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

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Guiding principals

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. reinforcing embouchure development
 - e. 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 it's smallest component.

III. As a tool to reach another mean

1. Keep them guessing
2. Instead of play on a concert F, play on SI for something different.
3. Any playing "game" can be done on SI- long tone contest, fastest tonguing, etc.

In Action

I. Fundamental Period

1. block note
2. air speed
3. articulation
4. dynamics- color change
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

III. Marching Band

1. Baby steps to marching- gives them less to manage
2. Ground in sound- is foot tech affecting air and/or embouchure
3. Understanding field timing responsibilities

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”
Trumpet	“dah”
Horn	“dah”
Trombone	“dah”
Euphonium	“dah”
Tuba	“dah”
Percussion	“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.

What are Small Instruments (fundamental parts)?

- Flute- headjoint
- Oboe- reed
- Bassoon- reed and bocal
- Clarinet- mouthpiece and barrel
- Bass Clarinet- mouthpiece and neck
- Saxes- mouthpiece and neck
- Brass- Mouthpieces
- Percussion- Mallets

Concert pitches that should be produced by woodwind small instruments (fundamental parts)

Flute

Open Open/Overblown Closed Closed /Overblown

Clarinet - mouthpiece only unless otherwise indicated

5 Eb Sop. Db Sop. Bb. Sop. mouthpiece and barrel Eb Alto Bb Bass EEb Contra BBb Contra

Saxophone - mouthpiece only

12 Soprano Alto Tenor Baritone Bass

Saxophone - mouthpiece and neck

17 Alto Tenor Baritone

Bassoon

20 #2 Bocal and Reed

Oboe

Reed Only

Brasses should match a reference pitch.

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.