

Gabrielle Spurlock

Chapters 11 and 12 summary

Chapter 11 discussed, in depth, the correct playing posture needed for air support and good tone quality specific to each instrument. For all instruments the posture is generally the same and photos are included to demonstrate the variations between instruments. Student's should sit with their back straight in a relaxed position to allow for relaxed breathing. With the back straight, it allows for natural air flow and expansion into, and out of the lungs. Any slouching will diminish the space available for the body to expand correctly with inhalation. An important detail mentioned is to remind students to bring the instruments to them instead of leaning down into the instrument. Students should also be reminded to stay as relaxed when playing.

For valves, the motions should be quick and clear even in slower passages. Slow valve compression will smear the pitch or produce an undesired pitch. Horns players should be aware of their horn angle and position whether the horn sits on their thigh or is held in the air. For players with the horn on their thigh should be aware to bring the instrument to them to prevent slouching which will squash the right side of the diaphragm. Hand position within the bell of the horn is with a cupped hand. To determine the best tone quality, students should place hand in the bell far enough to mute the sound and slowly pull their hand out until the tone quality desired is reached. Then, continue pulling their hand out until the tone is less desirable to finally place their hand in the horn that creates the best tone. Trumpets and trombones will both need to alter their positions in accordance to their stands to direct bells to the side, instead of into the stand. Be sure trombone players don't lean to one side when playing and the instrument should be supported by the left hand. The trombone slide is comparable to the violin string because the intonation is

determined by ear instead of a valve position. The chapter includes representations for each slide position. Both tuba and euphonium should sit on the student's lap when playing but the mouthpiece should be lifted to the embouchure to prevent students from leaning into the mouthpiece.

Chapter 12 focuses on the pedagogy of both sound beginning bands and collegiate level brass technique classes. Instructors should strive to make the learning process fun and entertaining and valuable so students stay engaged with class activities and make improvements on their new instruments. An exercise mentioned was to attach a small balloon to the end of the mouthpiece and have students use the ballooned mouthpiece with a breathing exercise. Having students place one hand on their stomach and the other on their chest and then breathe deeply from their stomach will encourage and demonstrate good breathing technique. It is also important for students to have correctly functioning equipment and chapter 12 includes a list of problems to check for before approving a student's instrument. The first 10 weeks of instruction greatly determines a student's failure or success. To inspire students, consider having an older student who has played for a few years play for the class. Also, a trip to see a recital of the instrument they're playing would be a wise option. For the first few lessons it is important to have a flexible lesson plan to adjust students to producing sound and becoming accustomed to the fundamentals of the instrument. Another important aspect for beginners is aural imagery. Provide students with an example of bad sound then notably correct the errors and produce a good sound for them to work towards. Be aware of common mistakes such as mouthpiece placement, stretched embouchure, puffed cheeks, bad posture, small breaths, too much mouthpiece, pushing too much air, or pushing air from throat. All of these are bad habits that should be closely watched for in the first few lessons. Helpful practice tips include buzzing a

new melody on the mouthpiece to get accustomed to the rhythm and tonal contour of the piece before playing it on the instrument. After the first few lessons, focus should be directed towards producing a good tone to maintain a strong foundation. The chapter suggests getting parents as involved as possible as well as warns about the struggle students may face with braces. It continues on to discuss the purpose of a brass techniques class at a college level to understand the brass fundamentals in order to properly teach them once entering the field.