

TONE

"Who do you sound like?" Students should be encouraged to be able to answer that question. Find ways to encourage them to see out videos/recordings of top professionals. Remember, if you were rehearsing for a role of a Southern Belle or Gentleman, you'd probably work on that accent using reference recordings or a dialect coach.

Ben Middleton - middletonb@foxc6.org

Something I tell my kids regularly is that it's called intonation, not intonation. It's much easier to tune when you play with your best tone.

Jeremy Knudtson - knudtsonjeremy@rsdmo.org

- There is no single "right" equipment set up. However, equipment, reeds, and reed placement can have a profound impact on tone.
- On brass instruments, the frequency of lip vibration must match the instrument length to achieve proper resonance



Jeremy Loui - louijeremy@rsdmo.org

The book '*Improving Intonation in Band and Orchestra Performance*' by R.J. Garofalo is a resource that helped me understand pitch tendencies of all of the band instruments as well as the acoustic, psychological and physical concerns when playing musical instruments and teaching young people. We also use a modified version of their intonation chart as a unit in our High School Band classes (usually in February). This unit teaches them to use a tuner, length tuning adjustments and also walks the Horns through tuning their instrument to itself. Overall it makes them aware that tuning is more complex than one note.

Doug Rice - riced@unionrxi.org

When helping a Saxophonist that is playing bright, strident or sharp on E or Eb above the staff, have them close the high D key when they play these notes. It doesn't work well on faster passages, but on slower passages or sustained notes it lowers the pitch and stabilizes those notes.

Doug Rice - riced@unionrxi.org

Every music educator that teaches beginners should check out the Tyler S. Grant youtube series "[TEACHING TONE](#): Successful sounds from the Beginning. These have given me even more tools to help students make great sounds and produce mature tones in the beginning stages.

Doug Rice - riced@unionrxi.org

- We talk about playing with our best individual sound as the basis, which we define as 1) steady (not bumpy, or wavering around), 2) clear (not fuzzy or buzzy), 3) full (not thin), and 4) dark (not bright). We also discuss playing gently. For the beginners, we mostly focus on playing steadily at first, while playing gently, then we add the other tone concepts little by little. From a balance standpoint, we simply ask them to not play louder or softer than the people around them.
- Near the beginning of year two, we take our individual "best sounds", and put them within a subtle interpretation of The Sound Pyramid. We discuss trying to match the sound of the low reeds and brass.
- Sometimes in year three, we will mix it up with a "blend" set-up, where nobody sits next to their sections, and all the bass voices are split evenly throughout the room, creating several pyramid-of-sound-based pods. This makes it easier for a few days for the treble clef instrumentalists to find and match the lows.
- In year two and year three, as we hit the final build into concerts, the reed students will approach a teacher at the piano during warm-up time at the beginning of class. They bring only their mouthpiece (clarinet: mouthpiece + barrel), and we quickly check mouthpieces pitches: Clarinet = F#, Bass Clarinet = F, Alto Sax = A, Tenor Sax = G, Bari Sax = D. When the students are able to consistently play these pitches on the mouthpiece, they are more in tone and in tune with each other, and the band. Typically, the bass clarinet and saxes are too tight, and the pitch is too high, which can make the instrument tone bright and abrasive. Typically, the soprano clarinets are too loose, which can make the instrument tone flat, buzzy, and dull.

Chris Sakowski - sakowskichristopher@rsdmo.org

After emphasizing good tone first, I demonstrate Intonation with my 8th graders each year by bringing in a synthesizer. I start 3 unison sounds (oscillators) and then slowly move 2 of the voices away from perfect intonation. This makes it really easy to hear the science of the sound waves without any human errors. I then play the correct note by itself, then the others and ask them to tell me if it is sharp or flat. This is difficult for some students.

Tracy Thomas - thomast@troy.k12.mo.us

TUNE

Use pitch bends to explore embouchure shape, find center of pitch, improve tone, and once COP is found, you can actually tune your instrument because you are not chasing COP while also tuning. or manipulating off of COP in order to find tuning.

Derek Limback - dlimback@stjschools.org

The Harmony Director and TETuner are resources I use every day in class.

Christian Pierce - piercechristian@rsdmo.org

“getting rid of the waves” but also “smooth like an ice skating rink” when thinking about tuning and “its okay to be out of tune, it’s not okay to stay out of tune. Make the adjustment.”

