

Pedagogical Guide for Accommodating Learning Differences in the Private Clarinet Studio

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Pedagogical Strategies for Accommodating Behavior and Emotional Characteristics

Private clarinet students who have been diagnosed with certain disabilities or disorders such as ADD, ADHD, ASD, anxiety, depression, and learning disabilities, or students who regularly exhibit behaviors associated with these disorders can benefit from some simple accommodations. According to Adamek and Darrow (2010), music educators feel that students with behavior disorders can be the most difficult to manage and successfully integrate into their classrooms. One of the most important strategies to remember for teaching all special learners is to realize that they are not behaving or reacting a certain way to make the teacher's job difficult. They are behaving in a certain way because they have a disability. It is sometimes easy to forget this, since behavioral and emotional disorders are not visible on the outside.

Many behaviors overlap from one disorder or disability to another. Symptoms that many people associate with ADD or ADHD, such as inattention or being easily distracted, are behaviors that can also be exhibited by students with anxiety, depression, learning disabilities, or sleep disorders ("Symptoms and Diagnosis of ADHD," 2020). Students with ADD or ADHD often have other disorders as well, such as conduct problems, learning disorders, anxiety, or depression ("Other Concerns and Conditions with ADHD," 2020). It is not as important for the clarinet teacher to know the cause of a behavior as it is to recognize the behavior and employ effective strategies to help the student learn successfully in their studio.

Below I have listed different behavior characteristics that private clarinet teachers have encountered in their studios and provided pedagogical strategies that teachers can use to help students with these characteristics find success in their lessons. It is important to note that because a student exhibits a characteristic, it does not mean they have a particular disability or

disorder. Also, students with a disability or disorder may not exhibit all the characteristics listed, or any characteristics at all.

Using the principles of Universal Design for Learning, I recommend that teachers incorporate many of these strategies into their teaching plan on a regular basis. The accommodations are not only designed for students with disabilities and disorders, but also can be used to address different learning styles.

Strategies listed are derived from various sources, which are cited when appropriate, or are strategies developed from my own personal experiences as a private clarinet teacher.

Behavior

A student who is easily distracted.

Strategies

1. Clear the teaching area of anything distracting. Look around your studio or teaching area. Something that you may not notice such as a ticking clock or a piece of paper fluttering from a fan can be extremely distracting for a student who struggles with attention (Melago, 2014). Try the following activities to find potential distractions in your studio.
 - Sit alone in silence in your studio for a few minutes. Close your eyes and listen. Make note of any extraneous sounds that you hear. If possible, remove the object or objects eliciting the sound.
 - When a student is distracted, follow their gaze to see what has caught their attention. A brightly colored poster or a shelf full of knick-knacks can be removed or placed out of the student's line of vision.

- Ask the student what has caught their attention. Approach the question with a curious tone rather than one of annoyance or exasperation. Remember, the student is only reacting to the environment in the way that their disability dictates. If something in particular is causing their inattention, remove the object.
2. Create and use a lesson notebook. Distracted students may have trouble remembering directions and instructions once the lesson is over.

Example: A lesson notebook can be as complex or simple as is necessary. A three-ring binder is great for adding content and moving sections around. Some recommended sections could include a practice session outline, warmups, assignments, scales/theory, fingerings, a guide for breaking in reeds, list of resonance fingerings, and student practice journal.
 3. Students with depression or anxiety may be inattentive due to worry (“Anxiety and Depression in Children,” 2020). It is important to note that a private music teacher is not a trained therapist, and addressing issues surrounding mental illness is out of the scope of their expertise. A private music teacher should never offer medical advice to a student and should refer any concerns for the student’s safety through the proper channels.

Behavior

A student who has a short attention span or poor concentration.

Strategies

When a student has difficulty keeping their attention on any one task, pacing of the lesson can be essential for success. It is important for a teacher to be flexible with their lesson plans and be willing to adapt when necessary.

