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Woodwind Techniques

Diagnostic Assignment

Video 1: Clarinet Lesson by Anna Victoria.

Issue: She pushes her fingers down too hard, she also instructs others to do that.

Fix: Show her how you can fully cover the hole without pushing really hard. Have her play an E pushing as hard as she can, and tell her to slowly let go until the sound stops. Then have her play a G, and slowly put her fingers on until it sounds as an E. This should be the appropriate amount of pressure.

Issue: She does not know how to articulate, everything is an alteration of air

Fix: Have her practice just blowing air and stopping it with the tip of her tongue. Then she creates sound and moves her tongue until she feels the tickling. Have her practice making a sound and stopping the sound without changing airflow, very slowly. Then start speeding it up to the tempo she is attempting.

Issue: Emboushre is too open, noticeable by how her cheeks are puffing out.

Fix: Have her first make sure the top of the mouthpiece is on her teeth. I have a feeling it isn’t, because of how puffed up her upper lip is. Then, help her direct her airflow so it all goes into the clarinet, not just into her cheeks.

Video 2: Bad Player Plays Badly

Issue: Here Emboushre is too wide in her lips. Air is leaking out the sides of her mouth

Fix: Have her create the imaginary fishhooks pulling her corners in. Make sure she is putting enough energy into the sides of her mouth that the emboushre stays firm. Try on the mouthpiece/barrel first.

Issue: Her fingers are flying off the instrument, and when they land, they don’t always cover the holes.

Fix: Have her play a low G, then slowly remove fingers, just until the note changes, showing her that she doesn’t have to take them way off the instrument.

Issue: The instrument is angled too far up.

Fix: Have her play with just the mouthpiece/barrel, and move it up and down until she hears a good sound. Help her be aware of it, then move to the full instrument.