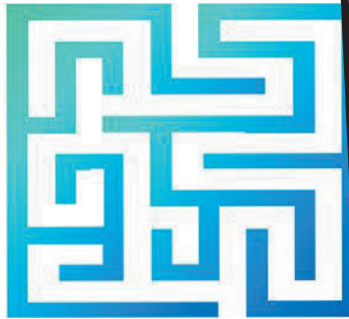




**Texas Bandmasters Association  
Convention/Clinic July 20-22, 2023**

**The Band's ALL Here: Successful  
Strategies for Teaching Heterogeneous  
Beginner Classes**

**CLINICIANS:  
Lynne Jackson, Chris Pineda,  
Andrew Weak**



# CHECKLISTS FOR TEACHING WIND INSTRUMENTS

## FLUTE

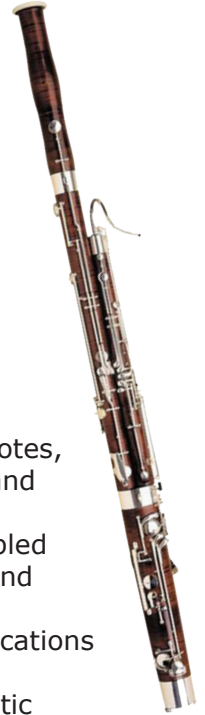
- Place the chairs at an angle.
- The flute is a forward facing instrument.
- Bottom lip and lip plate are parallel to each other.
- The bottom lip rests on the lip plate.
- The aperture is never wider than the tone hole.
- When starting beginners, use 'poo' - like 'shampoo.' When first starting, breathe 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 the student's air direction.
- Hand position:
  - Right hand makes a 'C' and should feel natural, thumb on the back of the tubing.
  - Left hand cradles the flute; wrist is bent like a "waiter."
- Fingers touch the center of the keys on the pads of the fingers (on the "fingerprints," not the fingertips).
- There are three balance points: left hand index finger, right hand thumb, lower lip.
- 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 or awkward for the student playing the flute.



## DOUBLE REEDS

- The student must have at least three good reeds at all times (a good reed will crow the pitch "C"). This must be instilled in the student as the highest priority. Nothing can overcome a bad reed. (The teacher must monitor this diligently.)
- The embouchure is a function of the reed. That is, if the reed is good, the embouchure can work efficiently. A bad reed necessitates that the embouchure must compensate, creating limitations for developing players.
- The student should form a "whistle" shape with the lips, securing the reed, not the teeth, even though the teeth provide support for the lips. Focus primarily on the lips when teaching reed placement. Do not roll too much of the red part of the lower lip into the mouth or the result will be a pinched, sharp sound.
- The reed is inserted in the mouth just beyond the edge of the lips so that the tip of the reed vibrates freely. About half of the wooden part of the reed should be inside the mouth.
- There is a slight overbite both for oboe and bassoon, but more so for bassoon.

- ❑ The reed will be at approximately a 45° angle to the chin. The student should think of blowing across the reed rather than into the reed.
- ❑ The bell of the oboe should be slightly above the knees.
- ❑ The bassoon seat strap should be toward the front edge of the chair with the boot hook at the forward right corner. For smaller students, the strap may have to be angled from the back left corner of the chair to the front right so that more body weight secures the strap.
- ❑ The bassoon balances in playing position across the body, and without leaning toward it. The instrument should "come to the student," not the other way around.
- ❑ The shape of the hands on oboe is curved like a bird's claw with the tips of the fingers covering the holes, not the pads or fingerprints. Fingernails must be trimmed accordingly.
- ❑ The shape of the hands on bassoon is also curved, but more oval shaped (flattened "C" shape). Bassoon is played with the fingerprints, not the tips.
- ❑ Air is "fast" for both instruments. In general, take slightly less reed for lower notes, slightly more for higher notes. Form an "oo" shape with the lips for low notes and "mm" for highest notes.
- ❑ Both the oboe and bassoon are delicate and must be assembled and disassembled carefully. Allow plenty of time before and after rehearsal for proper assembly and maintenance. Swab the instrument immediately after playing it.
- ❑ Students must not allow the instrument to remain in unusually warm or cool locations as the wood may crack.
- ❑ The reed may be soaked while the instrument is being assembled. A small plastic pill bottle is ideal. Soak the reed up to the string (for oboe) or to the wire/string (for bassoon) for 1-2 minutes. Do not soak the cork itself. (There are many schools of thought about the amount of time and how much of the cane should be soaked. A good private teacher will be able to guide the student based on his/her equipment and reed strength.)



