

Growing Up Your Saxophones from Middle School to College



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Handout



SCAN ME

Instrument Selection Process

Things to look for:

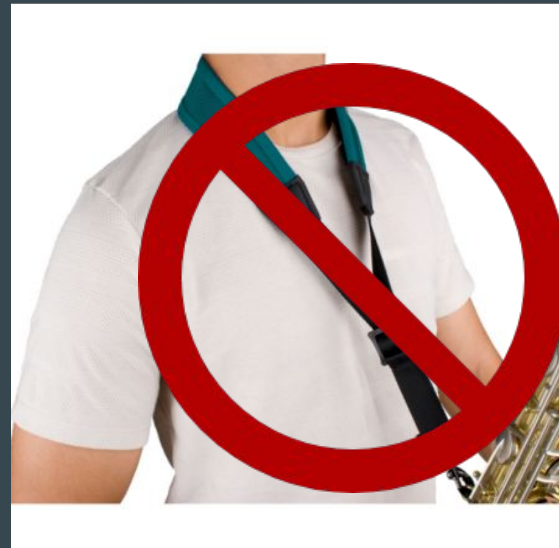
- Hand size
- Body size
- A thinner lower lip
- Jaw flexibility

Things to avoid:

- Severe underbites
- Super large beginner classes
 - Recommended no more than 10

Equipment

- Reed quality and strength matter!
 - 2.5 reeds for a very very short time before moving up to 3's
 - Plastic v. Cane Reeds
 - The “pop” test
- Get a professional mouthpiece if able
 - Plastic vs Hard Rubber vs Metal
- Leather vs. Metal ligatures
- Mouthpiece patch is a good idea
 - Layer patches for teeth placement
- No stretchy neck straps!
 - Even for marching band
- Instruments
 - Beginner vs Intermediate vs Professional
 - Pawn Shops and Marketplace/Internet



Instrument Check Points and Maintenance Issues

“My instrument is broken!”...

- But first ask...is the instrument in adjustment?
 - G#-D - TOP screw
 - 1/1 Bb fingering, tap bis - BOTTOM screw
 - Low B, rock onto C# - on low B pad cup
 - Is the octave pip sealing?



Embouchure Formation

- Top teeth on mouthpiece
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the tip
 - Business card trick
 - Mouthpiece patch
- Reed "cushioned" by bottom lip
- Corners IN
 - Like a rubber band
 - Whistling
- Chin flat but not pulled down
 - Not pointed like a clarinet
- Pull Test



Embouchure Formation

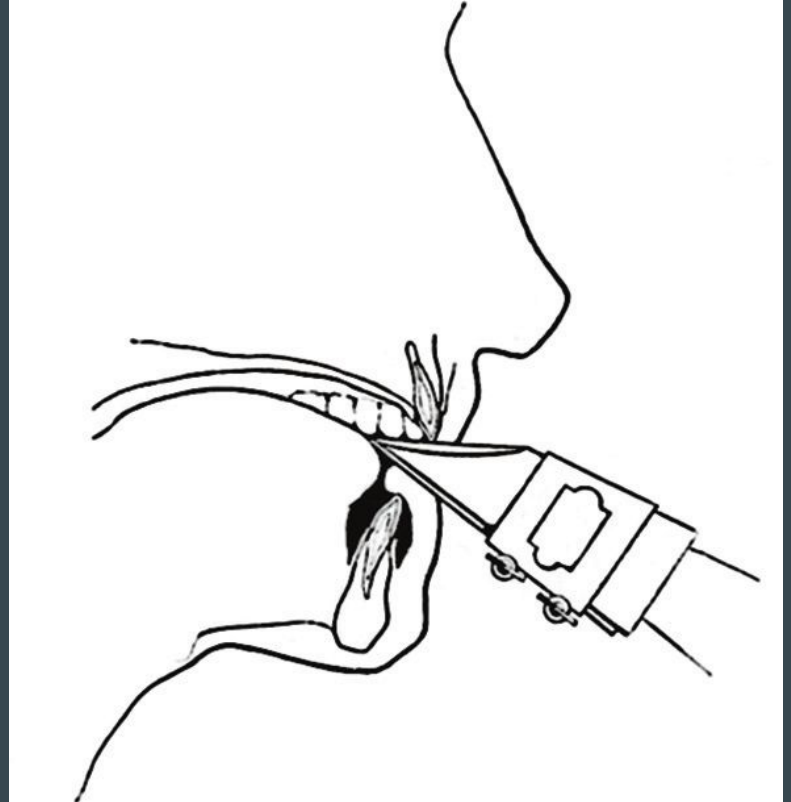


Typical Problems:

