

Personal Learning Plan:

Goal no. 1	Action Plan	
What will you accomplish? (Goal statement)	I will be able to accurately model fingerings for the clarinet from memory.	
What does it look like when you've accomplished your goal? i.e., How will you know you have achieved your goal? What are the indicators of success or progress? (Assessment)	When I am asked to assist with the fingerings for the clarinet or proper embouchure I will be able to demonstrate correct technique without hesitation. I will also be able to play short pieces without double checking fingering.	Timeline: (By when?) December 16 th , 2016 (last day of fall term)
Rationale: Why is it important?	If I am asked to teach an instrumental band course, I should be able to relate to and provide assistance to all types of instruments. In addition, a more well-rounded knowledge of all band instruments will be helpful when planning collaborative performances between vocal and instrumental music classes.	
Pre-assessment: What assets and/or liabilities currently exist? How can you take advantage of your assets and minimize your liabilities? Who or what can help?	Assets	Liabilities
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have studied the trumpet so I am used to fingering. 2. My mother and sister have played the clarinet and can help me. 3. I am a focused and driven learner. 4. I can play piano so I can use the piano to assist me with tuning. My piano experience can help with my 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My focus is singing and I have no experience with reed instruments. 2. I will need to learn more about how to repair clarinets. 3. I play multiple instruments so I will need to prioritize and organize practicing time. 4. Learning embouchure for a reed instrument after playing a brass instrument will pose a challenge.

	<p>fingering dexterity.</p> <p>5. I have strong breath control from singing and playing the trumpet.</p>	<p>5. Using multiple fingers may be difficult as I am used to using three fingers for the trumpet.</p>
<p>Action plan: How will you accomplish your goal? What will you do? By when?</p>	<p>Actions/steps to be taken (What will you do?):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I will borrow a clarinet. 2. I will access a methods book and a fingering chart. 3. I will learn the chromatic concert B flat scale (one octave). 4. I will test myself once a week to see if I can remember the fingering positions. 5. I will be able to play short pieces in my methods book without needing to refer to a fingering chart. 	<p>Timeline: (By when?)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. September 15th, 2016 2. September 16th, 2016 3. October 15th, 2016 4. Ongoing, memorized by: November 15th, 2016 5. December 16th, 2016

Personal Learning Project – A Reflection on the Importance of Musical Exploration and Making Quality Music at all Levels

(please refer to video documentation on USB Key)

Clarinet Journal:

September 15th 2016

I have borrowed a clarinet from the Faculty of Education and I am so excited to get started. Luckily, I have been able to locate an online PDF version of a clarinet methods book which I will use during my practice sessions. The first step will be to practice holding the clarinet properly. Personally, I am used to playing a trumpet, which only has three valves. Clarinets make use of almost all of the player's fingers during a piece. I have noticed that the clarinet feels awkward in my hands but I remember that the trumpet felt heavy and uncomfortable when I first started to play. I researched on the internet how to use proper embouchure while playing, and I have noticed how different it is from the trumpet. When playing the trumpet, the quality of the tone is largely dependent on your ability to "buzz" into the mouthpiece using your lips. When playing the clarinet, the mouthpiece actually goes inside your mouth. I tried to play an open note tonight as an experiment, and it took a lot of oxygen and tightness in my lips in order to get a sound. I am looking forward to continue practicing tomorrow. I have decided that I will practice on Mondays and Fridays up until practicum because I have the least amount of classes on those days.

September 16th 2016

Today I opened up the website I found about clarinet embouchure and reviewed it while I pieced my clarinet together. I still find clarinet embouchure very different from the trumpet, but I am sure as I play more frequently I will become more adjusted. I placed my mouth around the clarinet and I surprised myself by producing a good quality tone. I am able to fairly consistently play a G note. I thought for a moment that clarinet might be similar to trumpet in that a G above the octave or a middle C might both be open, but I cannot play any other open notes without squeaking. I am frustrated because I am so used to playing the trumpet and being able to hit all my open notes as part of my warm-up. I think back, however, to when I first started to learn trumpet, and how it took a few weeks before I was able to successfully play an octave from middle C to high C. I know that if I keep to a practice schedule I might be able to play a full octave by the time I finish my personal learning project. I will try to play more notes tomorrow.

