



How to Teach Beginning Tuba and Euphonium Students

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Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX
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- I. Breathing
 - a. PVC pipe to reinforce oral shape (1/2 inch)
 - b. Use your hand to check the tone of the intake
 - c. Teach the breathing mechanism as simply as possible
 - d. Start **every** lesson with deep breaths
- II. Air
 - a. Speed
 - i. Pinwheels = fun
 1. Use fast air for high notes (think blowing out a candle)
 2. Use slow air for low notes (think fogging up a mirror)
 - ii. Help the student isolate where air speed comes from (hint: it's not their lips *or* their throat)
 - iii. Think "up and in"
 - b. Direction
 - i. Continuum of air, not shift – for *most* students the following is true:
 1. For low notes, aim your air up, like you are blowing hair out of your face
 2. For high notes, aim your air down, like you are blowing a droplet of water off your chin
 - ii. Practice the continuum using your finger as a guide
 - iii. Air stream → free buzz → visualizer → mouthpiece → horn
- III. Articulation
 - a. Location
 - i. Tongue between the lips
 - ii. Put your finger against your lips and you should *barely* feel your tongue striking against it
 - iii. Analogies
 1. Like a cobra striking
 2. Spitting out a watermelon seed
 3. Launching a spit ball
 - b. Articulation + air
 - i. It's ok to start with breath attacks
 - ii. FAATFOTN = Fast Air at The Front of the Note
 - iii. Start with slurs, then add the tongue
 - iv. Analogies
 1. Jet ski bouncing off water
 2. Flag waving in the wind

- Always give criticism from a place of love
- “That’s not my favorite . . .”
- Some things take time to figure out – patience (for both the student and the teacher) is key
- End every session with something fun whenever possible! (Like duets!)