## CLARINET/BASS 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.
- ❑ Embouchure: lips gather toward the mouthpiece like a drawstring on a bag. The corners of the mouth must not stretch or smile back.
  - ❑ Clarinet: Upper lip presses downward on the mouthpiece; chin is flat; mouthpiece does not "float;" firm pressure on all sides of the mouthpiece/reed set-up.
  - ❑ Bass Clarinet: Looks similar to soprano clarinet but is more like saxophone; there is no "biting" and there is minimal "firmness." (Note: When playing above the staff—C and above—there is virtually NO pressure on the reed at all. The throat is open and relaxed.)

### ❑ Tongue position:

- ❑ Clarinet: The back of the tongue is high against the molars, the middle dips down, and the tip is up toward the bottom teeth, like saying the word "she".
- ❑ Bass Clarinet: The tongue is lower than on soprano clarinet, like saying "eh" in the middle range and "ah" in extremely high and extremely low registers.

### ❑ Instrument position:

- ❑ Clarinet: The angle of the instrument is correct when the head is balanced and the bell is centered between the knees.
- ❑ Bass Clarinet: Both a neck strap and a peg are recommended to get the proper angle of



the mouthpiece in the mouth. The neck strap holds the instrument in place so the mouthpiece doesn't slip out of the hands and mouth. The peg keeps the instrument at the right height. Without a neck strap, most students will bite down which will kill response in the upper register.

- ❑ The left hand angles 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 the open tone holes on clarinet and above the center of the keys on bass clarinet.

## 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 strength 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 neck strap is adjusted so that the instrument comes toward the student; the neck MUST NOT "crane" to reach the mouthpiece.
- ❑ 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 so that the head is balanced and the neck is in neutral alignment.
- ❑ 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.



## TRUMPET/HORN

- ❑ The body is correctly balanced, natural, and poised.
  - ❑ The lips are together, smooth and even in front of the teeth.
  - ❑ The muscles that surround the air must be properly developed. This takes time.
  - ❑ The placement of the head complies properly with the angle of the instrument.
  - ❑ The instrument should be correctly balanced.
- ❑ Trumpet: using the first finger on the left hand and the right thumb.
  - ❑ Horn: for beginners, the right hand holds the bottom of the bell. For intermediate and advance players, the right hand is inserted into the instrument and presses gently into the far side of the bell.
- ❑ The tongue is forward and down.
  - ❑ The breath is taken through the mouth and the air is unobstructed.
  - ❑ The fingers operating the valves must be naturally curved.
  - ❑ The articulation is a result of correct embouchure/ tone production.
  - ❑ The instrument must be kept in excellent working order and clean.



## TROMBONE

- ❑ The angle of the bell section to the slide matters and greatly affects balance (slightly less than 90 degrees).
- ❑ The slide is the most delicate part; never put the weight of the body onto the slide.
- ❑ A bad slide can cause students to play incorrectly. Constantly monitor slide maintenance.
  - ❑ Left hand: shaped like a water gun; "meaty" part on the bell lock nut.
  - ❑ Right hand: thumb and two fingers; does NOT "grip."
- ❑ The left hand carries the weight of the trombone; the right hand moves the slide; transfer as little weight as possible into the right hand when in lower positions.
- ❑ The trombone is stabilized by the neck, NOT the shoulder.
- ❑ Rest the trombone on the face; it is a very physical instrument that can lead to tension, causing students to press it against the face.



- ❑ Teach slow, natural, easy slide movement before teaching more rapid movement; make slide movement feel as natural as possible.
- ❑ Use glissandi to get the air to continue to move freely while the slide is moving.
- ❑ Rest the trombone on the ground on three points: the bell, the mouthpiece/lead pipe, and tuning slide. NEVER rest the trombone on the slide.

