many teachers and students are guilty of being less than thorough in working with a method that will insure complete understanding. It often seems easier to just play with the student or have the student imitate rhythms. Even some of the common ways of counting out loud and having the students put the subdivisions in their voices are nearly like having the students mimic the rhythms.

Let's look at the method of teaching to subdivide that was passed on to me by my colleague for a number of years, Larry Barton (most of his teaching career was in the Grand Prairie Independent School District between Dallas and Fort Worth, TX). The essential steps are:

- 1) Count and Clap**
- 2) Clap and Name**
- 3) Name and Finger**

Optional steps that can be added:

- 0) Downs and ups before step 1 when doing 16th notes**
- 4) Finger and Count**
- 5) Play the passage on mouthpiece and barrel (or flute head joint or brass mouthpiece).**

Implementing the first 3 steps thoroughly on a consistent basis makes a really big difference, especially if the student buys into it and uses it at home regularly.



In example 1, count and clap would be to say:

1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te, 1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te, clapping each time there is a new note, circling around with clasped hands during notes that are one and a half beats or more.

The clap and name step would be:

C te 2 te, D te 4 te E te 2 D C te 4 te (it's also fine to say and instead of te – success does not depend on the te syllable in particular).

The name and finger step would be to say the same thing as the clap and name step, but to finger on the instrument as you are doing it.

2

Clarinet in B \flat



In example 2, count and clap would be:

1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te, 1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te (notice that you do not leave a silence during the rest as some other systems do).

Clap and name would be:

F te 2 G A te G te, F te 2 te, rest te G te (with hands clasped during the notes held 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ counts or more, and hands are apart during the rest).

Name and finger would be the same speaking while we are fingering on the instrument, including speaking the rest.

3

B \flat Cl.



In example 3, count and clap would be:

1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te, 1 te 2 te 3 te 4 te (with hands clasped during longer values and apart during the rest).

Clap and name would be:

F te 2 te 3 te rest te, A, A, G, G, F te 4 te.

Name and finger would be spoken the same exact way while we are fingering on the instrument, (including speaking the rest).

4

Clarinet in B \flat



In example 4, we add another step before count and clap:

Down, down, up, up, down, down, up, up, down, up, down, up.

Then, step 1 is:

1 ti te ta, 2 ti te ta, 3 te, 4 te.

Clap and name would be: G, G, G, G, A, A, A, A; A, A, G, G.

And, step 3 is to speak those same note names in time holding instrument.

And, in our final example, we have the faster brand of 6/8 time at a slow tempo.



Count and clap would be: 1 la, li, 2 la li, 1 la, li, 2 la, li.

Clap and name would be: C la, li, F la, li, E, E, E, D la li.

And, then, we say the same while holding the instrument.

After using this system and others alternately, it is my belief that this one really teaches the student how long to wait during longer values and rests and can be used and retained better as the student works alone at home. It seems as though students forget how long the longer values and rests are when they go home and work without the presence of the teacher and some of the stronger classmates. As with any practice method, it is always a challenge to get the student to buy into it and use it independently. With this plan, it really pays to be persistent, since the student can function so much better, once this becomes habit.

Madelyn Moore's Articulation Tips for Young Students

1. Tip of the Top of the Tongue to the Tip of the Top of the reed.
2. Move your tongue as small as possible.
3. Keep the air connected through the tongues!!
4. Start with tonguing exercises at quarter note = 60 as part of the daily warm up.
 - a. Gradually work your way up with the metronome.
 - b. When the student can play them at quarter = 120, switch the rhythms to 8th notes and 16th notes and drop back down to quarter = 60.
5. At every step, make sure the air is connected through the articulation!
 - a. Air separation is the enemy of a fast, controlled tongue.