- Chin pointed and straight like a clarinet
- Corners pulled back like a clarinet
- Teeth just resting on the top with zero pressure
- Bottom lip placement/pressure
- Mouthpiece angle
- Too little/much mouthpiece in mouth
- Auxiliary saxophones
 - What are they playing? It matters
 - Business card trick

Mouthpiece & Tongue Placement

- Mouthpiece about $\frac{3}{4}$ " from tip
- Cut mouthpiece patch in half, place so student will “bump” teeth against it after doing business card trick
- If the student takes too little mouthpiece, they will have a hard time producing any sound
- If the student takes too much mouthpiece, they will “honk”
- Sides of tongue touching top molars
- Think “dEE” not “tAH” more like clarinet
- Voicing is CRUCIAL in getting a good sound



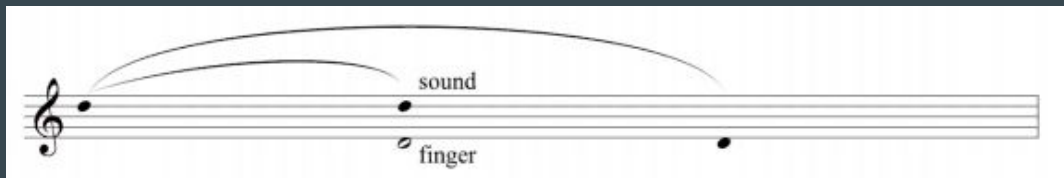
Instrument Placement

- Center vs. Side
 - All depends on the size of the student
- Mouthpiece angle is determined by instrument placement
- Caution!
 - Eb against the body
 - Left hand placement in regard to the palm keys
 - Right hand placement against side keys



Fundamental Exercises

- Mouthpiece pitch
 - Siren call
 - Match to piano or drone
 - Start on B, try to bend pitch down B major scale
- Neck and mouthpiece only
 - I play, You play
 - Practice different rhythms
 - Use this opportunity to carefully listen to articulation
- Matching - Overtones
 - Matching 1: Intro to Mode 1
 - Play middle D with octave key, remove octave key but maintain pitch of middle D, then slur down to low D. “Engage” muscles and increase airspeed - “relax”



Intonation Exercises

- Need to be done daily
- Your beginners can and will improve with overtone exercises
- Your high school students can and will improve with overtone exercises
- Your college students...you guessed it, can and will improve with overtone exercises
- These exercises help us with our tone as saxophone players because they develop our voicing muscles and our ears!
- Let's talk Method Books



Daily Practice

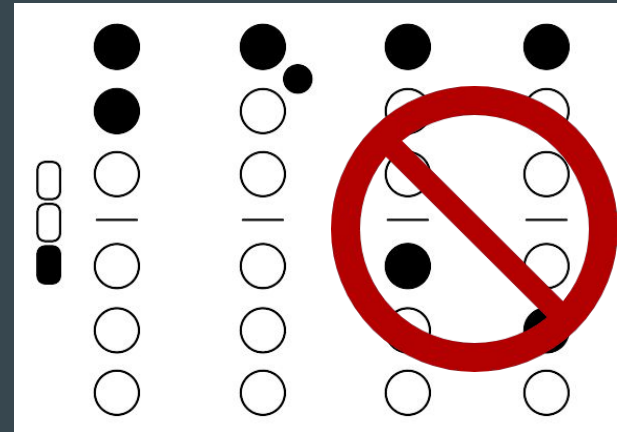
Helps with the refinement of tone, improved air speed, increased embouchure flexibility, recognition of intonation tendencies and ear training, increased facility on the instrument, and the facilitation of the altissimo register

5 minutes	Mouthpiece
10 minutes	Voicing: Matching, Top Tones, F Trick, Reverse Overtones
5 minutes	Vibrato
5 minutes	Long Tones, Dynamics,
5 minutes	Articulation
10 minutes	Intonation: Tuning CD, Drone, Matching Unison/Intervals
20 minutes	Scales, Arpeggios, 3rd, 4th, Scale Patterns, etc.

Tuning, Intonation and Development Checkpoints

- F# (middle) - F# (low) - B
- Do NOT tune to concert F (on alto) - It is the worst note on the instrument
- Mark the cork with a pen
- Beginner saxophone players after year 1 should have almost a full range of the horn with a consistent tone
- Scales lay out very naturally on the saxophone so push your players to learn all 12 major scales by their 7th grade year - full range, all slurred, all equal note values
- Scales will help your students learn which F# and Bb fingerings to use when playing technical passages
- Chromatic scale is super important to start with because it teaches the correct chromatic fingerings for F# and Bb

The age old debate...Bb on saxophone...don't be that guy



90%

Questions?

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