1. Plan activities that last only short increments of time, such as five or ten minutes. Be flexible with this, and be open to bouncing back and forth between activities if that is what the student needs to remain engaged. Switch modalities from one activity to another (Hammel, 2017).

Example: After five minutes of scale drills, switch to rhythm work. The student can practice sightreading rhythms while clapping or using a non-pitched instrument (such as rhythm sticks). After five minutes, switch to a verbal activity, such as discussing the history of the clarinet. Continue this pattern with different activities for the length of the lesson. A lot can be accomplished in five minutes when an individual is fully focused on the task.

2. Change the modality (Hammel, 2017).

Example: The student is working on a technical piece but is losing focus. Ask the student to clap the rhythm or sing-finger the piece. Changing the modality can help the student refocus on the same activity.

3. Provide a written schedule for the lesson. This can help the student focus when they know there is a concrete beginning and end to an activity. Be as detailed as necessary. A written schedule can also help students with ASD. Many individuals with ASD are resistant to change and rely on a consistent routine to be productive (Adamek & Darrow, 2010). A written lesson schedule that is structured the same from week to week can help these students feel comfortable and be successful.
4. Limit the amount of time that you talk. This is especially important for private teachers with little experience. Often teachers don't realize how much time they spend talking at a student. A good way to determine if you are talking too much is to record the lesson.

Watching yourself teach can be an eye-opening experience, as you may notice habits in yourself of which you were not aware.

Example: If you find yourself talking too much in a lesson, think of ways to show the student what you are telling them. Instead of explaining that you want them to use a lighter staccato, play the desired sound for them. Instead of telling a student what you liked or did not like in the solo they performed, ask them to explain what they did well and what they can improve.

5. Incorporate music styles that interests the student.

Example: The student enjoys video game music. Add these kinds of pieces to their repertoire in ways that will benefit the student. If they are working on technique, find a piece that allows them to work that aspect. Use music that interests them as their “etude” pieces. Duets of music that the student enjoys can also be used for sight-reading practice.

Behavior

A student that is restless, overly active, or unable to sit still.

Strategies

Students who learn best kinesthetically may need to move around during a lesson. This is also true for students who have behavior disorders that make sitting still difficult (Hammel, 2017).

There is no rule that says a student must sit for an entire lesson. The following strategies can be used for fidgety students.

1. Encourage the student to stand while playing the clarinet.
2. Work in break time where the student can stand and stretch or move around the studio.

Do this consistently and in every lesson. Include this break time on the lesson schedule.

3. Practice rhythms by clapping, tapping, marching, or by using a non-pitched percussion instruments such as bells, sand blocks, or rhythm sticks (Hammel, 2017).

4. Allow students to respond to questions with a dry erase board.

Example: The student is learning scales and key signatures. Instead of replying verbally, the student can instead draw the key signatures and/or scales with accidentals on a dry erase board with a staff. A laminated paper with a staff drawn on it can be used as a dry erase board as well.

5. A student that is verbally overactive can benefit from a lesson schedule where you work in “playing time” and “talking time”. Redirect them gently when they talk during playing time.

Example: Set specific rules for playing time and talking time that you follow each lesson, such as, “After we play scales, I want you to tell me one exciting thing that happened in band class today.”

Behavior

Student is anxious.

Strategies

Anxiety Disorder is a mental illness, and teachers are not therapists or psychiatrists. Private clarinet teachers should never offer medical advice to a student and should refer any concerns for the student’s safety through the proper channels. However, there are techniques and strategies that can minimize a student’s anxiety response in a clarinet lesson. The following strategies are suggested by Nelson (2019).