How I Describe the Use of the Tongue to my Students

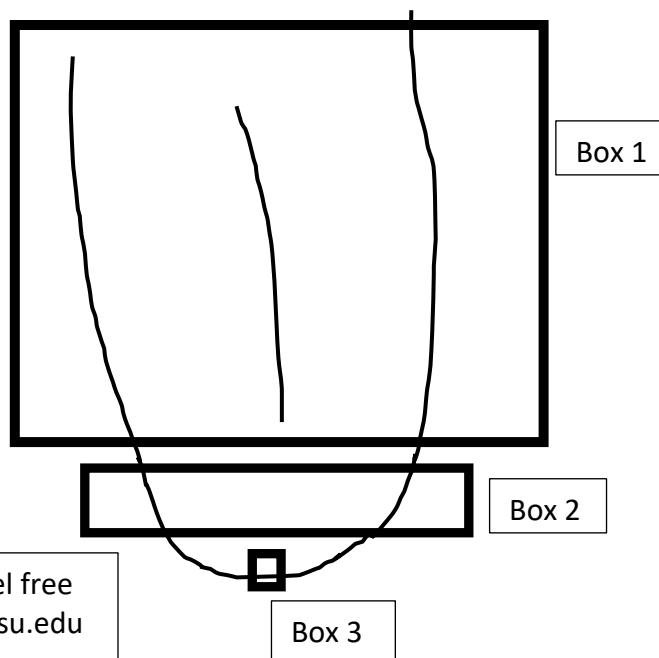
1. Most of the tongue is high (inside your top teeth) and never moves.
2. Think "tih" rather than "tee" or "tah" to minimize extraneous tongue motion.
3. You can practice using your tongue correctly without the clarinet in your mouth.
 - a. First practice saying "tih tih tih tih," paying attention to how your tongue is positioned and how much it moves (Think about the diagram below).
 - b. Then practice blowing air through those articulations, still without the clarinet. Make sure the tongue is staying the same.
 - c. Then add the clarinet on an easy note (E at the bottom of the staff).
 - d. Once that is comfortable, begin adding finger motion.
4. Every tongue stroke should be identical to the others and tone should be uniform and focused throughout all ranges. Listen carefully for this.

How to Use Your Tongue

Box 1 – This part of the tongue is always high and always still.

Box 2 – This part of the tongue barely moves when you say "tih."

Box 3 – This is the part of the tongue that actually touches the reed.



If you have questions, please feel free to reach out at mmoore82@nmsu.edu

Beginner Tonguing Exercises

Madelyn Moore

The sheet music consists of eight staves, each representing a different exercise. Each exercise begins with a measure number (1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22) and is written in 4/4 time. The exercises involve eighth and sixteenth note patterns, often with slurs and accents to indicate tonguing techniques. The exercises progress from simple eighth notes to more complex patterns involving sixteenth notes and slurs.

Exercise 1 (Measure 1): Starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4.

Exercise 4 (Measure 4): Starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4.

Exercise 7 (Measure 7): Starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4.

Exercise 10 (Measure 10): Starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4.

Exercise 13 (Measure 13): Starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4.

Exercise 16 (Measure 16): Starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4.

Exercise 19 (Measure 19): Starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4.

Exercise 22 (Measure 22): Starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a half note F#4.

Hand Position and Development of Technique in the Early Years

LEFT HAND:

Register key:

Thumb should be at an angle on the register key. Many students think it should be parallel to the floor, but it should be at an angle so the register key is accessible at anytime without altering the left hand position.

Throat-tone A key:

Students should be taught from the beginning to “roll” their left hand index finger to press/play the A key. Many students want to lift their finger to play it, but it should be a rolling action.

RIGHT HAND:

Thumb rest:

The thumb rest should be above the right thumb knuckle. Some students try to put the thumb rest above the thumb nail or all the way where the thumb meets the hand. This will not allow proper relaxed fingers and will cause strain and slower dexterity in the fingers in the future.

Pinky fingers:

The pinky fingers should be placed above the pinky keys. Younger students have the tendency of wanting to place their pinky fingers underneath the keys, which adds tension, but the pinky key should be accessible at anytime and that can only be done if the pinky is hovering above the keys.

BOTH HANDS:

Have a relaxed hand. No stress or tension in the hands.

Fingers should be curved.

Cover the tone holes with the finger pads, not the finger tips.

When playing, lift the fingers slightly above the tone holes and/or the pink keys. The less distance the better.

Do not look at the clarinet to see where the tone holes are or where your fingers should be placed. Emphasize muscle memory from the beginning.

Clarinet Equipment Information and Resources

Clarinets

Selmer Paris and Conn-Selmer offer a wide range of beginner, intermediate and professional clarinets. The beginner and intermediate models are well made with nice sound and feel, as well as being well crafted and staying budget-friendly.

