



## **The “Nuts and Bolts” of Teaching Band, Part 2: Brass Beginners**

**CLINICIANS:**

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# TRUMPET / HORN

- ★ The body is correctly balanced, natural and poised
- ★ The lips are together, smooth and even in front of the teeth
- ★ The muscles that surround the air should be properly developed
- ★ The placement of the head complies properly with the angle of the instrument
- ★ The instrument should be correctly balanced
  - ★ Trumpet: using the first finger on the left hand and the right thumb
  - ★ Horn: the right hand should be placed correctly
- ★ The tongue is forward and down
- ★ The breath is taken through the mouth and the air is unobstructed
- ★ The fingers operating the valves must be naturally curved
- ★ The articulation is a result of correct embouchure/ tone production
- ★ The instrument must be kept in excellent working order and clean



# TROMBONE

- ★ In assembly, the angle of the bell section to the slide matters and greatly affects balance (slightly less than 90 degrees)
- ★ The slide is the most delicate part; never put the weight of the body onto the slide
- ★ A bad slide can cause students to play incorrectly - constantly monitor slide maintenance
- ★ Left hand: shaped like a water gun; "Meaty part on the bell lock nut"
- ★ Right hand: thumb and two fingers, does NOT "grip"!
- ★ The left hand holds the weight of the trombone; the right hand moves the slide; transfer as little weight as possible into the right hand when in lower positions
- ★ The trombone is stabilized by the neck, NOT the shoulder
- ★ Rest the trombone on the face; it is a very physical instrument that can lead to tension, causing students to press it against the face
- ★ Teach slow, natural, easy slide movement before teaching more rapid movement; make slide movement feel as natural as possible
- ★ Use glissando to get the air to continue to move freely while the slide is moving
- ★ Rest the trombone on the ground on "three points" - the bell, the mouthpiece/leadpipe, and tuning slide - NEVER the slide



# EUPHONIUM / TUBA

- ★ Embouchure
  - ★ Natural face
  - ★ Teeth are relatively even and slightly apart
  - ★ Corners are natural
- ★ Posture - **posture must not be compromised when playing the instrument**
  - ★ Head is balanced
  - ★ Torso long and leaning forward slightly
  - ★ Elbows natural and relaxed
  - ★ Wrists are straight
  - ★ Left arm relaxed - not squeezing the instrument (euphonium)
  - ★ **Posture must be continually monitored as students grow throughout the year - what worked in September might not work in January**
- ★ Mouthpiece
  - ★ Angles down
  - ★ Anchors on the bottom lip and top lip touches lightly to create a seal
  - ★ Placement is 50%/50% or 60% top lip/40% bottom lip - depending on the student's natural face
- ★ Hand Position
  - ★ Fingers are curved and relaxed
  - ★ Play with the fingerprints
  - ★ Thumb should not be tucked under the 4th valve slide (euphonium)
- ★ Articulation
  - ★ "D" syllable - "Doo"
  - ★ Air must not stop between notes
- ★ Other things
  - ★ Students should not be allowed to set their instruments on the bell when not in use
  - ★ When walking with instruments, students should not let the instrument dangle from their arms. Instead, they should hold the instruments with the bells pointing upwards with the instrument close to their bodies.
  - ★ Manage the tuning slides for all of the valves