## EUPHONIUM/TUBA

- ❑ The face should feel 'natural.'
  - ❑ Teeth are relatively even and slightly apart.
  - ❑ Corners are natural.
  - ❑ Body balance (posture) must not be compromised when playing the instrument.
  - ❑ Head is balanced.
- ❑ Torso is long, leaning forward slightly.
  - ❑ Elbows are natural and relaxed.
  - ❑ Wrists are straight.
  - ❑ Left arm relaxed; not squeezing the instrument (euphonium).
  - ❑ Posture must be continually monitored as students grow throughout the year. What worked in September might not work in January.
  - ❑ The mouthpiece angles downward.
  - ❑ The mouthpiece anchors on the bottom lip and top lip touches lightly to create a seal.
  - ❑ Placement is 50%/50% or 60% top lip/40% bottom lip depending on the student's natural face.
  - ❑ Fingers are curved and relaxed.
  - ❑ Play with the fingerprints.
  - ❑ Use a "D" syllable when articulating: 'doo.'
  - ❑ The air must not stop between notes.
  - ❑ When walking with instruments, students should not let the instrument dangle from their arms. Instead, they should hold the instruments with the bells pointing upwards with the instrument close to their bodies.
  - ❑ Manage the tuning slides for all of the valves; that is, see that they are properly maintained.



# OUR “DAVID’S” MOVE: Sculpting 101 Revisited, 14 years later

By Lynne Jackson

---

In 2009, an article of mine, “Sculpting 101,” was published in the Texas Bandmaster Review and since then, I have done much yapping about Michelangelo and David in many band halls and forums all over the country. “We are sculptors,” I say. “Just as Michelangelo began with a single piece of marble and took away all that was not David, we sculpt our students day after day until young musicians emerge.” I have done a lot of thinking about David, and one thing I have realized is that David, although complete, has been and always will be in a “fixed” position.

However, our students are not.

## THE BODY

One evening while driving to the DSO with Claire Johnson and Bob Straka, Claire announced,

*I don't teach posture anymore. To me, posture denotes a “fixed, immovable” position. I now teach body balance. I want my students to be able to move any part of the body freely and comfortably while playing the flute.*

BOOM! That moment changed so much in my teaching. I now start out by having my young students experience how all the muscles and parts (joints) of the body can move freely and independently. I continue to work fervently with beginning students to maintain comfort, flexibility, and freedom of movement even as we start out by being “still.”

We must understand that our beginning students do have the muscles to balance the body, the instrument, to shape the hands, the embouchure and the breath. However, these muscles must be **developed consciously and properly** in order to play the instrument successfully. The fingers represent a good example where muscles must be developed correctly. I see so many young fingers that are collapsed or incorrectly cover the holes of the clarinet. I believe the student does have the muscles to play the clarinet correctly. However, these muscles are not always developed properly through the daily classroom pedagogy. This is up to the teacher. Often, we stop short with those students who require more sculpting than others. Diligence, patience, and the relentless pursuit of proper technique are required.

## THE FACE

Teachers of beginning instrumentalists have a tremendous responsibility in that they essentially determine the course of a student’s “band future.” I stand by my philosophy:

*If I strive to shape my student properly, physically and spiritually, that student will likely have the tools and the desire to continue in music.*

Providing a correct embouchure from the beginning is my #1 priority while also paving a pathway to musical understanding and appreciation.

An embouchure is a “group science project” that consists of facial muscles, lips, teeth and the tongue. Each member of the group has a distinct role in creating a balanced embouchure. If one member of the group fails to contribute successfully, responsibility then gets shifted to another member and quite often, the consequence will be an inefficient, imbalanced embouchure. The most common sign of an imbalanced embouchure is tension.

Essentially, all embouchures are the same.

These are my commonalities concerning embouchures (with specific exceptions for double reeds/clarinet)

- We must develop the muscles that surround the air
- Both lips should be visible (exception, double reeds)
- Lips and teeth in general are EVEN.  
(exception, double reeds)
- The bottom lip remains in front of the bottom teeth (exception, double reeds)
- The top lip comes down to/toward the bottom lip
- Corners are always positioned toward the air
- The tongue is forward and down (exception, clarinet, where back of the tongue is raised)
- Students must look natural (like themselves) when playing.

*(continued on next page)*

## OUR “DAVID’S” MOVE: Sculpting 101 Revisited, 14 years later

### THE MIND

Telling is not teaching. Information only becomes knowledge when one can use that information independently and confidently.

I see many classes where the thinking is done for the students. This is very convenient, that is, for the teacher. However, once I go “fishing” (another word for searching for understanding), it often becomes painfully obvious that students are not truly able to use the information successfully which has been dispensed to them.

Critical thinking in the classroom is essential. When students use information and apply concepts on their very own, the teacher then knows the classroom is vibrant and alive with knowledge.

*Critical thinking inspires curiosity and commitment.  
Critical thinking is the key element of joyful learning.*

As of late, I have been talking of “deep-seated” learning which is defined as, “firmly established at a deep or profound level.” I imagine myself in the early years of teaching, drawing five lines on the chalkboard. (Yes, the chalkboard!)