September 19th 2016

I am satisfied with my progress thus far as I am still able to play a consistent G today. I remember learning to play the trumpet and how some days I would be able to play the notes I learned successfully, and other days I would not be able to make a sound. I am happy because this is a sign that I am beginning to develop reliable playing technique. I know that I am beginning to develop muscle memory and that I am playing with technique, rather than only making guesses at how to produce sound on the instrument. Today I was able to play an F on the clarinet. In my methods book, the author has organized it so that the player begins by learning notes that require the least amount of fingering and progressing to notes that require significant fingering and muscle memory. I decided that the logical next step would be to learn to play an F, which only requires one valve to be covered. I find this transition interesting because on the trumpet you only press the first valve to switch from a G to an F. I found it helpful to imagine that I am playing the trumpet while attempting these notes because it helped me to think about

the subtle changes in embouchure required. I attempted this note by first playing a G, and then placing my finger over the required valve. I made a squeaking noise the first few times I tried, but after maintaining a strong breath while moving between the two notes, I am able to hit the two notes easily. I am only six notes away from being able to play an eight note scale, and I am excited to keep learning.

September 23rd 2016

I am feeling a little discouraged because every time I play a G I make a squeaking sound. I want to be able to play a G consistently without having to squeak to find my note first. I am sure this will come with time, though, because I can remember consistently squeaking on the trumpet while trying to hit an open G. I suspect the issue comes from the fact that the trumpet has several open notes and it is up to your embouchure to play them accurately. After looking through the fingering charts for the clarinet it does not appear as though there is a similar issue as I believe the only open note is G. I would assume the issue relates to your embouchure as well, but as some online research tells me, squeaking notes are usually a result of having a too dry or too damp reed, as well as the placement of the reed on the clarinet. It is frustrating to try and place the reed in an optimal location. I would imagine if I was a proficient player I would be able to play well regardless of whether or not my reed is slightly off, but for now it really makes a difference. I prefer the trumpet to the clarinet in this aspect because I like feeling like I am in control of my own tone production, instead of needing to be concerned about reed placement. I am only able to play these two notes consistently so far so I will rest my mouth muscles and keep practicing at a later date.

September 26th 2016

I decided to try and play the notes G, F, E, D, and C in order. My methods book lists them in this order as they begin at G which is an open note and move gradually to middle C which requires four valves to be pressed down. I tried to play all five notes sequentially and managed to get a sound out of each of them, but I had several squeaky notes as I worked down the scale. I have noticed that sometimes I am unable to play a note by simply holding down the required valves, adjusting my embouchure, and using proper breath support. Sometimes, I need to play a nearby note and work my way down or up to the note. For example, I am having a difficult time playing the note E without first playing the notes G and F. I can try to play the note E on its own, but I experience significant squeaking before I reach the note. I suspect this has something to do with the fact that once I have played notes G and F, my embouchure is in place to play E. I think that the fact that I have played trumpet is a big help here, as I am used to adjusting my embouchure slightly as I move up and down a scale. I am curious as to how conscious I am to my lip movements. I would be interested to compare the experience of someone learning the clarinet with no brass or wind experience to my experience learning the clarinet. I would like to know if they automatically adjust their embouchure or if that is something that I have learned through playing the trumpet. I am enjoying the process of learning to play so far because I am learning more about what might be automatic for me and what might require more of a break-down of tasks for students who are learning their first instrument.

September 30th 2016

I am now able to consistently play G, F, E, D, and C with minimal to no squeaking, and I am very pleased. I sent a recording of me playing the scale to my sister and mother, who used to play the clarinet, and they noted that they were impressed with how my tone has developed. I asked them if they could remember if they had trouble learning to adjust their embouchure to move up and down the scale. Both of them said they were not sure if they could remember, but

my mom volunteered that she used to play piano, and so when she would play her scales during class she could not help but picture herself playing the notes on the piano. We think that her experience on the piano must have caused her to adjust her embouchure without realizing while playing. My sister said that she thinks it may have taken her a little while before she realized that adjusting her embouchure would help her with playing her scales properly, but she mentioned the fact that her teacher explicitly taught embouchure to each instrument group individually before letting them practice in groups helped significantly. Hearing her say that made me feel even more certain that learning to play the clarinet, as challenging as it has been so far, was a good decision because if I am tasked with an instrumental music class I need to at least have some idea of how assist my students with reed instruments. I can apply my knowledge of trumpet more broadly to some brass instruments, but I definitely need to experience reed instruments to be able to speak to them during class time.