<https://www.conn-selmer.com/en-us/instruments/band-instruments/clarinets>

Mouthpieces Information/Nomenclature

How Mouthpieces Are Made –

Selmer Paris video showing the mouthpiece making process beginning to end.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54oDdnma7PE>

Mouthpiece Anatomy –

Vandoren/Dansr article describing the technical elements of mouthpieces and guide to matching reeds.

<https://www.dansr.com/vandoren/resources/the-key-to-mouthpieces-an-explanation-of-mouthpiece-anatomy>

Technical Elements –

Vandoren/Dansr mouthpiece diagrams of mouthpiece parts/terminology.

<https://vandoren.fr/en/mouthpieces-technical-elements/>

Mouthpiece Nomenclature –

Behn article including very detailed description of mouthpiece elements and materials.

[BEHN™ | Resources | Mouthpiece Nomenclature](#)

Mouthpiece Facings Explained –

Grabner article on mouthpiece elements, facings and measurements

[ClarinetXpress - Clarinet Mouthpiece Facings Explained](#)

How to Pick Out a Mouthpiece –

McClune article on how to test and choose the right mouthpiece for you.

[How to pick a mouthpiece. | David McClune's Mouthpiece Service \(mcclunemouthpiece.com\)](#)

Mouthpiece and Reed Comparison

Mouthpiece Models and Reed Strength Suggestions –

D'Addario chart showing several mouthpiece companies and styles, with suggested reed strength.

[dw_mouthpiece_comparison_charts.indd \(daddario.com\)](#)

Reed Comparison Charts -

D'Addario reed comparison chart of their own reeds as well as comparison to other manufacturers.

[daddario_woodwinds_strength_chart_clarinet_8.5x11.pdf](#)

Vandoren reed technical elements and comparison chart of their styles of reeds.

[Reeds Technical Elements - Vandoren Paris](#)

Vandoren mouthpiece comparison with recommended reeds and strengths.

<https://vandoren.fr/en/clarinet-mouthpieces-comparison/>

Essential Equipment for Young Clarinetists

There are many types of instruments, mouthpieces, reeds, and other equipment from which to choose and it's impossible to list all the terrific equipment out there! Here are some suggestions for equipment for beginner to advanced intermediate students that are very good and readily available. As you consider these lists, it's important to select a compatible system of clarinet, mouthpiece, reeds and ligature. For more information and help with pairing clarinets, mouthpieces and reeds, please refer to the *Clarinet Equipment Information and Resources* handout. Remember, the manufacturers have fantastic resources on their websites and may also have artists and other representatives for workshops and help. In addition to the equipment listed, look also for independent mouthpiece makers, who are very knowledgeable, and may have student models available.

Equipment	Beginner/Intermediate	Advanced Intermediate	Comments/Suggestions
CLARINET	<u>Selmer:</u> CL201 <u>Selmer Paris:</u> Prologue <u>Leblanc:</u> Serenade	<u>Selmer Paris:</u> Prologue <u>Selmer Paris:</u> Presence <u>Leblanc:</u> Serenade	Selmer CL201 is designed for beginning students and play with nice sound and intonation. Selmer Paris Prologue and Leblanc Serenade clarinets are well made, with terrific tuning and are a great choice for advancing students as well as beginning students. They offer fine quality but are budget-friendly.
MOUTHPIECE	<u>Vandoren:</u> M13 Lyre, M15 & M30 Lyre <u>D'Addario:</u> Reserve X5 & X10 <u>Selmer Paris:</u> Focus, Concept <u>Fobes:</u> Debut	<u>Vandoren:</u> M13 Lyre, M15, M30 Lyre <u>D'Addario:</u> Reserve X5 & X10 <u>Selmer Paris:</u> Focus, Concept <u>Various custom:</u> Behn, Fobes, Grabner, McClune, Redwine	Suggested reeds: Vandoren V12 2.5 – 3.5, Traditional 2.5- 3.5, V21 2.5-3.5, 56 3-3.5+ D'Addario Reserve and Reserve Classic, 3-3.5+ Note: When considering mouthpieces, some have the same facing available with variations for pitch and for comfort. For example - Vandoren offers Traditional vs. Profile 88 (shape of beak) as well as its Series 13 (lower pitch). Check tuning carefully when matching with clarinets, as young players may play too low with a 440 pitched mouthpiece due to their embouchure not being developed enough.
LIGATURE	<u>Vandoren:</u> M/O Silver <u>Leblanc:</u> Bonade, inverted, silver or standard <u>Rovner:</u> Classic Dark or Light	<u>Vandoren:</u> M/O Silver or Gold <u>Leblanc:</u> Bonade, inverted, silver or standard <u>Rovner:</u> Classic Dark or Light	Note: Generally speaking, metal ligatures will help reeds feel more vibrant and give a little more clarity of sound and articulation, while a synthetic flexible ligature will give more cover to the sound and darken a brighter reed.

