Points on Double Tonguing  
Dr. Jim Bovinette

Why Double Tonguing
Double tonguing is a necessary tool for wind players because it enables them to perform fast moving articulated passages at speeds greater than they are normally able to single tongue. The art of double tongue is essentially the skill associated with intermingling sounds produced with the tip of the tongue (as in normal tonguing,) with sounds produce in the throat (glottis,) in a bouncing motion. The primary objective or outcome for any passage that a player executes via double tonguing is that is sounds smooth and seamless, is stylistic accurate, and is undetectable compared to single tonguing.

Difference Between Articulation and Tonguing
In order to accomplish these objectives wind players need to understand that double tonguing is a form of articulation. It is very different from simply tonguing. Articulation is essentially a form of shaping the air, not starting or stopping it. Tonguing is related primarily to starting and stopping the air. The primary difference is that articulation must be initiated on a continuous uninterrupted air stream.

Importance of Projecting Air
The idea of an uninterrupted air stream is paramount in learning to execute any articulations especially double tongue, because we play wind instrument and it takes 'wind' to make them play. If you are not blowing through the instrument you are not projecting your sound. It is with this idea that wind brass players have developed the art of double tonguing and consequently the double-tonguing syllables that we commonly use. There are several syllables used, but whatever a player develops, they need to consider the ability to project their sound.

Most common syllables
Most commonly the syllables used are the Ta and Ka. These sounds are great for the addressing the concept of being able to produce a sound with the tip of the tongue, a sound with the throat (glottis.) The syllable however are not necessarily the best for developing the primary objective of a smooth and seamless, stylistic accurate, and undetectable articulations.

Different instruments will use different vowel sounds.
It is paramount at this point to mention that instruments have different requirements for the types of vowels that they use to product tone. Ta and Ka are great for trumpet players however lower brass players you more tu, du, toe and ko. This is because the oral cavity must be held in an more open position to produce resonate sounds on the larger instruments. The types of variation will also be true in the woodwind family. Generally the larger the mouthpiece, the larger the opening has to be to facilitate the instrument.

Even sounds
In all cases however double-tonguing is going to involve the marriage of two separate syllables of articulation. All syllables involve two things...
and vowels. It is extremely important that you choose consonants and vowels that match each other. Here also is where the point of style will play into your double tongue sound. T and K are very hard consonant sounds for example. T and K are really more suited for stopping and starting the air stream. If that is what you need stylistically then they are perfect. In most cases however we are more interested in shaping the air. In this case softer more legato type articulation syllables are needed.

**Best Options**

D and G, for example allow more air to easily pass into the instrument thereby allowing for more projections. At this point then the vowel now becomes the focus. Aah for example allows for a full projected sound. Try producing your double tongue with the syllables dah and gah. “If you and say it you can play it!”

To execute: Play a single pitch and sustain the sound. Alternate the syllable dah and gah until the sustain tone is uninterrupted by the changing syllables.