



# Working as a Private Instructor

College and Pre-Professional Engagement Committee  
International Clarinet Association

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# Working as a Private Instructor

## *Building a Private Studio*

Madelyn Moore & Kaitlyn Neufeld

### *-Working for a Music Store*

Madelyn Moore & Kaitlyn Neufeld

### *-Working in a Public/Private K-12 School*

Melissa Kindy

### *-Online Teaching*

Anthony Costa & Dalton Ringey

## *Method Books*

Bryce Newcomer & Anthony Costa

## *Pedagogical Approaches*

Jackie Glazier & Lisa Kachouee

## *Equipment Recommendations*

Jackie Glazier

## *Taxes*

Madelyn Moore & Kaitlyn Neufeld

The background is a dark navy blue. On the left side, there are two overlapping geometric shapes: a blue parallelogram and a light green parallelogram, both tilted at an angle. The green shape is positioned slightly to the right and above the blue one. The text 'Building a Private Studio' is centered on the right side of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

# Building a Private Studio



# *Marketing and Recruitment*

## Reach out to local band directors

- MEA website/job postings
- Offer a free masterclass or lesson
- Foster and maintain relationships with local students and band directors
- Offer to come in and play for the students to recruit for your studio

## Visibility and Accessibility

- Website
- Social Media
- Flyers/Business cards



# *Studio Policies and Payment*

Consider using a contract with your students

- Contact information
- Expectations
- Payment information
- Missed/cancelled/rescheduled lessons
- Required materials
- Signed by parent and/or student

## Payment

- Beginning of the month
- Invoicing
- District rates vs. setting your own rate vs. music store



# *Tips for Managing a Studio*

## Liability insurance (teacher's insurance)

- Protect yourself – be covered just in case
- Look for educator or professional liability insurance.
- Check your MEA website

## Plan your finances

- Be prepared to pay all your monthly bills and necessities with 3 weeks pay
- Plan ahead for the potential of lower income in the summer months


## Approach all levels of players in your marketing

## Above all, be consistent

- Consistency helps in every aspect of being a private instructor



# Working for a Music Store



# Working for a Music Store

## Interview with the music store

- Reach out to your local stores to see if they are hiring or look for job postings

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Store provides you with students	Pay usually set by the store <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice room rental taken from paycheck</li></ul>
A place to teach is provided	Scheduling is often difficult <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited availability of the space</li></ul>
Billing goes through the store (makes taxes easier)	Some stores have make-up policies that burden the teacher
Regular paycheck at the beginning of the month	Possibly low enrollment numbers and/or students divided between teachers
Equipment, accessories, music all easily available for purchase	Contract (noncompete, students belong to the store, etc.)
Store discount for teachers	






# *Working for a Music Store*

## Location considerations

- Large metropolitan areas
  - Traffic, gas, parking, high cost of space
  - Higher median income may mean a higher hourly rate and better pay even if the store takes 40-60%
- Music & Arts and like stores are franchises, so policies and pay can vary dramatically by location
  - Reach out to existing faculty to gauge their satisfaction, also helps expand your network

## Other Local Possibilities

- Music Academies that exclusively provide lessons
- Pre-college programs at universities
- Examples:
  - [Northern Virginia Woodwind Academy](#)
  - [Oklahoma Conservatory of Music](#)
  - [Potomac Music](#)



# Working in a Public/Private K-12 School

# K-12 Schools: Teaching Aspects

Get familiarized with the relevant vendor/visitor procedure(s)

- Background checks, fingerprinting, ID, etc.
- Process may differ by area

Offer a free or discounted first sectional to introduce yourself

- They will be more willing to have you in
- Easier to set pricing after they get to know you

Pay will usually come through band budget or boosters

- Usually a 1099 form (taxes not removed)
- Expect to provide invoices
  - Monthly suggested; easier for director/boosters
- Track your mileage for deduction on taxes!