REEDS	<u>Vandoren:</u> V12 2.5 - 3.5 Traditional 3.5 - 4 V 21 3.0 - 4 <u>D'Addario:</u> Reserve 2.5-4 Reserve Classic 2.5 - 4	<u>Vandoren:</u> V12 2.5 - 3.5 Traditional 3.5 - 4 V 21 3.0 - 4 <u>D'Addario:</u> Reserve 2.5-4 Reserve Classic 2.5 – 4.5 <u>Rigotti:</u> Gold 3 – 3.5 Medium	<u>Note:</u> When trying to match reeds with a mouthpiece, ask for samples, but if not available, look for a “flow pack” that has several models of reeds in the same strength.
REED CASE	<u>Vandoren:</u> VRC810, Plastic clamshell case (8 reeds), HRC10, Hygro case (6 reeds) <u>D'Addario:</u> Hydration case (8 reeds)	<u>Vandoren:</u> VRC810, Plastic clamshell case (8 reeds), HRC10, Hygro case (6 reeds) <u>D'addario:</u> Hydration case (8 reeds)	<u>Note:</u> These cases hold several reeds and help keep reeds organized and maintained during use.
SWAB	<u>Gem:</u> silk <u>BG:</u> silk <u>Hodge:</u> silk	<u>Gem:</u> silk <u>BG:</u> silk <u>Hodge:</u> silk	<u>Note:</u> Silk and microfiber swabs clean well and do not shed lint, which can sometimes create a build-up in a vent tube or other issues. Choose a swab with a chord long enough to pull through the entire clarinet (minus the mouthpiece) at once.
CORK GREASE	<u>D'Addario:</u> DCRKGR01, All Natural <u>Vandoren:</u> Cork grease	<u>D'Addario:</u> DCRKGR01, All Natural <u>Vandoren:</u> Cork grease	
MOUTHPIECE CUSHION	<u>Vandoren, D'Addario, BG</u> <u>Silverstein:</u> Omni-Patch with teeth guide	<u>Vandoren, D'Addario, BG</u> <u>Silverstein:</u> Omni-Patch with teeth guide	<u>Note:</u> Various material and thickness.
NECK STRAP	<u>BG:</u> C20E <u>Protec:</u> NCS3 and NCS2	<u>BG:</u> C20E <u>Protec:</u> NCS3 and NCS2	<u>Note:</u> These straps have an adjustable elastic chord and choice of thumb rest tab. Various strap lengths available.

Essentials of Clarinet Pedagogy: The First Three Years

Recommended Solos

First Year Solos:

Handel: Allegro from Concerto Grosso, Op. 3, No. 4 (arranged by Dishinger); published by Medici Music Press.

Mike Hannikel: Chalumeau on the Go

Gustav Langenus: Mount Vernon Minuet

Mozart: Cavatina (arranged by Pearson and Elledge); in Festival Solos Anthology published by Neil A. Kjos Music Company

Any solo in Clarinet Solos – Level One; arranged by Hovey, Leonard, and Seward; published by Alfred Music

Second Year Solos:

Debussy: Le Petit Negre (arranged by Perier); published by Alphonse Leduc

Haydn: St. Anthony Chorale and Rondo (arranged by Pearson and Elledge); in Festival Solos Anthology published by Neil A. Kjos Music Company.

Hovey and Leonard: Minuetto (Clarinet Solos- Level 2); published by Alfred Music

Langenus: Chrysalis

Tchaikovsky: Old French Song (edited by Jay Arnold)

Third Year Solos:

Elton E. Burgstahler: Clarion Caper

Hovey and Leonard: Pergola; in Solo Sounds for Clarinet Anthology, Volume 1, levels 3-5; published by CPP Belwin.

Mozart: Waltz Fantasy (arranged by George Waln)

Several solos in Concert and Contest Collection by H. Voxman; published by Hal Leonard