
(name of the practice flaw)

Definition: _____

Examples/How To Tell

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Why it doesn't work: _____

Tips for correcting/avoiding this practice flaw

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Group Members: _____

For editable and reproducible copies of everything we will discuss, visit:

www.palenmusic.com/practice

Practice Flaws

Skimmers	Gluttons	Bad Bricklayers	Sheep Counters
Definition:	Definition:	Definition:	Definition:
Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:

Shiny Object Polishers	Red Light Runners	Always From the Top	Pattern Practicers
Definition:	Definition:	Definition:	Definition:
Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:

Speed Demons	Drifters	Clock-Watchers	Autopilots
Definition:	Definition:	Definition:	Definition:
Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:

Chopping Wood with a Spoon	Ignoring the Map	<u>NOTES</u>
Definition:	Definition:	
Correcting/Avoiding:	Correcting/Avoiding:	

Resources

Johnston, Philip. (2007). *The Practice Revolution: Getting great results from the six days between music lessons*. Pearce ACT, Australia: PracticeSpot Press

Johnston, Philip. (2009). *Practiceopedia: The big book of practice help*. Mawson ACT, Australia: PracticeSpot Press

“Levels” provide a simple way for students to measure progress as they learn their music. This system will allow you to define many more specific degrees of readiness, so that students can progress from “no idea” to “fluent” in a series of measurable steps. *The Practice Revolution* – p. 132

Beginning Students

Level #	Requirement for the musical selection to attain this level
1	You are performing with correct posture and your instrument is in the correct playing position.
2	You can identify all notes and rhythms in the piece. You know all fingerings and can write in the counting for the rhythms.
3	You can “finger and say” the passage.
4	You can “finger and say” the passage with a metronome at _____ bpm.
5	You can perform the passage with a metronome at _____ bpm.

Intermediate Students

Level #	Requirement for the musical selection to attain this level
1	You can identify and finger all notes, count all rhythms, and define all other score markings.
2	You can “finger and say” the passage with a metronome at _____ bpm.
3	You can use all correct articulations and dynamics in the passage.
4	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at 75% of the marked tempo.
5	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at 75% of the marked tempo 3 times in a row without mistakes.
6	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at the marked tempo.
7	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at the marked tempo 3 times in a row without mistakes.

Advanced Students

Level #	Requirement for the musical selection to attain this level
1	You can identify and finger all notes, count all rhythms, and define all other score markings.
2	You can “finger and say” the passage with a metronome at _____ bpm.
3	You can use all correct articulations and dynamics in the passage.
4	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at 75% of the marked tempo.
4a	You can perform the passage as stated in level 4 and make your own musical decisions, where appropriate.
5	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at 75% of the marked tempo 3 times in a row without mistakes, in a set amount of time.
6	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at the marked tempo.
7	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at the marked tempo 3 times in a row without mistakes, in a set amount of time.

Sample assignment for a beginning band student, using the “Levels” language.

#13 & 15 – Up to Level 3 by Thursday. Playing test (Level 5 proficiency) on Tuesday.

Sample Practice Record for a beginning band student, using the “Levels” language, working toward the assignment above.

Level #	Requirement for the musical selection to attain this level	Parent Initials
1	You are performing with correct posture and your instrument is in the correct playing position.	_____
2	You can identify all notes and rhythms in the piece. You know all fingerings and can write in the counting for the rhythms.	_____
3	You can “finger and say” the passage.	_____
4	You can “finger and say” the passage with a metronome at _____ bpm.	_____
5	You can perform the passage with a metronome at _____ bpm.	_____

Sample Practice Records for an intermediate band student, using the “Levels” language.

Week 1

Assignment: Cajun Folk Songs by Frank Ticheli – m. 28 – 44

Level #	Requirement for the musical selection to attain this level	Parent Initials
1	You can identify and finger all notes, count all rhythms, and define all other score markings.	_____
2	You can “finger and say” the passage with a metronome at _____ bpm.	_____
3	You can use all correct articulations and dynamics in the passage.	_____

Week 2

Assignment: Cajun Folk Songs by Frank Ticheli – m. 28 – 44

Level #	Requirement for the musical selection to attain this level	Parent Initials
4	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at 75% of the marked tempo.	_____
5	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at 75% of the marked tempo 3 times in a row without mistakes.	_____

Week 3

Assignment: Cajun Folk Songs by Frank Ticheli – m. 28 – 44

Level #	Requirement for the musical selection to attain this level	Parent Initials
6	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at the marked tempo.	_____
7	You can perform the passage with correct notes, rhythms, articulations, and dynamics at the marked tempo 3 times in a row without mistakes.	_____

Breakthroughs Diary (due Monday, February 15)

Student Name: _____

Assignments – Week of February 8

- M, W American Hymn Tune Sketches – m. 138 - 179
- Th The Sounds of Spring – whole piece – style!
- Th Of Sailors and Whales, Movement 1 – C – E, 82 - end

Assignments – Week of February 15

- American Hymn Tune Sketches – Whole Piece
- The Sounds of Spring – Whole Piece
- Of Sailors and Whales, Movement 1 – Whole Piece

SmartMusic Assignments

- 2 – 5 minute practice sessions (New Version!)
- American Hymn Tune Sketches – Whole Piece
- The Sounds of Spring – Whole Piece
- Of Sailors and Whales, Mvt 1 – Whole Piece

Date	Breakthroughs

Reflect on the pieces we are playing. What are you still having issues with? What parts do we need to focus on more in class? Is there something that you don't understand about a particular piece or section of a piece? Tell me what you need! I will be happy to try to accommodate you in our rehearsals!

