

# GROWING OUR YOUNG TUBISTS

**S.T.T.B.P.**

South Central ITEA - Tuba & Euphonium Conference

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Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi  
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**S.T.T.B.P.**

**Sing:** Sing rhythm syllables/note letters directionally. Note goes higher = Voice goes higher (singing on pitch is a distinct plus!)

**Toh:** Sing on Toh. Tongue articulates (T) then drops to bottom of mouth (oh) creating an air cave.

**Tongue the Air Stream:** Using copious quantities of air, tongue the rhythm.

**Buzz:** Directionally, or on pitch, buzz the rhythm & melody.

**Play:** Play!

These are progressive steps in which the information/experience gained from one step is transferred to the following step in a cumulative manner leading finally to playing. (note group, measure, exercise...)

*Do I always have to follow these steps? No. Can I use some steps and skip others? Yes. Should I try to follow these 5 steps as much as possible? Yes! Yes! Yes! Can't I just enjoy playing music? What, are you crazy? These steps facilitate the enjoyment of music making!*

## COMMUNICATION SKILLS

*We regret to inform you that your communications link has failed...*

- As we develop vocabulary skills, we think in words. We're communicating with ourselves. Have students verbalize their learning. This helps them to understand "deeper" and it helps them to file the information in the right place – in *their* right place.
- Positive vs. Negative communication -or- "No" vs. "Bad dog."
- Be Honest – Positive communication does not mean lying or avoiding addressing problems. Be especially careful with labels. "How helpful/hurtful is this comment?"
- Memorize – Use these words A LOT: "Memorize how that *sounded*. Play it again, just like that" -or- "Memorize how that *felt*. Play it again, just like that" Following a successful play-through, these sentences help students to pair what they have heard/done with a particular goal we have been getting them to work toward.

# TO ROTE OR NOT TO ROTE

*This shouldn't even be a question (from now on, at least!)*

Music is a *sound* medium. Musical notation is *only* a visual means of reproducing *sounds*. Which is to say: The reason for the notation is the *sound*. Which is to say: Utilizing rote teaching is *not* a deadly sin. Relying *only* on rote teaching – now that's an altogether different story!

➤ **WHENEVER POSSIBLE: Start with the sound then move to the *notation*.**

## **TRY THIS: Model, Rote, Explain, Transfer**

**Model:** Play for your students a lot! Your model is extremely important.

**Rote:** (It's OK.) Teach new concepts by rote. Review old concepts by rote. (It's OK.)

**Explain:** When teaching a concept by rote, be sure to explain how the concept works. Have students verbalize the concept to demonstrate their understanding.

**Transfer:** Now, put the modeled, rote taught, well explained concept in a different setting, (an exercise, a solo, a band part) causing the student to have to transfer knowledge gained to new material.

## • **CONCEPT 1 - ISOLATE & SIMPLIFY**

Isolate the problem area in the music. Try to determine what causes the problem. Simplify by: 1. slowing the tempo 2. play in lower octave 3. S.T.T.B.P.

HAVE STUDENT(S) VERBALIZE THE STEPS TAKEN TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

## • **CONCEPT 2 - REINFORCE**

Have the student reinforce what they have learned through *slow, quality repetitions*. The student(s) must then also reinforce at home what they have learned.

HAVE STUDENT(S) VERBALIZE THE STEPS TAKEN TO REINFORCE NEW LEARNING.

## • **CONCEPT 3 - TRANSFER**

Encourage the student(s) to make connections between what has already been learned and new material. Can she/he transfer known concepts to new music? Transfer breathing exercises to a piece of music? Transfer the energy of a great crescendo in measure 12 to the crescendo in measure 47?

HAVE STUDENT(S) VERBALIZE TRANSFERRED INFO.

## • **CONCEPT 4 - IMPROVISE**

**A.** Start with known material, using specific parameters: "Create a lullaby using the 1<sup>st</sup> three notes of the Bb Major scale. Start on Bb and end on Bb. Known Material: Bb Major Scale  
Specific Parameters: Lullaby. 1<sup>st</sup> 3 notes of Bb Major scale. Start on Bb and end on Bb.

**B.** Introduce Blues Scale & swing style through Echoes: (Move from simple to more complex)  
Patterns on: F, F Ab, F Ab Bb, F Ab Bb Bnat, F Ab Bb Bnat C, F Ab Bb Bnat C Eb,  
F Ab Bb Bnat C Eb F.

## • **CONCEPT 5 - MOTIVATION**

Success breeds success. Through reinforcing and transferring, try to build on previous successes. Give lots of positive feedback, as well as working the problem areas.

As you work, have fun. Music is a lot of work. And the eventual payoff is great! BUT – Make sure you and your student are having fun along with the hard work.

Extrinsic is OK. Stickers, stamps, candy, etc. Just don't over do it. The best reward system is one in which the payout is random. It keeps the potential recipient hopeful – like the slots!

Music selection motivates. Choose music that might be interesting to students and with which students can be successful. Choose your challenges wisely. The student who feels overwhelmed often has little desire to pick up the horn. Some "Junk Food" is OK, but make sure the vast majority of selected music is quality literature.