

Developing Articulation From Middle School to High School

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It Starts With Disciplined Instruction

- Introduce articulation after consistent tone has been established
- Students should know multiple pitches
- Avoid waiting too long

Woodwind Articulation

- Establish tone before starting articulation
- Vowel shape
- Use visuals
- “Tip of the tongue to the tip of the reed”
- Preferred articulation syllables per instrument
 - Flute - “DAH”
 - Oboe - “DOO”
 - Clarinet - “DEE”
 - Bassoon - “DAH”
 - Saxophone - “DOO”
- Look and listen

Brass Articulation Basics

- Start away from the instrument
- Emphasize the concept of air interruption and the tongue makes no sound
- Open throat releases
- Start with a “D” articulation
- High Brass “Dah”
- Low Brass “Doh”

Brass Idiomatic Considerations

- Trumpets MUST breathe through their corners
- Where does the tongue actually touch?
- Some tongue placements may vary from person to person
- Brass need to articulate in different places, tongue will use more surface area, more teeth, etc...

Beginning Band Articulation Refinement

- Refrain from yes or no questions
- Rapid tonguing
- Note releases are important
- Continue refining legato articulation throughout most of the year
- Introduce new style markings in mid to late Spring
- Emphasize tone production

Articulation Reinforcement

- A lot of solo/soli
- Listen and look
- Be insistently persistent - If it doesn't sound right, it probably isn't
- Find your student models
- Avoid private lessons
- Articulation is about perception - what does a student perceive to be "correct"
- Tongue starts vs. air starts

Make it Fun!

- Student Models
- Healthy Competitions
- Kool Aid Day

Multiple Tonguing

- This is the only year where things are not "hard"
- Introduce in microdoses
- Every instrument can double tongue
- Start slowly
- Use your biggest - best sound
- Start with the "K" syllable first - try different syllables
- Strive to make it sound like the "T"
- The tongue makes no sound
- Air distance is further
- Practice away from the mouthpiece
- Notes need to lead at faster tempos
- Think of all multiple tonguing exercises as long tone exercises
- Practice on repeated and moving notes

Developing Ensemble Articulation

- Consistent daily articulation exercise - Do it every day
- Daily Reinforcement of the articulation syllable - Example
- Find an exercise that will develop, maintain, and challenge
- Hear sections, individuals, and model the students that sound characteristic (- demand that each student sound like the model)
- "Full Band Friday"
- All instruments need to be able to play the page perfectly

Cultivating Uniform Articulation in Repertoire

- Repeated notes are always tongued firmer
- Articulated notes after slurs are always tongued firmer
- Accents have nothing to do with playing notes louder, rather the shape of the note
- Accompaniment sometimes must adapt at times to not impede on the clarity of the melody

Implementing More Detail Work on Note Releases

- Note releases are just as important as note starts
- Open throat releases always
- Ensemble uses same syllable for note lengths:
- When exactly does that note release?
- Clock method for full band release

Outdoor Ensemble Articulation

- We use the SAME exercise form middle school to high school marching band
- Might be a little louder...
- Articulations that work inside may need to be modified outside
- Accents may become more ffp, fp, mfp, etc
- Lifted notes may need to become shorter
- Field placement can affect articulation

Articulation In a Nutshell

- Prioritize tone
- Practice it daily
- Teach it early in the beginning band process
- Have a set counting system, articulation exercise, and ensure all directors are implementing it in the same way
- Always hear individuals
- Be Consistent