



The “Nuts and Bolts” of Teaching Band, Part 1: Woodwind Beginners

CLINICIANS:

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FLUTE

- ★ Angle those chairs!
- ★ The flute is a forward facing instrument
- ★ Bottom lip and lip plate are parallel
- ★ The bottom lip rests on the lip plate
- ★ The aperture is never wider than the tone hole
- ★ When starting beginners, use 'poo' - like shampoo! When first starting, breathe through the nose; start with the lips closed to prevent apertures that are too large and to help students keep their lips even
- ★ Air is blown across the wet part of the bottom lip
- ★ Corners are NEVER pulled back or 'smiley'
- ★ Bottom lip covers 1/3 of the tone hole; not covering enough = sharp; covering too much = flat; use your hand to feel air direction
- ★ Right Hand - makes a 'C' and should feel natural, thumb on the 'back' of the tubing of the body
- ★ Left Hand - cradles the flute, wrist is bent
- ★ Fingers touch the center of the keys on the pads of the fingers (not the finger tips)
- ★ The three balance points: left hand index finger, right hand thumb, chin
- ★ The flute is angled down and the player's head is tilted toward the right ear; the neck is long
- ★ Lift up the flute from the elbows; no shoulder tension
- ★ If something looks weird or awkward, then it is weird and awkward for the student playing the flute!



THE NON-NEGOTIABLES OF INSTRUMENT PEDAGOGY

Presented by Lynne Jackson, Kimberly McCutcheon, Andrew Weak, Ross Patterson, and Christopher Pineda

CLARINET

- ★ The reed is in excellent condition and is perfectly aligned (a hair's width of the mouthpiece can be seen above the reed)
- ★ The size of the reed fits the student and the mouthpiece. A stronger reed is only better when it improves sound and feels "easier" or "about the same" to play
- ★ The bottom lip sits in its natural position: mostly in front of and only slightly over the bottom teeth
- ★ The correct amount of mouthpiece is in the mouth; placement is slightly behind the point at which the instrument will "squeak"
- ★ There is a balanced amount of pressure on the reed
- ★ The back of the tongue is high against the molars, the middle dips down, and the tip is up toward the teeth (like saying the word "she")
- ★ The angle of the instrument is correct: with the head balanced, the instrument goes from the mouth to between the knees
- ★ The left hand points slightly downward, and the first finger is able to cover the first tone hole, touch the A key, and touch the G# key simultaneously
- ★ Fingers are only slightly curved
- ★ Fingers "hover" over tone holes they are not covering



SAXOPHONE

- ★ The reed is in excellent condition and is perfectly aligned (a hair's width of the mouthpiece can be seen above the reed)
- ★ The size of the reed fits the student and the mouthpiece; a stronger reed is only better when it improves sound and feels "easier" or "about the same" to play
- ★ The bottom lip rolls slightly over bottom teeth; some of the red part of the lip should still be visible
- ★ The correct amount of mouthpiece is in the mouth; placement is slightly behind the point at which the instrument will "squeak" or "honk"
- ★ There is a balanced amount of pressure on the reed
- ★ The corners of the lips hug into the mouthpiece
- ★ The mouthpiece and saxophone neck come out of the mouth at a slightly below horizontal angle; the right hand thumb must press forward on the instrument and the neck strap must be correctly adjusted
- ★ The mouthpiece and neck are properly turned so the head and upper body are centered
- ★ Fingers are curved
- ★ Fingers touch the pearls at all times