

Small Instruments:

Small Instruments: The Best Diagnostic Tool You Never Knew You Had

Guiding Principles

- I. As a pedagogical tool
 1. Playing on the fundamental parts increases teaching efficacy by
 - a. Establishing a pitch center
 - b. Developing resonant sound
 - c. Developing immediate response
 - d. Developing consistent pitch
- II. As a diagnostic tool
 1. Playing on fundamental part increases rehearsal efficiency by
 - a. Diagnosing articulation issues
 - b. Diagnosing air speed issues
 - c. Diagnosing ensemble alignment issues
 - d. Rehearse dynamic effects without distorting tone or pitch
 2. Gives students a tool to compare the above items
 3. Breaks everything down to its smallest component.
- III. As a tool to reach another mean
 1. Keep them guessing
 2. Instead of playing on a concert F, play on the small instrument for something different.
 3. Any playing “gam” can be done on the small instrument

In Action

- I. Fundamental Period
 1. Block note.
 2. Air speed
 3. Articulation
 4. Dynamics
 5. Relationship of airspeed/articulation/embouchure movement
- II. In Rehearsal
 1. Vertical Alignment
 2. Matching Style/Articulation
 3. Dynamics
 4. Playing passages and keeping pitch centered.

Block Note Diagnoses

1. Problems with the beginnings of notes
 - Embouchure is not set or steady at the beginning of the note.
 - Airstream is not fast enough = slow or unclear starts.
 - Airstream is too fast = explosive starts.
2. Problems with the middle of notes
 - Airstream or embouchure does not remain steady
 - Airstream is too fast = out of control sound
 - Airstream is too slow = weak or stuffy sound
 - Embouchure pressure is too tight = stuffy sound
3. Problems with the ends of notes
 - Embouchure relaxes before the end of the note
 - Stopping the note incorrectly

List of fundamental Articulation syllables for each instrument.

- Flute – “dah”
- Double Reeds – “dah”
- Clarinets – “dee”
- Saxophones – “doo”
- Brass – “dah”

Syllables with which the tongue touches the teeth or reed and subsequent shape of the tongue as it rests inside the oral chamber following the articulation.

Resources:

Cavitt, Mary Ellen. *On Teaching Band: Note from Eddie Green*. Hal Leonard. 2012. Print

Millican, Si. *Starting Out Right: Beginning Band Pedagogy*. Scarecrow Press. 2012. Print

Pasquale, Dr. John. “Teaching Ensemble Fundamentals within the Music: An Approach to Maximize Rehearsal Efficiency”. Midwest Band Clinic, December 19, 2012, Chicago IL. Presentation.

Small Instruments in your Rehearsals

Warm-ups:

- Performing the Block Note on the Small Instrument
- Tuning the Small Instrument (Daily for beginners in their first month)
- Dynamic & Articulation Exercises on the Small Instrument
- Airspeed assessment

Rehearsal:

- Perform & Rehearse tricky rhythms
- Practice Sustaining Phrases
- Practice Starting and Ending Notes and Phrases

Section 6: Mini Method Books

Small Instrument Packet

Introduction to playing your instrument and small instrument exercises.

Beginning Band Theory Packet

Teach your students about the staff, notes, and rhythms.

Rhythm Supplement

Practice common rhythm variations.

First Five Notes

Learn the first five notes beginning with Concert F moving step wise down to Concert Bb.

Scale Study Packet

Learn your scales with four simple exercises for each scale.

Progressive Warm-Ups

A slow introduction to chromatic warm-ups.