Dr. Melissa Kindy, clarinetist			
Contact Information (Phone/Email)	Mailing Address (for checks)		
Payment Invoice Spruce Creek High School October 2019			
DATE	# CLASSES TAUGHT	PAY RATE/CLASS	AMOUNT CHARGED
10/1/19	2	30	60
10/8/19	2	30	60
10/15/19	2	30	60
10/29/19	2	30	60
TOTAL CHARGES	8	30	\$240
Total owed: \$240.00			



# *K-12 Schools: Teaching Aspects*

## Lessons vs Sectionals

- Sectional: pass out business card to students to recruit for private studio
  - Recommend “if you have any questions” at first; less pushy
- Consider difference in teaching procedures for engaging one vs a group

## During or After School

- Consider class time/working time when setting pricing
  - During school - usually comes out to more of a 45 minute session per class period

## Communication with Directors

- Ask about specific requests/goals (especially if sectional)
- Can provide more information on a student or the section
- Follow up after your teaching to discuss the session
  - Opens opportunity for “next time” discussions to build momentum
  - Help to educate about clarinet playing/teaching - feel free to get technical!  
They will appreciate being involved



# Online Teaching



## Online Teaching

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Expand market to students outside of region	Cannot play together
Continue to work with students who move away	Sound quality
You can teach from anywhere	Technology purchases
More flexibility with scheduling	Added costs of some platforms

Be careful recording lessons (be aware of laws):

<https://fsw.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/2031/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=110975#:~:text=There%20are%20a%20couple%20of,the%20outset%20of%20a%20class>



## Video Calling Software/Platform Options:

Some of these services charge a percentage of your lesson fee, others have monthly subscriptions. Some use ZOOM, and some use their own software.

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**Lessonface** <https://www.lessonface.com/>

“Lessonface connects students with highly qualified, excellent teachers for one-on-one and group classes over Zoom. All you need to use Lessonface is a computer or tablet with webcam and reliable Internet access. Lessonface fee is 15% of the lesson tuition on private lessons booked by students who find you via Lessonface, and just 5% on students whom you recruit. We also offer teachers the tools to host self-paced courses and group classes”

**Forte** <https://www.fortelessons.com/>

Free, Basic (\$5.99 month), Pro (\$19.99 month), Elite (\$29.99 month)

“Forte was built by musicians, for musicians—so you never have to compromise on sound quality. Our advanced platform captures tone, dynamics, articulation, and every musical nuance, ensuring your lessons and practice sessions are as immersive and productive as possible”

**Lecture Owl** <https://www.lectureowl.com/>



## ***Platform options, cont.***

### **Muze**

An online music education platform built for music teachers, by music teachers, offering tools like a built-in metronome, visual cues, and the ability to record and store lesson clips, according to [teachwithmuze.com](https://teachwithmuze.com).

### **RockOutLoud.Live**

A platform that offers features like second camera capability, in-app sharing options (whiteboard, note writing), and group lesson support, according to Colorful Keys.

### **TakeLessons**

A platform offering online music lessons with a focus on personalized feedback and a customized learning approach, according to Soundbrenner.

### **Muzie.Live**

A platform designed to enhance lesson quality and student engagement through innovative tools, making it a good option for teachers looking to expand their teaching capabilities and manage their studios efficiently, according to Muzie.Live.





## ***Platform options, cont.***

### **MusicTeacherNotes**

An all-in-one music lesson platform that helps teachers manage online and in-person lessons, helps parents aid their children with music lessons, and helps students learn music faster, according to MusicTeacherNotes.

### **MusicplayOnline**

A platform offering interactive music making resources for both in-person and online lessons, according to MusicplayOnline.

### **Zoom**

A widely used video conferencing platform that allows teachers to conduct live lessons, share screens, and utilize built-in chat features, according to a blog post by Ashley Danyew. <https://zoom.us/pricing>

### **Skype**

DISCONTINUED! (example of the ever-changing landscape of online teaching)

### **Others**

FaceTime, Google Meet, WhatsApp



# Online Teaching Considerations

Both need to have music materials – have digital copies of all music

- Mark up beforehand, online library available to students

Screen sharing (not available on certain platforms)

Cannot play together

- Have pre-recorded pieces to play along with

Demonstrate/model often

Have students use metronome and tuner at their end of connection

Camera (teacher and student) angles, resolution, etc.