1. Guide the student through deep breathing exercises. If a student is having an anxiety response, stop whatever activity is causing the distress and talk the student through deep breathing exercises.
2. Stand up and move around. Exercise and physical activity are recommended to alleviate anxiety. Have the student stand up and jump up and down, do jumping jacks, or guide them through yoga poses.
3. Listen to the student. Individuals with anxiety might need to “talk it out” with someone they trust. You do not necessarily need to provide solutions for the student but taking the time to be a sympathetic ear could be all that the student needs.

Behavior

Performance anxiety

Strategies

1. If a student is overly nervous about performance, choose literature that you know they will be able to perform successfully. Save the challenging pieces after they feel more comfortable performing.
2. Begin preparing students early so they do not feel rushed.
3. Have the student record their piece for you once a week. Require that they stand up and play if that is what they will be doing in the actual performance.
4. Organize low stakes performance opportunities. Assisted Living facilities are often welcoming of volunteer performances, and your students can learn about service to their community as well as practicing their performance skills.
5. Help students set small performance goals that increase in expectation over time.

Example: For a first performance, simply making it through from beginning to end is an adequate goal. (Blanchard, 2007).

6. Practice mindfulness meditation and breathing exercises in lessons. Do these on a regular basis before the student performs for you and encourage them to make this a regular part of their practice routine.

Behavior

A student who is shy, does not respond verbally to questions, or who does not initiate spontaneous socialization.

Strategies

Students who cannot or do not want to communicate verbally can make it difficult for a private teacher to assess whether the student is comprehending the material. It is also important for students to be able to self-assess their playing so that they can learn to troubleshoot issues in their practice session. Finding an alternative means of communication will benefit these students.

1. Give the student ample time to respond to a question (at least 5 seconds, but longer if the student requires more time). The student may need extra time to process the question and formulate an answer.
2. Allow students to respond by writing their answers. You can use a notebook or a dry erase board for this purpose.
3. Allow students to draw their answers on paper or a dry erase board.
4. Allow a student to respond with gestures.

5. Make picture or word cards that the student can point to in order to answer a question or communicate their needs. Keep them on the music stand or nearby for easy access (Adamek & Darrow, 2010).

Summary

Students with behavior disorders, or who exhibit behavior disorder characteristics, react in certain ways because of their disability. It is important for the clarinet teacher to recognize behaviors that may be disruptive to the student's ability to learn and accommodate those behaviors in the most beneficial way possible.

Further Reading and Resources

- Attention Deficit Disorder Association – www.add.org
 - Website provides information and resources about ADD.
- Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) – www.chadd.org
 - Website provides information on ADD/ADHD for adults, parents & caregivers, educators, and professionals.
- Autism Speaks – www.autismspeaks.org
 - Provides information and help for Autism Spectrum Disorders
- National Autism Association – www.nationalautismassociation.org
 - Provides information and resources for Autism Spectrum Disorders

- “Behavior Issues in the Music Classroom” by Darrow and Adamek, in *Exceptional Music Pedagogy for Children with Exceptionalities: International Perspectives* (edited by Blair and McCord)
 - ISBN: 978-0-19-023457-7
- “Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder” by McCord in *Teaching the Postsecondary Music Student with Disabilities*
 - ISBN: 978-0-19-046777-7
- “Psychiatric Disorders” by McCord in *Teaching the Postsecondary Music Student with Disabilities*
 - ISBN: 978-0-19-046777-7
- “Autism Spectrum Disorders” by McCord in *Teaching the Postsecondary Music Student with Disabilities*
 - ISBN: 978-0-19-046777-7

Pedagogical Strategies for Students with Learning Disabilities and Processing Disorders

Students with specific learning disabilities made up the largest population of students receiving special education services in the United States from 2018-2019 (“Children and Youth with Disabilities,” 2019). The term “learning disability” is used to describe specific disabilities that affect a particular processing area. A student who is diagnosed with a learning disability must show a disparity between their abilities measured by achievement or intelligence tests, and their actual achievement. The difference in the two cannot be from any other factors such as intellectual disabilities or sensory impairment (Adamek & Darrow, 2010).