*“This is a staff. This is the treble clef. The lines are EGBDF. Every Good Boy Does Fine. The spaces spell FACE.”* More than likely, that would have been the extent of my student’s introduction to the treble clef staff.

Today, I believe that developing “deep and profound” knowledge of the music staff is of utmost importance in paving a successful path to music literacy. I have observed Chris Pineda and Andrew Weak, two of my teaching heroes, break information down into its most simple form. Start with five lines. Number the lines from the bottom. Number the spaces from the bottom. Start fishing. Begin, by having the students confidently identify each of the 9 positions on the staff.

Next, move on to upper neighbors and lower neighbors. Then ask, “What is the upper neighbor of space 1?” The answer is “Line 2.” Become relentless on your fishing expeditions to be sure that all students are able to use their information successfully. The question you must now ask

yourself is, “What comes next?” The answer is not always so obvious. (Remember, the teacher is seeking understanding at a deep and profound level.) The next thing I do is erase the numbers. Continue fishing.

### THE BREATH

#### *Breathing In*

Arnold Jacobs, the magnificent tubist/teacher wrote, “Strength is my enemy, weakness, my friend.” This suggests that in order to take in a maximum amount of air, the body must be entirely relaxed and open, free of any tension during the intake and output.

Once I understood how important lack of tension and freedom of movement are, my teaching changed considerably. Whenever possible, I have students stand during class and lessons. This makes it easier for the entire body to freely breathe and blow without obstruction. And, consequently resonance is increased. Once seated, encourage young musicians to strive for the same sensations and results.

#### *Blowing Out*

In 2003, I received a call from Dr. Alan Wagner, SMU music education professor. He asked me if I would like to teach an undergraduate instrument methods class. Of course, I would. Which class? Double Reeds! Gulp! I immediately called Herman Vogelstein and set up my weekly bassoon lesson. Lessons continued with Herman, a masterful teacher, for over 2 years. I could write another entire article describing what I learned from that experience. Here, I will share two things.

1. It is possible to be only one step ahead of your class and be a successful teacher. (Whew!)
2. Bassoon air is not anything like trumpet air!

Consider the texture of a double reed compared to that of the center of the top lip. The air required to vibrate a bassoon reed successfully is entirely different from the air I use to play my trumpet. I soon concluded that air is *not the same* for all instruments. When teaching reeds, I use the expression, “fast air.” When teaching brass and flute, I talk to my students more about the volume of air as opposed to the speed of the air.

*(continued on next page)*

## OUR “DAVID’S” MOVE: Sculpting 101 Revisited, 14 years later

As I studied flute with Claire Johnson, I realized there are so many similarities to brass playing. The basic similarity is that both are instruments with less resistance. Faster air can easily throw the pitch out of center. Higher notes are played in a similar fashion for flute and brass. The aperture becomes smaller and rounder for high notes. Faster air is a result. In my opinion it is misinformation when a teacher directs the student to use faster air exclusively for upper pitches. We must not latch onto expressions such as *faster air* or *firmer corners*, simply because we hear others use them. Our words are important and if we are thoughtful, our words can yield magnificent results. Choose wisely.

### THE HEART

*I am not sure that musicality can be taught. However, I do know that I can provide my beginning students with concepts and tools that will enhance the ability to express through the instrument that which is felt in the heart.*

I aspire daily to stand in front of my students as a musician/teacher. Our example is quite often the most important and longest lasting image we offer to our students. We are comrades in arms, fellow musicians, devoted to the love of music!

### *Pedagogical gateways to musicianship:*

1. Building a beautiful embouchure is my first pedagogical priority. An efficient, balanced embouchure is one that can elicit an instant, characteristic sound which IS the first gateway to musical expression.
2. Efficient embouchures also yield the ability to articulate naturally. Here is an opportunity for young students to learn to listen closely to themselves and others in order to identify and match the desired quality of articulated sound. Be picky! It will pay off big for your kids!
3. Breathing in must be taught. Teach students to engage the correct breathing muscles, to breathe over their tongues and to keep the face natural and in the shape of the embouchure when taking a breath. Teach the long breath, the in-time breath and the quick breath.

4. Breathing out must be taught. Blow over the tongue. Vibrate the reed/lips and vibrate the instrument. Start with an instant sound, **sustain** and release. When releasing the sound, be still; stop the air and leave the sound outside the bell.

