

“Navigating the Flute: Charting the Course for Young Musicians”

Dr. Lyndsay Eiben

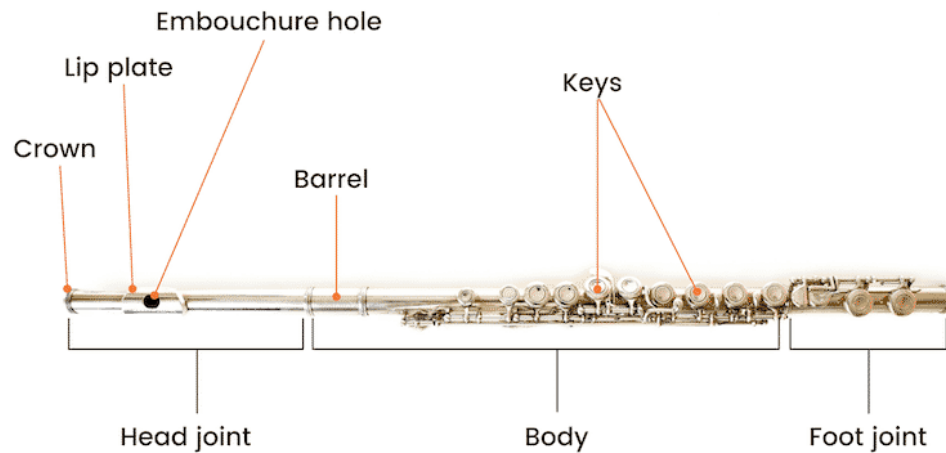
Assistant Professor of Music – Flute and Music Education

University of Texas Permian Basin

1. Physical setup (instrument)

a. Putting the flute together

- i. Grab the foot joint by the bottom and carefully connect to the body. The pieces should fit together easily. If this is not the case, the joints may need to be cleaned with a cleaning cloth to remove buildup.



- ii. Hold the flute by the barrel and gently put the headjoint inside the barrel. The pieces should fit together easily. If this is not the case, the joints may need to be cleaned with a cleaning cloth to remove buildup.

b. Hand position

- i. Hands and fingers should always be curved and relaxed.
- ii. Three main points of contact to distribute the weight of the flute evenly. (Chin, Right Thumb and Left index knuckle)

c. Playing position

- i. The planes
- ii. Angle of hips vs. angle of the flute
- iii. Chair vs. standing

d. Plugs or no plugs?

- i. This depends on the size of the hands. Most 6th graders have pretty small hands but I encourage my students to have all plugs removed by

the end of the first year of playing. You can do this one at a time. The hardest to remove will be the left hand, third finger.

2. Physical setup (flute)

a. Pneumopro

- i. This is a great tool to teach your students the beginning stages of flexibility, **when used correctly!**



- ii. Use the colors to teach the students the appropriate angle of the air for each register of the flute.
- iii. I recommend having a class set when possible!

b. Headjoint on face

- i. Inside edge of the tone hole should sit slightly below the lip line. Fit the headjoint all the way into the chin.
- ii. Be sure to check your students at multiple angles.

c. Headjoint alignment

- i. The edge of the tone hole should align with the outside edge of the first key, relatively. The position of the headjoint can depend on the size of the student's lips.
- ii. The headjoint should be pulled out from the body to about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch.

d. Listening for a proper tone, *and how to fix it.*

- i. In general, an airy sharp sound either means the air direction is too high or the headjoint is too high on the face, or a combination of both.
- ii. A hollow, covered sound that is often flat in pitch means that the tone hole is turned too far inwards in the direction of the student's face.
- iii. The first notes – B, A, G, F – start to add an octave slur on F to work on early stages of flexibility

3. Flexibility

a. Embouchure

- i. The flute embouchure should feel relaxed in general.

- ii. Bottom lip – pouted out over the tone hole. (Cover about 1/3 of the tone whole with the lip)
- b. Air direction
 - i. Most of the time, will be at a downwards angle.
 - ii. This is dependent on the register and volume.
- c. What being flexible means
 - i. The student is flexible when they can change their air direction smoothly and easily.
 - ii. Wider intervals are not an issue.
 - iii. Flexible pitch
- d. Applying with first pitches
- e. Exercises from beginner to advanced
 - i. Headjoint “octave slur” exercises
 - ii. Start off with octave slur on F and work your way up
 - iii. Eventually add harmonics to the routine

4. Vibrato

- a. How to accomplish the “pulse”
 - i. Always thinking about forward direction!
- b. Teaching pulses with rhythm
 - i. Switch it up!
- c. Width vs. speed
 - i. Variable depending on register and volume
- d. Applying the vibrato to music
 - i. Start with rhythmic breath pulses
 - ii. Begin to let the vibrato happen naturally

5. Articulation and double tonguing

- a. Exercises from beginner to advanced
 - i. Start with double tonguing on one note
 - ii. Slowly incorporate finger movement with tongue
- b. Stages of double tongue literature

6. Technique

- a. Start small! – scale bites
 - i. This can be as you introduce key signatures
- b. One octave scales and arpeggios
 - i. Finger wiggles!
- c. Two octave scales and arpeggios – relationship of fingerings
- d. Full range scales – All 12 Major keys for advanced players
- e. Fun patterns! – incorporate arpeggios