The following list shows various specific learning disabilities and the processing areas that are affected.

- Dyslexia – a language and reading disability
- Dyscalculia – difficulty with math concepts and processes
- Dysgraphia – a writing disorder that results in illegible handwriting
- Dyspraxia – a sensory integration disorder that causes motor coordination problems
- Central auditory processing disorder – difficulty with mental processing and remembering language-related tasks
- Nonverbal learning disorders – difficulty understanding nonverbal cues such as body language
- Visual perceptual/visual motor deficit – letter reversal, difficulty copying accurately, loses space frequently
- Language disorder (aphasia/dysphasia) – difficulty understanding spoken language, poor reading comprehension (Adamek & Darrow, 2010, p. 169).

Students with a diagnosed learning disorder, and who receive special education

services through their school, will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that lists, among other things, the accommodations and modifications that public school teachers are required to follow for the student. Though a private clarinet teacher does not have access to the student's IEP, if the parent discloses that their child has a specific learning disability, the teacher should ask if there are any accommodations or modifications that they could follow in their lessons.

Below are specific processing disorder characteristics encountered by clarinet teachers, and strategies for accommodation. Strategies listed are derived from various sources, which are cited when appropriate, or are strategies developed from my own personal experiences as a private clarinet teacher.

Processing disorder characteristic

Student has difficulty reading and processing written instructions/assignments.

Strategies

1. Audio record lessons assignments and instructions for the student.

Example: Use a voice recorder app on their smartphone. If they do not have a smartphone, you can record on your own device and send the file to their email.

2. Type assignments and instructions in a document, and encourage the student to use a text to speech program to read it out loud to them.

Example: There are many apps and computer programs that convert text to speech. They range in price from free to very expensive. Try different apps and programs until you find one that works for you and your student.

3. Enlarge print on any text instructions and assignments.

Processing disorder characteristic

Student has difficulty reading music.

Strategies

Students with various learning disabilities can struggle to read music for many different reasons.

It is important to try many strategies to see what works best for the individual. The following strategies and examples are suggested by Hammel (2017), except where indicated.

1. Use of color can be very helpful to students who have difficulty reading music due to visual stress or a specific learning disability. (Adamek & Darrow, 2010).

Example: Use color overlays over sheet music.

Example: Print sheet music on colored paper.

Example: Color code fingerings and have scale/arpeggio exercises printed in color, with each note the same color of the fingering.

2. Enlarge sheet music.
3. Isolate sections of the sheet music by cutting and pasting.

Example: If a student is working on a difficult or visually busy section of music, make a photocopy, then cut out the section. Paste it onto blank paper.

4. Use a highlighter to mark certain information, such as key changes or accidentals.

5. Teach music using different modalities.

Example: Allow the student to learn by watching your fingers or by listening to either a recording or to you playing the music.

Processing disorder characteristic

Student has difficulty with working memory.

Strategies

Working memory is the process of taking stored information and using it to achieve a task.

Students with learning disabilities that affect working memory can find it difficult to listen to, remember, or follow directions. (“Working Memory: The Engine for Learning,” 2020).

1. When giving directions, reduce the number of steps in the direction list (“Working Memory: The Engine for Learning,” 2020).

Example: The student is learning scales. A student with working memory problems may have difficulty with the following sequence. “Tell me the key signature of the D major scale, then play the scale one octave on eighth notes, tonguing on the way up and slurring on the way down. Make sure you play the arpeggio afterwards,” Instead, give only one direction, (“tell me the key signature of the D major scale”). After the student responds, ask then to play the ascending scale tongued. After they play this, then ask for the descending scale tongued.

1. Reduce the amount of information that the student must recall from memory (“Working Memory: The Engine for Learning,” 2020).

Example: Provide a sheet with fingerings, definitions, scales, or directions. Keep it displayed on the music stand at all times.