Microphone (see article in resources for more detail)

- Mackie EM-91CU (under \$50) according to NYTIMES review
- 512 Audio Tempest(under \$100) according to NYTIMES review
- Blue Yeti (@\$100)

Audio Interface

- Audio settings Tips for good audio: [youtube.com/watch?v=rTDLrkPtOeQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTDLrkPtOeQ)

Internet wifi (speed: 25 mbps minimum)

- When experiencing lag, teachers can turn off video and mute
- Send reminders to students for lessons and include lesson link (day of is helpful)
- Include in contracts



## ***Resources: Website and Blogs with More Information***

### **Comparing Platforms for Teaching Online Music Lessons**

<https://colourfulkeys.ie/platforms-online-music-lessons/>

### **Let's Compare The Most Popular Online Music Lesson Platforms**

<https://www.musicteachernotes.com/articles/lets-compare-the-most-popular-online-music-lesson-platforms/>

### **Discover the 9 Best Online Music Teaching Platforms in 2024**

<https://connect4education.com/9-best-online-music-teaching-platforms-in-2024/>

### **14 Best Microphone for Online Teaching Options in 2024**

<https://thetutorresource.com/best-microphone-for-online-teaching/>



# *Other Tools for Online Lessons*

## **SmartMusic**

A web-based music education platform that allows teachers to create individualized assignments for students.

## **Google Classroom**

While not specifically for music, it can be used to assign lessons, post materials, and communicate with students, according to Solfeg.io.

## **Musicca:**

A platform for teaching music theory, offering exercises and content for students to learn at their own pace, according to website.

## **MuseScore:**

A free notation software for creating and editing music scores, according to a YouTube video.

## **MusicTeacherNotes:**

Music teacher software designed to help manage private music studios and advertising online, according to their website.

## **Sight Reading Factory:**

<https://www.sightreadingfactory.com/>

**Teoria.com** (music theory website)



# Method Books



# ***What Should You Look When Choosing A Method Book For Your Student?***

“Clarinet specific books” focus on development issues specific to the instrument and are a great supplement to the student’s band method book, such as the *Standard of Excellence* series

Most books are easily separated into progressive weekly goals

Method books encourage student ownership of learning by tracking progress

Completing benchmarks and books is a rewarding goal for students

Note: Not all method books are equal in the sequence of notes/topics presented or their pacing; find ones that meet your students’ needs

Method books are one tool in your teaching toolbox; be flexible and reevaluate methods regularly



# *A Sample of Method Books Available*

- Albert - 24 Scales and Exercises
- Baermann - Complete Method for Clarinet
- Bozza - 12 Etudes
- Cavallini - 30 Caprices
- Chambers, Denny - Prep Steps Before you Kroepsch
- Chambers, Denny - Finger Fitness Études (Books 1-3)
- Corley, Paula - So You Want To Play The Clarinet
- \*Ethrige - A Practical Approach to the Clarinet, (Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced)
- Galper - Tone, Technique, and Staccato
- Galper - Upbeat Scales
- \*Galper - Clarinet Method (Books 1 and 2)
- Hamlin - Scales and Exercises
- Hite - Progressive Studies (Books 1 and 2)
- Hovey - Practical Studies for Clarinet
- Jeanjean - 18 Etudes
- Jettel - 10 Etudes, 18 Etudes
- Kell - Clarinet Staccato from the Beginning
- Kell - 17 Staccato Studies
- Klose - 14 Studies
- Kroepsch - 416 Daily Studies
- Langenus - Complete Clarinet Method
- Lester - The Progressing Clarinetist
- Opperman - Velocity Studies
- Polatschek - 12 Etudes
- Rehfeldt - New Directions
- Rose - 32 and 40 Etudes
- Rubank - Elementary, Intermediate, and Advanced Methods
- Russianoff - Clarinet Method (Book 1 and 2)
- Stark - Arpeggio Studies
- Taddeo - Blatt 24
- Voxman - Selected Studies
- Wiedmann - 32 Clarinet Studies
- Zare/Cuong - Elements of Contemporary Clarinet Technique
- AND MANY, MANY MORE!