October 3rd, 2016

I have started to work through some of the pieces, and one in particular I enjoyed was called "Breath Control". It is written in 4/4 time and features three half notes followed by two quarter rests, and this pattern repeats three times. The music asks the player to play each half note in one breath, and uses the notes that I have recently learned. This piece is a little challenging because I have to start on F instead of on G. I squeaked a little while playing but I was able to play the pieces with a reasonable tone. I liked that the piece started with two Fs moving to an E, as it warmed me up for the second part of the piece which moved through E, F, and G and then back down again sequentially. I was pleased that I was able to sustain these notes without taking a large breath in-between them. I think that this kind of exercise would be helpful when teaching beginner vocal students as breath control is often something that new singers find challenging. Again, I am noticing that my ability to sustain notes is likely due to my experiences playing the trumpet as well as singing. I am starting to think now about what kind of exercises I might like to try to adapt for my vocal music classroom. After having tried this piece today, I think I could incorporate sustaining notes as a challenge in my classroom, particularly during warm-ups. I could present students with a series of phrases that gradually increase in length, and we could challenge ourselves to see who can sing the longest phrase without needing to take a breath. We could follow that warm-up with a discussion about how singing and playing phrases without pausing for breaths helps to establish musicality and expression, as well as how to take breaths discretely when needed and stagger breaths when performing in a group setting. Learning clarinet is teaching me a lot about how to break-down musical skills into smaller tasks or activities for my students.

BREATH CONTROL

Try to play the three half notes in one breath. How should breath be taken when playing your instrument?

October 14th 2016

Practicum is officially underway and I am really enjoying myself. This first week has involved a lot of observation and working with students in small groups to get a feel for the class, but I have started to do some small lessons as a large group. My associate and I have done a lot of discussing and planning for the upcoming weeks, including developing a long-range plan for the duration of my practicum and beyond. Looking at these plans, I think I am going to be busy every day, as I am preparing my grade tens and twelves towards their summative tasks and

teaching them the skills they need to write single-text analysis and comparative essays. I am very excited to get started, but I am nervous about how much time I will have to learn the clarinet. Today I worked on the piece “Soloist Tryout” which features melodies that use the notes E, F, and G. I tried using slurred notes on parts (a), (c), and the beginning of (d), and using staccato notes on parts (b) and the ending of (d). I am able to slur my notes well, but staccato notes are a bit of a challenge, likely because I have not yet learned proper technique for tonguing my notes. Tonguing my notes was a challenge for me on the trumpet as well, so I am not surprised that that difficulty has transferred to the clarinet. Tonguing your notes while still maintaining a good tone is difficult because if not done correctly the tongue will cut off the sound too quickly and cause undesired sounds. I researched online how to tongue my notes properly on the clarinet and they suggest using only the tip of your tongue, which is similar to the trumpet. I think that with practice, I will be able to accomplish the precision required to tongue my notes without disrupting the tone.

6 SOLOIST TRYOUT

Choose a different soloist or group to play each of these little tunes, then all play on the repeat.

October 29th 2016

Practicum has become extremely busy in a very short amount of time. I have been having a very difficult time dividing my attention between practicum, my job, volunteering, and learning the clarinet. Furthermore, practicum can be emotionally exhausting as it easy to self-deprecate when one or more of your lessons did not go well on a particular day. I have been trying to hold on to and remember the positive feedback from my associate and the appreciation my students have shown me, but it can be very difficult to not be over-critical of oneself during this time. Overall, I am feeling quite overwhelmed, but I know I am not alone and many others are feeling this way, too. Today, I tried the “Find That Tone” exercise from my methods book as it includes the note A and I wanted to move beyond the five notes I have learned. As expected, I found it challenging to play the notes independently as opposed to within a scale, but I wanted to quickly apply the new note I had learned. It was difficult to quickly adjust my embouchure, but the piece includes quarter rests which gives you time to relax or tighten your lips. I also found it difficult to quickly switch my fingering to fit the notes. When playing in a scale on the clarinet, your fingers move in a very natural way as you gradually hold down more or less valves which are near to one another. Switching between notes that are not near to one another is challenging because you have to consciously think about where your fingers are moving next. In this piece, I only had to move my thumb and index finger as I was moving between E and A, but other transitions like D and A pose challenges. Engaging in a “Find That Tone” exercise would be helpful in a vocal music class because students often struggle with sight singing and hearing notes mentally before singing them physically. I would like to try this exercise with a vocal music class and have students gradually work towards singing a piece of music that starts on E or A and be able to sing their starting note without having to rely on the piano.

