

<b>Namm 2014 pBone Circle Lesson Plan</b> 40-60mins	
Preparation: pBones are set out in a circle center stage, slides meeting at the centre. CF has voice mic.	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
Warm up. Head tap game. Big breaths <b>7 min</b>	Everyone is paying attention to the leader. We have engaged both sides of the brain Posture has been well modelled and awareness of posture is developing. Awareness breathing has been introduced and raised. A musical pulse has been introduced and modelled
<i>Follow me claps/bp (extension if time)</i>	<i>Beat and duration</i>
Song rope <b>5 mins</b>	<i>Find the voice pitch</i>
Sing/buzz/play: MP call and response. <b>10 mins</b>	Good breath in Position of mouthpiece. Direction of air/angle of attack Creating the buzz Listen and copy
Getting to grips with the pBone <b>7 mins</b>	"Thumbs Up": everyone has a working grip on the pBone
Posture <b>5 mins</b>	Everyone has a good posture and angle of attack with the instrument
Sing buzz play pBone: indie, group <b>10 mins</b>	All are aware of "high, medium and Low" and can begin to ID their pitch placement. All are beginning to understand change the pitch of the buzz. One or more pitches are now playable in first position
"Bring it all together": extension activity: performance. <b>10 mins</b>	Utilising the learned playing into a performance

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## Teachers notes: Activities

**Head tap game:** A physical warm-up involving copying the leader; in a pulse led, real-time body tapping action, which travels from head to toe.

Limbs cross to engage left and right-hand brain, in a brain gym style.

Numbers of taps are altered at the last minute, adding to the complexity of the thought process, which is easily differentiated for varying abilities.

Successful engagement by the pupil will illicit:

- Following leader skills
- Physical multi-tasking
- Ensemble skills
- Mental multi-tasking

**Big breaths:** Large, slow, whole body, sweeping actions from head to toe keyed into intake of breath.

Used here as a warm down from the previous activity, this is also very useful for relaxation and allowing the participant to begin raising awareness of breathing without an overt reference.

This calls for posture and pace across the whole body while-finding watching strategies to stay with-the leader and/or the ensemble. The participant must listen to gather cues about breathing, both regarding style and pace.

**Follow me claps/body percussion extension, (if time):** This is initially a concentrating activity that really directs the group on the leader.

The leader enforces, with no words, the desired clapping posture and then leads a series of claps with the expectation that the whole group sounds as one.

The exercise then moves quickly into call and response clapped patterns.

This is a key component of my program, as this will develop over the weeks into complex body percussion ensemble pieces, creating a\_resource for generating rhythmic material through improvisation and composition; in body percussion, singing and playing.

The beauty of working within circle spaces is that a skilled and aware leader can allow individuals to enjoy a very secure environment in the group that slowly allows them to blossom into creative solo musicians through their most successful engagement medium.

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This activity can be a really fertile space for the development of improvisational skills in a totally secure and unthreatening environment.

**Song rope:** This activity is a “finding your voice” exercise: no previous singing skills needed!

The group imagines that we are all holding a rope in a big circle, doing some breathing/relaxing in this position as needed.

Next, we all hum together, very quietly, eyes closed, a sound that feels the most comfortable to each individual, regardless of how the sounds fit together. In fact, I often tell the group that the “spookier” or “weirder” the final sound, the better.

We will open eyes and then all use the rope as a dynamic signal: up for louder, down for quieter, still humming our own personal and comfortable pitch.

The next step is to do the same with pitch, moving from our “comfort” hum up and down. It doesn't matter if the move is a half-step (semitone) or an octave, it's the moving that counts, and participants can move the rope a distance that feeds back to the leader how they feel about the pitch change that they are creating.

As time goes by different sounds and calls can be used, but in my experience homogeneity of pitch will be the end result.

In fact, the first “spooky” sounds are really useful in composing but unfortunately will soon be hard to reproduce as the participants naturally seek the same pitch as they gain connection and control of their voices.

This is excellent preparation for the pitch work centered on controlling the harmonic series that is to come later during the development of brass playing skills.

**Sing/buzz/play:** Essentially using call and response to create a deepening brass skill based on voice, buzzing on the mouthpiece and then playing the instrument.

High quality, clear leadership is essential along with time and space for the pupils to grasp the tasks at hand.

There is excellent potential for breakout groups and peer learning partnerships with in this activity.

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Those familiar with the great Arnold Jacobs will no doubt smile wryly at this descriptor, but for the absolute beginner, I am convinced that this process, removed from the added stress of learning to read music simultaneously elicits a great foundation in the simple brass skills of:

- Concept of sound
- Internalizing pitch
- Controlling air flow
- Developing and controlling the aperture
- Self-assessment of success factors
- Ownership of the skills and pathways to improvement

It is really clear that inspirational leadership from a brass player who has a crystal clear view of the key elements of success as a brass musician is essential to the success of a learning scheme like this. However, I believe that this can also take place through training and leading less experienced teachers. Imagine a skilled high school brass player leading a classroom teachers from his feeder elementary schools through such a program; delivering a once a week lesson that could then be taught to the elementary pupils later that week thus building skills in the teaching workforce and a cohort of brass foundation skilled elementary pupils hungry to dive into the band program at middle or high school.

**Getting to grips with the pBone:** pBone is unique amongst trombones in that it is light, tough and strong. In addition, we have added ergonomic aids into the design of the instrument to help the younger player.

The left hand can hold the instrument in a traditional manner. However, we determined that good posture emanates from a straight wrist in the left hand and while maintaining this, a young player can use a variety of grips that will not undermine traditional trombone posture necessary if the pupil goes on to explore the trombone further.

Similarly guides that encourage students to hold the slide without using the right hand to support the instrument or using the fingers to touch the bell in third position are on the outer slide mouldings.

**Posture:** This is so important that I have developed a series of activities to encourage both good posture and therefore, an acceptable angle between the players face and the instrument.

Needless to say, the lightweight, ergonomics and absence of fear of damaging the instrument if dropped make pBone uniquely useful in this environment.

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**“Bring it all together”: extension activity: performance:** Sessions typically end with a celebration of new concepts learned and contextualization of any materials used or generated in the session into an authentic, musical experience via performance.

In this more informal setting, that generally means that the leader will create a new piece from the materials incorporated in the lesson.