Building Great Clarinetists: Teaching Tips & Literature

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Building Great Clarinetists: Teaching Tips and Literature
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Teaching Tips

1. Work on Embouchure and Articulation
   A. Basic
   B. Snow-Cone
   C. 5 Tricks for both Embouchures.
   D. Articulation

2. Always ARTC (Basics) See ARTC on Practice Tips & Routine handouts
   A - Approach & Attitude
   R - Relaxation (Mechanics & Air)
   T - Tone (Emb. & Articulation)
   C - Counting

3. Learn about Clarinet Specifics
   A. “The Break”
   B. Equipment (+Legere)
   C. Recommended Resources
   D. Other
   E. Literature (see below)

Clarinet Literature

   A. Solos
   B. Ensembles

Summary - See Building Great Clarinetists Summary [i.e. “Stuff You Can Use”]
Questions & Answers

Building Great Clarinetists Summary
“Stuff You Can Use”
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1. Keep learning about embouchure and articulation – try Snow-Cone Emb. and remember Syllables

2. Focus on Basics – Think ARTC (Approach/Attitude, Relaxation, Tone, Counting)

3. Three Quick Fixes: 1) “Don’t Pinch Corners of Reed – Keep Bottom Lip Flat”
2) “Project the Sound” 3) “More Air” (If you don’t know what to say, say this!)

4. Approach: Work on the “Mental Game.” Focus on what you control: Preparation and Effort. Check out Coach John Wooden’s Definition and Pyramid of Success, etc.

5. Relaxation: Think “Relax in your body/Concentrate in your mind” (Think it, Say it, Do it, Teach it, Teach it, Teach it, Teach it….) Teach good Habits.

6. Tone: Use Syllables to help embouchure, tone, articulation, etc. (Tew, Tee, Thea [theatre], Dee)

7. Counting: Clap it, Sing it, Yodel it, etc. (Note: Always yodel alone…. “If you can’t clap it, you can’t play it.”

8. Teach students how to practice (have a routine with a warm up, attention to basics, scales, sight-reading, etc.)

9. Sight-Reading: Teach students how to do it and make it a part of your and their routines.

10. Make sure students practice going over “The Break” every day as part of their practice routine.

11. Make sure students have good equipment (especially good mouthpieces, reeds, and ligatures). Each student should have a Legere or similar reed for emergencies, etc.

12. Learn about and collect good solos and ensembles – esp. class 2 and 3.

13. Have students participate in chamber music.

14. Expose students to good classical music regularly. (You will likely be the only one encouraging it.)

15. Work to consistently model expected behaviors – Check out the John Wooden books, websites, DVD, etc.

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Practice Routine: Clarinet

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Warm-up

Pre-Playing Warm-up Stretches

Relaxation/Air (Balance)

Tone (Emb. & Articulation)

Long Tones (Projection)

Misc. Exercises (Over The Break, High C, High Notes, Tonguing, Legato Fingers, Octaves, Tuning, Reeds, etc.)

Scales

Chromatic

Major & Minor plus Arpeggios

Fully Diminished 7th Chords

Others (Whole-tone, Octatonic (a.k.a. Diminished), related to a work, etc.)

Music

Sight-reading/Transposition

Etudes/Studies

Solos
Ensemble Excerpts (Band, Orchestra, Chamber, etc.)

Improvisation/Jazz

[NOTE: A copy of this routine and the practice tips are available at clarinetmike.com/resources.]

Practice Tips A to Z

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A. Always ARTC (Approach, Relaxation, Tone, Counting – “Artsy!”).
B. Breaks. Practice in several short sessions (30-45 minutes) with breaks.
C. Counting-Aloud Technique. See Lesson 5 of Leon Russianoff’s Clarinet Method, Book I.
D. Double Articulation. Put two articulations of equal duration on each note of a passage.
E. Enjoy your metronome, but don’t get addicted.
G. Go Slow at first (with ARTC), then Go Faster. Go SLOW!
H. Hands! “If you can’t clap it, you can’t play it.”
I. Intensity. Learn to stay focused. (“Relax in your body./Concentrate in your mind.”)
J. Judge your playing soberly. Know what is “really going on” in your practicing.
K. Kinko’s. Make study scores of piano part and old versions of your part.
L. Look for patterns in the music. Find and mark scales, chords, etc. on your music.
M. Make MUSIC!
N. No distractions or interruptions while practicing.
O. Organize your practice. Follow a good practice routine.
P. Pay Attention to Pitch and Tuning. Get a tuner.
Q. Quit if it hurts or you get overly upset.
R. Recordings. Listen to CD’s, etc. for insights, but not too much (don’t copy!).
S. Sit and Stand during practice.
T. Record yourself and listen to it. Be aware of how you actually sound (and look).

U. Understand the words, symbols, etc. on the music. Look them up in a music dictionary.

V. Variety. Spice up practicing by changing the routine (add jazz, etc.)

W. Work on hard parts first. Break the music into sections.

X. Examine the larger form. Notice what phrases, sections, etc. repeat.

Y. Yodel or SING the music.

Z. Zero in on Rhythm (pattern & pulse). “Rhythm First, Notes Second”

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**Building Great Clarinetists: Recommended Resources**

Short, inexpensive book filled with this legendary clarinet teacher/performer’s ideas.

Originally published in the 1970s, this book by one of the UK’s best clarinetists features his candid (and noteworthy) views on important clarinet issues.

Includes excellent pre-playing warm-ups (shoulders, arms, wrists, etc.) that can help reduce/prevent pain and injuries.

Recent book on clarinet playing and instruction from long-time member of Cincinnati Symphony & clarinet teacher at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory.


Former TV executive explains Wooden’s principles. One of the best books on Wooden’s ideas.

About legendary clarinet teacher/performer based on interviews with former students.

Very important collection of clarinet essays; includes a chapter on teaching the clarinet.

Marsalis (with Yo-Yo Ma) presents a practical and fun look at practicing. Includes practice tips and terrific performances by Marsalis and Ma. Great for music classes.

Covers saxophone and clarinet teaching concepts of master teacher Joe Allard.

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Great book. Excellent information on fundamentals (including *relaxation*), clarinet history, music, etc. Terrific fingering chart.


Excellent text on teaching all woodwinds.