Example: Provide a word bank (Adamek & Darrow, 2010). If the student struggles to remember the words for dynamics or tempi, make a word bank with these words and definitions, or with pictures to illustrate their meanings. Keep the work bank on the music stand during lessons.

2. Choose repertoire that is appropriate for the student. If they struggle with working memory, complex music may be very difficult.

Example: Provide music with familiar tunes or repetitive music.

3. Provide a simplified version of new music, then gradually add elements back to the music over time (McCord, 2016).

Example: Remove items such as time signature, key signature, and title. Work on pitch and fingerings only. When they have mastered the pitches, add the rhythm back to the music. Continue adding more complex elements as the student progresses.

Processing disorder characteristic

The student struggles with number concepts (including counting and rhythms).

Strategies

1. Teach rhythms without the clarinet or the melodic notes (Hammel, 2017).

Example: When introducing a new piece of music, have the student work only on rhythms using verbal syllables, counting, tapping, clapping, or using a non-pitched percussion instrument. When the rhythms are secure, introduce the clarinet back into the music. The student can play the rhythms on a static pitch that is easy for them (such as throat tone E, open G, or low C). When this is comfortable for the student, introduce the music as written.

2. Teach rhythms with manipulatives (Hammel, 2017).

Example: Seeing rhythms represented visually by length of the manipulative can help students understand abstract rhythm concepts. Paper cut to different lengths and laminated can be used to build rhythms. Draw the note onto the paper so that they can see both the note and the visual representation of the value. Another fun idea is to use Lego blocks. The different size Legos can represent different rhythmic values, and the student

can snap them onto a Lego board as they build rhythms. Draw the notes onto the Legos with a sharpie. Students can then see a concrete representation of the rhythms in their music. This is also a great strategy for kinesthetic and visual learners.

3. Teach rhythms by ear.

Example: Tap, sing, or play the rhythm and have the student repeat it back to you.

Example: Record yourself tapping, singing, or playing the rhythms. Allow the student access to the recording at home so they can practice. Have them follow along with their music as they practice echoing the rhythms.

Summary

Students with specific learning disabilities can succeed in music with proper accommodations and modifications. Learning disabilities affect how the student processes, stores, retrieves, or responds to information. Not all students with learning disabilities will struggle in music; some may even excel since much of the information is presented aurally and kinesthetically. (Adamek & Darrow, 2010). Clarinet teachers that incorporate aural or kinesthetic activities to replace traditional approaches to reading music can help students with learning disabilities, as well as students who learn best through aural or kinesthetic means find success.

Further Reading and Resources

- International Dyslexia Association – www.dyslexiaida.org
 - Website with information on dyslexia including definitions, signs, and resources.
- Learning Disabilities Association of America – www.ldaamerica.org

- Information designed for parents, educators, adults, professionals, and students about learning disabilities and related disorders.
- Smarties for Brass – www.smartiesforbrass
 - An example of a color-coding system created for trumpet students learning scales
- *Dyslexia: 100 Ideas for Secondary Teachers* by Green and Reid
 - ISBN: 978-1472917904
- “Specific Learning Disabilities and Music Education” by McCord in *Exceptional Music Pedagogy for Children with Exceptionalities: International Perspectives* (edited by Blair and McCord)
 - ISBN: 978-0-19-023457-7
- “Specific Learning Disabilities” by McCord in *Teaching the Postsecondary Music Student with Disabilities*
 - ISBN: 978-0-19-046777-7

Pedagogical Strategies for Students with Sensory Impairment and Sensory Sensitivity

Visual Impairment

Visual impairment and blindness can affect a student's language development, intellectual development, social development, and academic development, depending on the severity and onset of the vision loss. Children often learn through imitation; however, children with early onset vision impairment lose this opportunity. In general, students with vision loss may learn best through kinesthetic and aural modalities. (Adamek & Darrow, 2010).

