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Teaching the French horn: Improved methods and resources

For instrumental music teachers, training successful French horn players can be a frustrating endeavor, because the playing technique, range, holding position, and other unique challenges of the instrument are often stumbling blocks for young students. While horn players often represent the top tier of a band in academic performance, it is difficult to motivate talented students to practice and play an instrument at which they are not as successful as they desire and expect to be. Therefore, like learning to play a sport or acquiring any comparable skill, it is important for students to learn to play an instrument without the hindrances created by avoidable bad habits. This project is an effort to empower teachers and students by increasing their knowledge and understanding of horn playing and pedagogy. The results of a survey of instrumental music teachers throughout Missouri were used to rank common difficulties in young horn players, as well as to gather and compile advice from experienced teachers. Books and other resources written by nationally and internationally recognized horn performers and pedagogues were used to supplement, support, and refute the advice offered by instrumental music teachers. Resources to provide information and solutions to combat reported difficulties were created based on the expressed needs of teachers and students.