Jeremy Knudtson - knudtsonjeremy@rsdmo.org

At festival or on stage when we don't have a harmony director, I usually use the clarinet/bass clarinet section as our tuning drone playing three octaves of concert Bb's. Judges seem to appreciate that process.

Jeremy Knudtson - knudtsonjeremy@rsdmo.org

While students "should" not need a tuner on the stand, having a visual reference for them that is readily available can be very beneficial. If you're working on pitch tendencies, having them "see it" and "hear it" can be a game changer.

Ben Middleton - middletonb@foxc6.org

The Woodwind Fingering Guide - <https://www.wfg.woodwind.org/> - has been a great resource for so many things 'woodwind.' This is a cultivated site using user submissions and suggestions for woodwind fingerings from Tin Whistle to Sarrusophone! It contains Basic charts, extended range charts, trill charts, 1/4 tone charts and so many more. They are easy to search, and there are options with notes about intonation, technique, etc.. My Bassoons and Flutes use these charts the most. Anytime there is a difficult upper register flute passage or trill - they go to my room computer, hit the shortcut link and look it up! It is really a great tool!

Doug Rice - riced@unionrxi.org

- After the beginners have built up a consistent embouchure and steady tone, we'll show the students some common starting spots for their tuning situation. We'll check in on those tuning situations from time to time leading into the performances during the first year.
- Early on in year two, once the students have played for a couple of weeks, they begin learning to fine tune their instruments using an amplified low drone. We teach them what "out of tune" and "in tune" sounds like through teacher demonstration, then they begin learning to tune their instruments little by little, day by day, chipping away at the skill forever and ever from that point forward.
- When time allows, we check "The Three C's" on the reed instruments before tuning. If the reed students have the mouthpiece pitches pretty solid, then when they play three different octaves of C (clarinet = mid, then low, then mid, then high, and saxes = mid, then high, then mid, then low), the three different octaves should match better. If the band is 1/3-1/2 full of reed players, and they play better in tone and in tune, then the entire band's sound improves.
- In year three, we start adding in some little games where we "hear" the pitch in our mind, then hum it, then play it. We do this with the first five notes of the Bb concert scale, and it helps them center pitches, and listen to each other more accurately. This is also an opportunity to discuss using vowel shapes to adjust pitch in real time to match.
- Alternatively, this book has been beneficial for being proactive in helping the students identify likely intonation issues before they encounter them: [A Guide to Understanding and Correction of Intonation Problems](#). This book has also been recommended to me, but I have not had time to dig in with it yet: [Tuning for Wind Instruments: A Roadmap to Successful Intonation](#).

Chris Sakowski - sakowskichristopher@rsdmo.org

TIME

- We teach the students to tap their toes with the metronome.
- We teach them how the rhythms fit with their toe tap.
- When we transition to watching the conductor, the students learn the conducting patterns by trying them, then they practice counting with the conductor, while the conductor gradually speeds up and slows down. If the students watch the conductor (at least once per measure), tap their toe, and listen to their neighbors, they will be more likely to play in time on the concert material.
- It's important to move away from the metronome early on in the concert-preparation process. If we wait to take the metronome away too close to the performance, they won't have enough experience watching for time. This is a mildly-controversial topic amongst instrumental music teachers, but most agree that metronomes are important at least somewhere in the learning process for learning to play in time. The more experience the students have transitioning from the metronome to watching the conductor for time, the easier that transition becomes.
- Learning new, more complicated rhythms and time signatures can be challenging if the students are not properly motivated intrinsically. We have found that making little games and competitions can begin motivating the students extrinsically at first, which can often create the intrinsic motivation that we hope for in our students.

Chris Sakowski - sakowskichristopher@rsdmo.org

Rehearsing without a metronome is preparing to play out of time. Instill a strong sense of pulse and encourage students to always practice (alone or in a group) with the metronome. Set a timeframe for removing the met and watch your students excel!

Ben Middleton - middletonb@foxc6.org

The right note at the wrong time is a wrong note! Timing has to be taught from the beginning by establishing the habit of rhythm reading and performance during rehearsal. Use an audible metronome to establish pulse. Demand that students tap their toe/foot to feel the pulse. When appropriate, stress that the down and up of the foot are eighth notes. Have them count smallest subdivision of rhythm with their voice. Clap the rhythm in the hands. Next, transfer the subdivision to their inner voice and have them sizzle/play rhythm while still tapping their foot. Finally, remove the metronome and demand that students watch the director. Consistency with this process in the earlier years will pay dividends through the later years.

Cassie Rice - cassie@palenmusic.com