The Practice Revolution: Level 2

Student Name: _____ Groupmates: _____

Read the article on ***Not wanting to practice***. Complete the following worksheet regarding the reading.

This article discusses the process of finding out what ***exactly*** you don't like about practicing and offering you some tips about how to combat these problems. Rank the 8 "common irritations" in your own order. #1 will be the thing that irritates you the most, #8 will be the thing that irritates you the least.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Discuss the most important thing you read (2 – 4 sentences):

Choose 3 "solutions" that you would like to research further! This is not a hierarchy...merely a list!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Practice Revolution: Level 3

Student Name: _____

Groupmates: _____

Read the article on **Triggers**. Complete the following:

What is a trigger? _____

What are some triggers that negatively affect your practice time? These should be things that actually happen to you...not canned things from the text. List or discuss a few.

What are some triggers that positively affect your practice time? These could be things from the text! List a 3 – 5 triggers that you can start using immediately!!

Read the article on **Visualization**. Complete the following:

What is visualization? _____

Discuss something about music that you can practice using visualization.

Discuss something about your future that you can “practice” using visualization.

Go-To Practicing Techniques

The following are some tips for practicing. Keep this sheet in your binder if you get stuck or need a reminder!

General

Set goals and make them specific – decide what your top five sections that sound the WORST are. These are the sections you need to focus on! Choose to fix SPECIFIC notes/measures. Your sections should be small.

Find a quieter place to practice...your practice should be private!

Put your phone on airplane mode to limit distractions.

Don't set a time limit – when you accomplish your goals you are done.

Be critical! Don't move on unless you have reached your goals.

Once you get something, play it WELL 5 times in a row. If you mess up, go back to 1. If you mess up consistently, pick another technique and refine it - it's not ready yet.

Break difficult spots down to their most basic level (finger and say, rhythm on one note, note-by-note, etc.) and build from there.

Set a timer for every 3 minutes. If you are focused every time it goes off, set it for 5 or longer. If you find that you are already not focused at 3 minutes, try setting it for 2 minutes, or 1 and try to get longer and longer.

If you get frustrated, go to a different spot and come back. Sometimes you just need to move on and revisit it later.

When you stop, ask yourself these questions:

“What did I play well?”

“What needs more work?”

“What technique can I use to get that section even better?”

“Is my position/posture perfect?”

Intonation

Play the section note-by-note. Don't move on until each note is in tune.

Slow it down – put metronome at 60bpm instead of 100bpm and gradually get faster.

Play with a drone (use tonic or the note that is consistently out of tune).

Listen to a recording or play the melody on the piano.

As you get it back up to tempo keep listening carefully and make sure your accuracy stays consistent.

Tone Quality

Practice consistent air! Make the whole note sound the same – clear, dark, open!

Try to make your articulations consistent and seamless! You should be able to move between different articulations without having to stop and think about it.

Experiment with dynamics to get the sound you are looking for.

Precision

Slow it down.

For passages with straight 8th notes, 16th notes, etc. use rhythms: L = long, S = short

LSLS, SLSL, LLSS, SSLL, LLLL SSSS, SSSS LLLL, as written

Use same articulation as written, or slur/tongue it all first

These rhythms are designed to be played at a slower, manageable tempo and then sped up

Practice the fingerings without actually playing (**air and fingers**), or the rhythm/articulations on one note.

Isolate a variable!!

Transitions

Play from the middle of one phrase to the middle of the next, even if it feels uncomfortable!

Instead of breaking a piece up into measures, play the measure plus one or two notes, then the next measure plus one or two etc.

Play from the middle of each measure to the middle of the next measure instead of starting at the beginning.

Brass Flexibility & Range

PLAY mp!

Start on your third-space C and play up one note until you get to top-line F. Remember to use gentle air and don't play loud!

Then, start over at fourth-line D and play to G above-the-staff.

Continue this process until you go at least 2 notes past the note you need to be able to play in the music.

Woodwind Vibrato

If your instrument utilizes vibrato, pick longer notes to try vibrato on and only vibrato on those notes.

Make sure you are using vibrato that comes from your diaphragm/air support. DO NOT use throat/muscle vibrato!

Stay relaxed!

Only isolate vibrato for a few minutes at a time and then work on adding it into a musical phrase.