# Pedagogical Approaches





# *Pedagogical Considerations*

Motivation and studio morale are important factors in enjoying your work and helping students improve

It's important to connect students with styles of music and repertoire they enjoy playing

Create opportunities for solo and chamber performance and building community

- Studio recital, chamber music with teacher and other students, clarinet choir, performance opportunities in the community

Keeping records or notes in lessons helps manage many students and keep students accountable

Introduce students to professional recordings and live performances

Find opportunities for students in youth and community ensembles to keep them engaged and growing



# Equipment Recommendations



# *Reeds*

Set expectations for how many reeds to purchase and how often

Introduce students to a break-in and rotation process

Check student's reed placement

Humidifiers for reed case are helpful for dry and inconsistent environments

Check for appropriate reed strength

- Development of the air column and embouchure is important before increasing reed strength
- Generally speaking, if a reed is too responsive and bright where the sound cannot be controlled and the student is backing away from their air, the reed is too soft
- If the reed is unresponsive and/or stuffy sounding or the reed is too hard
- Not all brands' reed strengths are created equal. When switching brands or reed models the reed strength may need to be calibrated



# Mouthpieces

If a student is using a stock mouthpiece, advise them to purchase a replacement as soon as possible

- Student models are great for beginners and professional models for intermediate/advanced students

When trying out mouthpieces, check for sound, response and intonation

Students should try different types of mouthpieces as they may have different preferences and needs

It is important to match reed strength appropriately based on the tip opening

- A closed-facing mouthpiece will require a harder reed than a more open-facing mouthpiece

Teach proper care of mouthpiece and add a patch for the top teeth



## *Instruments and Other Accessories*

Recommend students to purchase through a trusted dealer

Meet with parents/guardians to discuss budget and make recommendations based on student's goals and budget

Check for sealing issues in joints as well as bridge-key alignment

Teach proper assembly/disassembly

Check for bending with metal ligatures; rubber can be a good low-cost option for beginners

A neck strap can be helpful for students with small hands, double-jointed students, or students with a lot of tension in their arms

Check the instrument case to make sure there isn't excess space causing the instrument to move around when carried



# Taxes



# *Important Takeaways*

Track Mileage

Track Business Expenses (instruments, reeds, music, meals, insurance, promotional fees, etc.)

Do not double claim income

- If you have a 1099, you do not need to additionally claim that on your own

Estimated Taxes (quarterly payments)

- IRS Form 1040-ES

Consult a tax professional

Additional Resources:

- <https://www.mtna.org/downloads/MembersOnly/Tax%20Guide.pdf>
- <https://musicteacher.com/claiming-tax-expenses-as-a-music-teacher/>



## Tax Software and Tools

### Quickbooks (\$35/mo)

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Easy to use	Kind of expensive
Invoicing, income tracking, mileage tracking, other features, etc.	Not designed with the freelance musician in mind

### Freshbooks (\$19/mo for Plus)

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Invoicing, income tracking, mileage tracking, other features, etc.	Plus version only sends invoices up to 50 clients

### My MusicStaff (\$14.95/mo)

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Easy to use	No mobile app
Has everything a music teacher would need	
Can contact parents and students through the platform	





## *Tax Softwares and Tools, cont.*

### Duet Partner (\$9/mo or \$99/yr)

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Easy to use	No mobile app
Can contact parents and students through the platform	Fewer features than other tools (no expense tracking)
Designed for the private lesson instructor	

### Wave Accounting (Free starter plan)

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Basics for keeping track of records and invoicing	Very limited free features

### Google Excel

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
Free	Taxing and time consuming
Easy to keep track of everything	You have to be in charge of <i>all</i> your tracking



## *In Closing . . . .*

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to you all for attending this presentation! Big thank you as well as to the ICA Board, the ClarinetFest® 2025 Artistic Leadership Team and Artistic Director Mary Druhan, all the members of the College and Pre-Professional Engagement Committee, and everyone who makes this event possible.

Find this information and more at our CPEC resource page:

<https://clarinet.org/cpec/>

