

# Clarinet Curriculum

Revised 2020-2021

Andrew Brown & Emily Dobmeier



**EASTMAN  
COMMUNITY  
MUSIC SCHOOL**

## Level 1

### **Musical Skills**

Rhythm	Understands duple meter and basic note values of whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes Is in the beginning stages of verbalizing rhythm patterns and maintaining a steady tempo	
Pitch	Beginning to read note names and demonstrate associated fingerings	
Articulation	Beginning to consider basic articulation of tongued and slurred notes	
Dynamics	Beginning to understand basic dynamics, but may not yet be able to implement in performance	

### **Technical/Executive Skills**

Embouchure	Able to make a basic sound, but may exhibit common difficulties of early embouchure development: Collapsed or bunched chin Puffed cheeks Too much or too little lower lip Too much or too little mouthpiece taken Unconscious motion in jaw and musculature Muscular development is in beginning stages	
Articulation/Tongue Position	Articulation is in early stages of development and is considered, but may appear heavy and/or lack facility	
Air Support	Tone still striving for clarity and characteristic center and may not yet be supported by a constant stream of pressurized wind May manifest as a hollow/breathy, quiet/spitty or loud/uncontrolled quality	
Hand Position	Able to cover most tone holes and utilize most keys, but may exhibit common difficulties of early hand position development: Collapsing of knuckles instead of rounded fingers Difficulty covering lower right hand notes Right hand thumb position incorrect Left hand first finger hops to A key instead of rocking Right hand braces on side Eb key	

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	Locked pinkies and third fingers	
Other	Angle of clarinet is correct at roughly 30 degrees Proper assembly and disassembly of the instrument	

**Range:** Low E - Throat Bb    **Scales:** F Major, G Major

## Suggested Methods

Belwin Student Instrumental Course, Book 1 Elementary

Breeze Easy Book 1

## Sample Solos

Clarinata (Whitney); Carnival (Couperin/Lamb)

## ECMS Recommendations

May or may not be ready to participate in juries

## Level 2

### Musical Skills

Rhythm	Understands sixteenth note combinations Beginning to understand dotted rhythms Able to verbalize most rhythmic patterns Able to deconstruct basic time signatures in simple/compound meter Student has been introduced to the idea of subdivision Beginning to maintain a steady tempo	
Pitch	Able to read note names on and below the staff and demonstrate associated fingerings Can identify what is in the key signature, but may struggle to associate this with a specific key Student can name enharmonic pitches, but may still have difficulty applying to their music	
Articulation	Able to differentiate between slurred and tongued articulations	
Dynamics	Able to identify dynamic markings and their meaning Makes attempts to play terraced dynamics	
Artistic Presentation	Beginning to understand musical moods, characters and styles	

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Other (Theory, Form, etc.)	Understanding of repeat signs and DS/DC al Coda Able to identify thematic return	
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## Technical/Executive Skills

Embouchure	Able to point chin on command, with and without instrument No puffing of cheeks Beginning to hold a proper embouchure for short periods of playing time Reduced unconscious motion in jaw and musculature	
Articulation/Tongue Position	Makes an adequate light articulation Can distinguish between long and short articulation and demonstrate this in playing Has the ability to produce a characteristic clarinet tone Has the ability to produce F# on mouthpiece and barrel, but may lack consistency yet	
Air Support	Understands the basics of proper airflow and support Has ability to properly sustain a note for 12-20 seconds May still struggle to maintain good habits during technically involved passage work	
Hand Position	Right hand thumb position is correct Right hand no longer braces on side Eb key Left hand first finger no longer hops to A key and is able to execute with a rocking motion Finger strength developing and beginning to address collapsing of knuckles Some difficulty covering lower right hand notes may still occur (depending on size of hands)	
Other	Proper head orientation without the chin dipping	

**Range:** Low E - Clarion G    **Scales:** C Major

## Suggested Methods

Belwin Student Instrumental Course, Book 1 or Book 2

Breeze Easy Book 2

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## Sample Solos

Gypsy Moods (Leonard); Minuetto (Hovey); Chrysalis (Langenus)