Below are strategies and suggestions for assistive technologies that may aid students with vision loss or blindness find success in the clarinet studio. Strategies listed are derived from various sources, which are cited when appropriate, or are strategies developed from my own personal experiences as a private clarinet teacher.

Impairment

Visual Impairment/Blindness

Strategies

1. Enlarge sheet music and text.

Example: Adamek and Darrow (2010) recommend not only enlarging the music/text, but also the space between the lines and letters. You may need to enlarge music, then cut each staff line and paste them further away from each other on a piece of paper.

2. Braille music

Example: Not every musician with visual impairment/blindness will read Braille. If a student intends to pursue music as a career, Adamek and Darrow (2010) advise that the

student learns Braille music. There are websites that provide Braille sheet music, as well as software that will translate music into Braille.

3. Provide recordings before a lesson of any new music so that the student can be aurally familiar with it (Hammel, 2017).
4. Teach music by rote instead of by reading music.
5. Choose repertoire from music that is already familiar to the student.
6. Choose repertoire that is not complex and easy to memorize (repetitive).

Example: Solo pieces in ABA form, Rondo, and short Sonata-Allegro form could be easier for a student to memorize.

7. Audio record lesson assignments and instructions (Hammel, 2017). Use a voice recorder app on their smartphone. If they do not have a smartphone, you can record on your own device and send the file to their email.
8. Type assignments and instructions in a document and encourage the student to use a text to speech program to read it out loud to them. There are many programs and apps that are free to use. Ask the student if they are already using a similar program or app.

Hearing Impairment

Hearing loss can be mild to severe and can affect a student's language development, social development, and academic achievement. There are many assistive devices that a student may already possess to aid in their hearing, such as hearing aids or cochlear implants. It is important to note that, though these devices can dramatically impact the student's overall hearing, they can change the way that music sounds to the student. Hearing aids increase the

volume, but do not make sounds clear. Some cochlear implant users report that there are changes in pitch and timbre from before they had the implant (Adamek & Darrow, 2010).

Impairment

Hearing Loss, Hard-of-hearing

Strategies

1. Remove items that produce extraneous noise (Adamek & Darrow, 2010).
2. Face the student. Many individuals with hearing loss may rely on lip-reading as well as their hearing to understand (Adamek & Darrow, 2010).
3. When giving directions or assignments to a student, write them down as you speak so that the student can hear and see what you are saying.
4. Tapping the beat with your hand or conducting can help the student by giving them a visual cue of the beat while they play.
5. If the student uses American Sign Language (ASL), ask them to teach you signs that may be helpful during lessons.
6. Use an app for tuning that displays a visual representation of the intonation.
7. Use a metronome app that vibrates and place the phone on the student's leg while they play.
8. Use a metronome app that shows a visual representation of the beat, such as flashing or color changes.

Sensory Sensitivity

Some students may be sensitive to sensory stimuli such as bright lights or loud/high pitch sounds. This is especially true of some students with ASD (Adamek and Darrow, 2010). If a student often covers their ears when they hear loud sounds or complain about the brightness of the lights, you can make modifications to the environment and use assistive devices to better serve the student.

Sensitivity

Lights

Strategies

1. Dim the lights before the student arrives for a lesson and keep them dimmed. If you are in a room that has only an overhead light source (such as a practice room at a school), bring a lamp or stand light to use instead of the overhead lighting (“Sensory Issues, 2021).
2. Use natural lighting or incandescent lighting when possible. Individuals with light sensitivity seem to be more sensitive to fluorescent lighting (“Sensory Issues, 2021).
3. Suggest that the student wear sunglasses during the lesson, or a visor to block overhead lights (“Sensory Issues, 2021).

Sensitivity

Loud or high-pitched sounds

Strategies

1. Allow the student to wear musician ear plugs while playing or listening to music.

2. Choose music that will not upset the student's sensitivity.

Example: Music that stays in the altissimo range for long periods of time may be bothersome to a student with sound sensitivity. Limit the amount of time spent on altissimo study.