5 FIND THAT TONE

November 11th 2016

I was starting to get really worried about my personal learning project because I did not think that I would be able to achieve my initial goal of completing the methods book by December. I think when I was constructing my goals I was comparing what my practicum would be like to experiences I had during my undergraduate practica. My undergraduate practica was very manageable, but being completely responsible for three classes each day poses entirely new challenges. I emailed Professor Bolden and I am feeling a lot better now because I know that I am able to adjust my goals. I think if I were to attempt another personal learning project I would adjust my goals so that they would be achievable in fifteen minute increments during practicum. For the next couple of weeks, I will need to focus on completing what I can achieve for the remainder of practicum and when I return to regular classes.

November 25th 2016

Now that practicum is complete I have more time to work on the clarinet. I have recently finished learning “Mary Had a Little Lamb” and I am feeling proud of myself for learning a real song on the clarinet. I am impressed at the fact that I was able to start at the A on my clarinet without needing to work my way up to it using nearby notes, and I have played with a reasonably good tone. I am also impressed by the fact that students only really need to know a few notes before they can start playing songs on their instruments. It is important for students to have these small pieces of success as they learn an instrument or learn to sing to keep them engaged and wanting to keep learning. I think in the case of a vocal class I would have them sing a popular song they all enjoy to help them see how accessible singing can be for them, but the point still stands that having small moments of success early in the learning process is pivotal for motivation.

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB Folk song

8 (Melody)

Take a quick breath in measure 6 where marked. Shorten the note before the comma in order to have time for a breath.

9 (Harmony)

The image shows a musical score for the folk song "Mary Had a Little Lamb". It consists of two staves: a melody staff (labeled 8) and a harmony staff (labeled 9). Both staves are in 3/4 time and use a treble clef. The melody staff includes fingerings (3, 5, 7, 9) and a performance instruction: "Take a quick breath in measure 6 where marked. Shorten the note before the comma in order to have time for a breath." The harmony staff also includes fingerings (3, 5, 7, 9). The title "MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB" is centered above the staves, and "Folk song" is written to the right.

December 9th 2016

I am feeling a little disappointed as I cannot yet play beyond an A on the clarinet without squeaking. I have successfully been able to do the fingerings and I nearly have them memorized, but I cannot produce a good tone beyond an A. I will continue to work on the clarinet as I want to have a basic level of proficiency in case I am assigned an instrumental music class. My music teacher in high school could play at least a little of each instrument, and it was so helpful to hear from someone who had experienced the same difficulties I was experiencing. My future goal is to play a basic piece of classical music on the clarinet well enough that I would feel comfortable demonstrating it to a high school class. This goal will help me stay motivated to continue learning the clarinet, and it will also be a useful tool to show my students that basic pieces are well within their reach if they continue to practice. I will be able to share my story with them about my experiences learning the clarinet, and we will be able to easily empathize with one another as we continue to learn more about our instruments. Overall, I am glad I chose the

clarinet, and I will continue to keep practicing so that I can support any future reed instrument students that I have in my classroom.

Summative Reflections and Connections:

Learning the clarinet has taught me a lot about myself as a musical learner as well as how to differentiate musical tasks in my classroom. Learning the clarinet was a frustrating but enlightening experience, and I could not help but reflect on my experiences learning the trumpet as I logged my journal.