## ECMS Recommendations

Studio or general recital performance

## Level 3

### Musical Skills

Rhythm	Ability to sight read duple meter rhythms without verbalizing Ability to maintain a steady tempo Ability to count rhythms, including sixteenth-note divisions in simple meters Beginning to demonstrate use of subdivision	
Pitch	Beginning to read note names above the staff and demonstrate associated fingerings Can identify what major key is associated with a given key signature Can construct arpeggios in a given key	
Articulation	Able to identify staccato, legato, and accented articulations, but may struggle to execute in practice	
Dynamics	< see air support >	
Artistic Presentation	Attention to phrase endings	
Other (Theory, Form, etc.)	Has a basic understanding of cut time	

### Technical/Executive Skills

Embouchure	Maintaining proper embouchure approximately 50% of playing time Displays appropriate relationship of upper/lower teeth alignment Jaw is stable	
Articulation/Tongue Position	Clarity of articulation developing nicely Consistent stream of air when articulating, staccato still developing Continuing to develop light articulation Tone quality is becoming more focused and properly shaped Intonation is fairly consistent	

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	Has the ability to produce 3rd partial left hand notes without register key	
Air Support	Beginning to show nuance in musical expression of dynamics Beginning to maintain a supported tone in a way that enhances technically challenging material	
Hand Position	Continuing to address/improve collapsed knuckles Hand/finger strength improving Ability to completely cover tone holes Beginning to focus on connection and consistency between notes	
Other	Student is beginning to keep their eyes looking forward in the music and read ahead of where they are playing	

**Range:** Low E - High C      **Scales:** Chromatic scale, All major scales one octave beginning two octave scales as range permits

## Suggested Methods

Belwin Student Instrumental Course, Book 2; The Progressing Clarinetist (Lester)

## Sample Solos

Allegretto Fantasia (Miskow/Voxman); Fantasy Piece (Schumann/Voxman); Nocturne (Bassi/Voxman); Scherzo in D minor (Koepke); Allegro Molto (Schubert/Webb)

## ECMS Recommendations

Studio or general recital performance, ensembles, music theory

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## Level 4

### **Musical Skills**

Rhythm	Ability to sight read triple meter rhythms without verbalizing Beginning to understand mixed meters and irregular note groupings Can navigate between duple and compound rhythms back-to-back Beginning to pace rubato in a musical manner Continuing to develop subdivision	
Pitch	Able to read note names above the staff and demonstrate associated fingerings Understands the construction of a major scale Beginning to understand chords Can readily name major key signatures Has a handle on reading enharmonic pitches and can readily recognize A#, Db, Gb and E#	
Articulation	Continuing to incorporate staccato, legato, and accented articulations in practice	
Artistic Presentation	Able to identify phrase length and make reasonable breath marks Able to identify the high and low points of a phrase	
Other (Theory, Form, etc.)	Can identify returning themes within a larger context	

### **Technical/Executive Skills**

Embouchure	Able to hold a proper embouchure, perhaps with the exception of large leaps in registration and extreme technical requirements	
Articulation/Tongue Position	Clarity and facility of articulation developing nicely Consistent stream of air when articulating Gaining ability to produce characteristic short articulation, but may lack consistency Further development of shape and tone color Intonation is consistent Student has a basic understanding of voicing Has the ability to produce overtone partials in left hand and upper right hand without register key	
Air Support	Ability to sustain a supported tone through all registers	

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	Low register is resonant, rich and strong without being unfocused Upper register tone is clear and characteristic without being forced or overcontrolled with embouchure/mouth Can sustain a tone for 20-30 seconds	
Hand Position	Finger strength allows for positive finger motion (student can “pop” toneholes) Hand position is developing well enough to facilitate fluid technical passage work Able to execute a fluid and even trill in most fingers, but may struggle with the ring fingers or difficult pinky key combinations Pinkies remain in the vicinity of pinky keys	
Other		

**Range:** Low E - High G

**Scales:** Chromatic scale and all major scales, two to three octaves

## Suggested Methods

The Advancing Clarinetist (Lester); Voxman Selected Duets, Volume I; Hite Melodious and Progressive studies, Book 1

## Sample Solos

Minuet from Divertimento in D (Mozart/Voxman); Petit Concert (Milhaud); Sonatina (Gordon); Wacht Auf (Bach/Tomei); Prelude (Debussy/Theodore Presser Co); Sonata in G-minor (Handel/Lurie); Andante Cantabile (Mozart/Dangain)

## ECMS Recommendations

Studio, general, or showcase recital performance, ensembles, music theory  
Purchase of “Breath Builder”