3. Prepare the student for loud or high noises.

Example: Remind the student to put in their ear plugs or cover their ears when you are about to demonstrate playing something loud.

4. When listening to recordings, ask the student beforehand if they prefer using earbuds.

Summary

Students with sensory impairments are capable of learning and performing music. Assistive technology can help tremendously when teaching this population. Discuss with the student any assistive devices they already use in school, and don't be afraid to try new apps and software. Incorporating kinesthetic learning opportunities for students with vision loss and visual learning opportunities for students with hearing loss are encouraged.

Students with sensory sensitivity can be accommodated easily by modifying the environment or encouraging the use products such as earbuds, ear plugs or sunglasses. If a student complains about the lighting or sound, discuss options that may help the student feel more comfortable.

Further Reading and Resources

Vision Loss and Blindness

- American Foundation for the Blind – www.afb.org
 - Provides information on Blindness and vision loss, including information on eye conditions, Braille, and assistive technologies
- Braille Sheet Music – www.braillesheetmusic.com
 - A free resource for Braille sheet music. Categories of music in Braille include classical, jazz, new age, pop/rock. You can also submit music to be translated into Braille by their volunteers.
- GOODFEEL Braille Music Translator – www.dancingdots.com/main/goodfeel.htm
 - Software that converts sheet music to Braille music.
- Tonal Energy Tuner and Metronome
 - App available for iOS and Android
 - Tuner displays a large “smiley face” when the pitch is on target
 - Sound function plays a pitch that the student can match
- “Low Vision and Blindness” by McCord in *Teaching the Postsecondary Music Student with Disabilities*
 - ISBN: 978-0-19-046777-7

Hearing Loss

- Hearing Loss Association of America – www.hearingloss.org
 - Provides information on hearing loss and technologies available for individuals with hearing loss
- Handspeak – www.handspeak.com

- Website has a searchable American Sign Language dictionary that provides videos of the sign for the word.
- Tonal Energy Tuner and Metronome
 - App available for iOS and Android
 - Metronome visually flashes the beat
- Vibratronome
 - Metronome app available for Android
 - Vibrates the beat as well as playing an audible sound
- “Music for Children with Hearing Loss” by Gertner and Schraer-Joiner in *Exceptional Music Pedagogy for Children with Exceptionalities: International Perspectives* (edited by Blair and McCord)
 - ISBN: 978–0–19–023457–7
- “Hard-of-Hearing, D/Deaf, and Deaf” by McCord in *Teaching the Postsecondary Music Student with Disabilities*
 - ISBN: 978–0–19–046777–7

Sensory Sensitivity and ASD

- Autism Speaks – www.autismspeaks.org
 - Provides information and help for Autism Spectrum Disorders
- National Autism Association – www.nationalautismassociation.org
 - Provides information and resources for Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation – www.spdfoundation.net
 - Provides information about sensory processing disorders in children and adults

Strategies for Students with Physical and Orthopedic Impairments

Physical and orthopedic impairments can affect students in many ways; however, the most impactful impairments will be ones that interfere with the student holding the clarinet or covering the holes. It would be simple to dismiss a student with a physical disability that affects their hands, arms, or fingers, but technology exists to accommodate those students. Below is a list of physical impairments that could affect the way a student holds or plays the clarinet, and possible modifications to aid the impairment. Many instrument makers, repair persons, and artisans might be able to make modifications that suit the specific needs of a student. If none of the modifications below will work for the student's unique needs, contact an instrument repair person and see what is possible.

Strategies listed are derived from various sources, which are cited when appropriate, or are strategies developed from my own personal experiences as a private clarinet teacher.

Impairment

Student cannot cover the holes fully.