As I tried to play notes without squeaking or needing to work up to them playing their nearby notes, I started to think about my experiences playing the trumpet and how I struggled initially with differentiating between my open notes. I took a while before I was able to articulate my notes well on the trumpet, and I remembered this vividly while frustratingly trying to articulate notes on the clarinet. I need to remember this frustration when teaching my students because many of them will be entering my classroom with no music experience. In the case of both learning the trumpet and the clarinet, I was learning these instruments having already had previous musical experiences and lessons. This experience of learning the clarinet has taught me that any musical exposure plays a significant role when learning a new instrument. Reflecting now, I have realized that if I were to be diligent in my future practice on the clarinet, I could later use that knowledge to learn other reed instruments such as the oboe or the saxophone, which is something I could not do had I not learned the clarinet first. I have increased my realization that one's musical knowledge truly builds and feeds on to itself. As I mentioned in my journal, my mom, sister, and I had a discussion about whether or not adjusting one's embouchure while moving up and down a scale is something we would do naturally or if it is a result of previous musical exposure. This skill seems so simple, but we determined it is likely because we have all had musical experiences before learning the clarinet. With this knowledge, I will be sensitive to students having difficulties moving between pitches, whether in an instrumental or vocal class. We would start with tasks such as changing pitch in seconds, and gradually work up to changes such as thirds, fourths, and fifths. I would work with each instrument group and explicitly teach them about which muscles will require movement, and I will be able to use my knowledge of the clarinet to my advantage in this case. In the case of a vocal class, we would practice helpful visualizations to achieve higher and lower pitches. For example, my vocal teacher Mark Dubois would often describe singing higher notes as "opening the attic door" and singing lower notes as "opening the basement door" to help students adjust to the different feelings they experience when singing notes in a scale, or moving beyond their typical vocal range.

When teaching my students, I will need to consider ways to make learning music accessible and exciting. In a study conducted on adult musical learners who had previous experiences with music lessons, the study noted that for many participants "transfer of prior learning to a new instrument was readily available. For example, Troy compared learning the baritone saxophone for the first time to his mastery of a second language" (328). With this knowledge of transferable skills in mind, I will make it explicit to my students that learning music opens possibilities to learn an infinite number of instruments and musical genres. For students who may not enjoy their instruments or are unsure about music, I can refer to this study as well as my own musical experiences to express to my students that it is okay if they are not passionate about their instruments. Learning the basics on one instrument can allow students to transfer that knowledge to an area of music for which they have more passion. For me, learning

the piano and the trumpet granted me a good foundation to begin learning classical singing, which is where I have found the most musical enjoyment and success. I will encourage my students to engage in musical exploration and try as many instruments or genres as they can to determine their strengths and preferences.

I reflected in my journal about how successful I felt when I was able to play a real song, “Mary Had a Little Lamb”. When I was able to play something I could recognize as an actual piece of music, I started to feel significantly more accomplished as I started to feel more like a clarinetist. These small pieces of success are crucial to maintaining student motivation. If students are unable to see themselves as making music, they will be less motivated to keep practicing. Wasiak echoes this idea in his chapter “Teaching Musicianship from the Podium” in *Teaching Instrumental Music in Canadian Schools* when he notes “Repertoire is analogous to diet. A balanced and high quality musical diet nourishes students’ musical education and enables them to grow” (Wasiak 235). While Wasiak is more so referring to whether “those involved gain something new each time they encounter the work” (235) I would extend his comments to apply to students being able to make music they enjoy even at a beginner level. The piece “Mary Had a Little Lamb” only used four notes, but that was all I needed to start playing pieces on my clarinet and feel accomplished. Likewise, in a vocal music class, there are several popular and enjoyable songs that only require a minimal vocal range to sing successfully. I could extend that activity to include students accompanying on piano or guitar as many of these basic songs only require minimal chord changes, yet the entire class can feel comfortable and enjoy themselves. Students can see that they do not need to be incredibly accomplished musicians before they can start partaking in exciting musical experiences.

Learning the clarinet has provided me with an opportunity to reflect on how I can be sensitive to my students and break down musical tasks into manageable steps. If I had not tried to learn a new instrument, I would not have achieved the new appreciation I have for the commitment and frustration beginner musicians experience. As a future music educator, I have found this to be an overall beneficial experience. In my future practice, I will take care to congratulate students on all successes, no matter how small they may seem, and constantly provide opportunities for musical exploration and successes in my classroom through selecting exciting and accessible repertoire.

Works Cited

- Roulston, K., P. Jutras, and S. J. Kim. "Adult Perspectives of Learning Musical Instruments." *International Journal of Music Education* 33.3 (2015): 325-35. Web.
- Wasiak, Edwin B. “Teaching Musicianship from the Podium” *Teaching Instrumental Music in Canadian Schools*. Don Mills: Oxford UP, 2013. 43-61. Print.