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## Level 5

### **Musical Skills**

Rhythm	Understands mixed meters and irregular note groupings, but may struggle to sight read them Paces rubato in a musical manner, but may have some difficulty in non-metered/contemporary music Exhibits a good sense of inner rhythm and subdivision	
Pitch	Understands the construction of minor scales, as well as major and minor key relations Understands chord structure and beginning to identify in the context of their music	
Articulation	Basic understanding of stylistic articulations beyond simply what is marked on the page	
Artistic Presentation	Shows musical contrast between larger sections of a piece	
Other (Theory, Form, etc.)	Able to verbalize overall formal structures Has a basic understanding of rondo form and sonata form	

### **Technical/Executive Skills**

Embouchure	Using a proper embouchure most of the time	
Articulation/Tongue Position	Student can articulate 16th notes at 100 Ability to produce characteristic stopped staccato consistently Minimal-to-no throat motion when articulating Tone exhibits depth and projection Student plays in tune May have the ability to play "bugle calls" without the register key	
Air Support	Combined use of air support, voicing and proper embouchure mechanics contribute to an overall beautiful presentation Student is beginning to be able to manipulate intonation without distorting tone quality	
Hand Position	Little to no collapsing of knuckles Minimal tension in wrists and forearms Hand position facilitates fast, positive, and even finger technique Ability to distinguish between legato and positive finger techniques	



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Other	Aural skills are developing well enough to distinguish between small qualitative differences in tone/style/articulation etc	
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**Range:** Low E - High G

**Scales:** Beginning to work on minor scales, two to three octaves

## Suggested Methods

Hite Melodious and Progressive Studies; Klose Celebrated Method For Clarinet, Selected; Voxman Selected Duets, Volume II; Rose 32 Etudes

## Sample Solos

Cantilene (Cahuzac); Divertimento (Baermann); Adagio and Tarantella (Cavallini); Five Bagatelles (Finzi); Arabesque (JeanJean); Rhapsodie (Osborne); Solo de concours (Rabaud); Concerto No 1 (Weber); Concerto No. 1 (Stamitz); Variations, Op.33 (Weber); Introduction, Theme and Variations (Weber)

## Sample Excerpts

Beethoven Symphony 6, movements 1 & 2; Brahms Symphony 1, movement 3; Brahms Symphony 3, movement 1 & 2; Dvorak Symphony 8, movement 2; Mendelssohn Midsummer Night's Dream Scherzo\*; Mendelssohn Symphony 3, movements 1 & 2; Rimsky-Korsakov Capriccio Espagnol, movements 1 & 3; Shostakovich Festive Overture; Tchaikovsky Symphony 5, movement 1\*

\*often appear on RPYO auditions

## ECMS Recommendations

Studio, general, or showcase recital performance, ensembles, potentially diploma/honors program

RPYO/Hochstein Auditions

Suggest upgrading instrument if needed

## Level 6

### Musical Skills

Rhythm	Paces rubato in a musical manner in non-metered/contemporary music Plays in a way that show strong inner rhythm and subdivision skills	
Pitch	Able to identify basic chords/arpeggios within the context of their music	

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	May have experience with extended pitch techniques (quarter tones, timbre trills, glissandos)	
Articulation	Able to perform a wide variety of articulations	
Artistic Presentation	Student plays with good artistry	
Other (Theory, Form, etc.)		

## Technical/Executive Skills

Embouchure	No readily apparent embouchure concerns	
Articulation/Tongue Position	Has the ability to tongue rapidly, clearly, and musically Voicing facilitates an in-tune and beautiful sound throughout the registers	
Air Support	Uses tone production in an artistic way (ie. effective dynamic range, varying colors of sound, etc.)	
Hand Position	No readily apparent hand position issues	
Other	Is able to distinguish between small qualitative differences in tone/style/articulation etc.	

**Range:** Full range

**Scales:** All major and minor scales, two to three octaves

## Suggested Methods

Rose 32 and 40 Studies for Clarinet

## Sample Solos

Concertino (Weber); Concerto No. 2 (Weber); Grand Duo (Weber); Sonata (Poulenc); Duo Concertante (Milhaud); Fantasie-Caprice (Lefebvre); Solo de Concours (Messenger); Sonata (Saint-Saens)

## ECMS Recommendations

Solo recital, honors program