

BUZZ ACTIVITIES

LESSON/ACTIVITY PLAN

While proper embouchure and lip technique should only be taught by a brass specialist or band teacher, the physical experience of buzzing one's lips into a variety of objects, including a brass mouthpiece, will help each student understand how brass players make sounds on their instruments.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will produce a sound by buzzing their lips in order to physically experience the buzzing of lips that brass players must do to create a sound.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Start with kazoo! Make them yourself by covering one end of a toilet paper tube with wax paper and securing it in place with a rubber band, or buy some at the dollar store. Either way, playing a tune on a kazoo gives students the kinesthetic experience of vibration in and around their lips.
Note: there is a key difference between making a sound on a kazoo versus a brass instrument. To play a kazoo, the player must hum/sing into the instrument. Brass players do not do this—they use their wind, or breathing. Be sure to point out this difference.
2. Move from kazoo to zerberts (or raspberries, or whatever term you like to use for creating a seal between your mouth and forearm and blowing.) After the initial zerbert, ask students to do the same thing with just their mouth—i.e., with no arm.
3. Try buzzing lips into various tube-shaped objects, including an actual brass mouthpiece, if you have access to one.
4. If at all possible, find different-sized mouthpieces. Compare and contrast the experience of blowing into a large mouthpiece versus a smaller one. Students will find it is much easier to produce a sound with a large mouthpiece, as their lip buzz can be much “looser.”
5. Once students start to have some amount of success with their buzzing, encourage them to experiment with various speeds of buzzing. Ask them to notice the difference in sound between fast and slow buzzing.

EXTENSIONS/MODIFICATIONS:

1. If you have enough materials, ask students to try to “play” familiar tunes alone or in a group by buzzing through their mouthpieces.
2. Check out this fun website for directions on how to make your own brass instruments: http://www.nyphilkids.org/lab/make_trumpet.html

STANDARD:

1. K–3. 1. Artistic Foundations. 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of the technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 0.1.2.3.2. Sing and play with accurate pitch, rhythm and expressive intent.
2. Grades 4–5. Artistic Foundations. 2. Demonstrate knowledge and use of technical skills of the art form, integrating technology when applicable. Music. 4.1.2.3.2. Sing and play alone and in a group demonstrating proper posture, breathing, technique, age-appropriate tone quality and expressive intent.



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