Modification

Plateau key clarinets

- Plateau key clarinets are modified to have the tone holes covered, similar in style to a bass clarinet or saxophone. Students with extremely small hands or narrow fingers may find it difficult to fully cover the tone holes of a clarinet. This is especially true for the tone holes on the bottom joint. Students with reduced movement in their hands (such as

with arthritis, cerebral palsy, or other motor skill impairments) may also find plateau key clarinets helpful.

Clarinets made with plateau keys can be difficult to find, but there are some manufacturers. I would recommend that the teacher play test any unknown instrument brands before recommending them to your student.

- Standard tone hole clarinets can also be modified to have plateau keys. Many reputable instrument makers offer this service. This can be a good way to provide a student with a physical impairment an opportunity to play on a professional quality instrument and allow for the modification.

Impairment

Student has difficulty holding or balancing the clarinet.

Modification

Neck strap

- Clarinet neck straps are very popular among clarinetists with or without disabilities. They can help balance the clarinet for students with weak hands and can take some of the weight off the right thumb. It is important that the neck strap is made for the clarinet (not a saxophone strap) and is elastic.

Modification

Kickstand

- A clarinet kickstand is a thin rod that attached to the thumb rest of the clarinet and rests on the chair between the clarinetist's legs. This can be a good option for students who need more weight bearing or balance assistance than a neck strap can provide.

Modification

Ergonomic thumb rest

- Ton Kooiman manufactures different styles of thumb rests that shift the support of the clarinet from the first knuckle of the thumb to the space between the first and second joint. An ergonomic thumb rest could be a good solution for students with arthritis, tendonitis, or carpal tunnel syndrome.

Impairment

Student cannot hold the clarinet.

Modification

- Stands designed to hold musical instruments at the height of the performer exist. MERU, a charity that provides assistive products to children with disabilities, along with the OHMI Trust, which makes musical instruments for people with disabilities, has produced a trumpet and trombone mount that connects to a cymbal stand. They have not produced a clarinet mount as of the publication of this guide, but it is possible that such a product will be developed in the future.

Impairment

Student has the use of only one hand.

Modification

One-handed clarinet

- Peter Worrell manufactures a fully chromatic one-handed clarinet that can be used by either the left or right hand. It comes with a unique support system so that the clarinetist

does not need to support the clarinet with their thumb. It also comes with a piece that can attach the clarinet to a microphone stand, which will fully support the clarinet while the clarinetist plays with one hand (Worrell, 2020).

Summary

A physical disability should not disqualify a student from learning the clarinet. There are many examples of successful musicians who possess a physical disability, such as Dr. David Nabb, Professor of Music, Woodwinds, and Music History at the University of Nebraska Kearney. After suffering a major stroke, Dr. Nabb was no longer able to play the saxophone with both hands. He worked with Jeff Stelling (owner of Stelling Brass and Winds) to create a one-handed saxophone (“Dr. David Nabb,” 2021). There is no reason to assume a student with physical disabilities could not succeed in clarinet lessons. With a bit creativity and ingenuity, clarinet teachers can help solve many limitations that their students have on a traditional instrument.

Resources for Modifications

The researcher does not have experience with all the resources for clarinet modifications. Teachers interested in the products should try them first to make sure they will meet their student’s needs.

- Clarinet “kickstands”
 - ERGOclar Clarinet Support System – www.ergobrass.com/clarinet
 - Kickstand “BHOB” Instrument Support – www.rdgwoodwinds.com/products
- Plateau keys

- Lohff & Pfeiffer can modify existing instruments to add plateau keys –
www.clarinet.dk
- Plateau Clarinet by Rheuben Allen - <https://rheubenallen.com/product/plateau-clarinet/>
- One-handed clarinet
- Peter Worrell one handed clarinet - <http://www.peterworrell.co.uk/onehandedclarinet.htm>

Ergonomic Thumb Rests

- Ton Kooiman – www.tonkooiman.com

Instrument Stands

- MERU - <https://www.merushop.org/product-category/accessiblemusic/>

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