### Artistic gateways to musicianship:

1. I consider that the first artistic stepping-stone for a young musician is to be able to move between two notes while using full sound and clear articulation. I painstakingly develop this style/concept with each individual student. It often takes time for students to develop the awareness to know they have moved properly, without diminishing the air. Once grasped, the connected style becomes a tremendous musical tool. I advocate using this style exclusively throughout the beginning year.
2. I play, you play. Sound like me. I do have my flute in flute class, and clarinet and horn in their respective classes, however when it comes to demonstrating musicality, I most always use my own instrument. I also urge you to consider leaving the metronome off at times. Create some silence in the room before playing, and then, perform.
3. Have students vocally match pitch while positioning. Do this very soon in the year. I try not to make this a “new” thing. It’s a “band” thing. From the beginning, we learn to internalize the music we are playing.
4. Play lots of songs. Through melodies, I demonstrate to students that repeated pitches and repeated patterns musically intensify. Recognizing pick-up notes is an important gateway to identifying phrases. Breathing before a pick-up note, not after, is something I consider to be a huge “musical step”. Also, using melodies, I teach the four bar phrase which includes “the power of 4” – count 4 leads to count 1.

*(continued on next page)*



## OUR "DAVID'S" MOVE: Sculpting 101 Revisited, 14 years later

I will conclude this article the same way I did 14 years ago. Many things have changed through the years, but not this.

I strive to see a "David" in every child I teach. As a result, I have found myself to be a much happier, more productive and successful teacher. Some "Davids" emerge sooner than others. Some may be a little more polished, some not. Some stand taller. Some are not yet so tall. But, to me they are all beautiful.

I would like to dedicate this article to all the incredible student teachers and young teachers I have worked with for the past several years. You are a true inspiration and a light for the future generations of young musicians. I personally have found much happiness knowing you, because you have inspired me to give and to grow. I want the best for you in this profession and encourage you to find the joy and good in all you do.

Lynne Jackson is currently in her 53rd year as a music educator. She has degrees from the University of Michigan and Vandercook College of Music. Ms. Jackson is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Music Education at Southern Methodist University, recently retired from Berkner High School in Richardson and previously spent 26 years as a member of the J.J. Pearce staff. In 2010, Ms. Jackson was awarded the TBA Meritorious Achievement Award and in 2016 was inducted into the Phi Beta Mu Texas Bandmaster's Hall of Fame. Recently, Lynne was inducted into The Conn-Selmer Institute Hall of Fame. Lynne is widely known throughout Texas as a clinician, and mentor to young students and teachers.

**TMF BOBCAT BAND WEBSTORE**  
 CUSTOM WEBSTORE  
 SIMPLIFY YOUR APPAREL SALES  
 SPIRIT WEAR FOR EVERY SEASON  
 CUSTOMIZE YOUR APPAREL  
 OPTIONAL PERSONALIZATION  
 MENS & WOMENS CUT  
 EXCLUSIVELY DESIGNED APPAREL TO FUNDRAISE & BRAND YOUR PROGRAM FOR MARCHING SEASON, ATHLETICS, EVENTS & SCHOOL YEAR!  
 TRAVEL • MERCHANDISE • FESTIVALS  
 WWW.TMFCONNECT.NET TMF AWARDS & APPAREL 956-984-9468  
 ALL DIGITAL DESIGN SAMPLES ARE PROPERTY OF TMF ENTERPRISE, CANNOT BE REPLICATED BY ANY OTHER BUSINESS OR PUBLICATION, THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMPLIANCE.

**TMF + WiddyUP**  
 WWW.TMFCONNECT.NET  
 PARTNERED UP TO HELP YOU RAISE SOME SERIOUS MONEY  
 WiddyUP is the most fun, easy and effective fundraising platform for schools, clubs, teams and music groups  
**RAISE MONEY WHILE PROMOTING YOUR GROUP**  
 NO PRODUCTS TO SELL  
 FULLY DIGITAL, VIDEO BASED  
 THE AVERAGE DONOR GIVES \$52  
 CAN BE DONE INDIVIDUALLY OR AS A TEAM  
**SHARE YOUR AWESOME**  
 STEP 1: Create a donation page profile  
 STEP 2: Share it with friends, family, social media and anyone who will support you  
 STEP 3: Make a video featuring a talent, hobby, passion or something awesome  
 STEP 4: Only those who donate to your campaign get access to your video  
**NO SIGN-UP FEES**  
 You take home 95% of all the money you raise  
**GET STARTED TODAY**  
 widdyup.com // info@widdyup.com  
**TMF WiddyUP**