

How to Practice/Practice Methods

Objectives: By the end of the session students should be able to..

- Think critically about their current practice goals and how they can achieve them in daily increments
- Plan practice sessions consistently with a method that works for them
- Apply new ways to practice instrument fundamentals and musical fundamentals
- Learn a song by ear

Materials

- Guided notes sheet (btnworkshop.com)
- Practice scheduling and fundamentals sheet (btnworkshop.com)
- Slideshow (btnworkshop.com) and projector
- Louis Armstrong recording of Mack the Knife
- Writing utensils

Welcome to the first session & Duet (15 min)

- Play
- Introduce co-presenters
- Why is knowing how to practice important
 - Practicing is the key to unlocking the kind of musician you want to be
 - Practice only works when you're able to make it effective
 - **Activity: What are you working on in your playing and what do you want to work on next?**
 - Provide a personal example
 - Think (1 min): Write silently on guided notes sheet
 - Pair (2 min): Share with a partner
 - Share: Partners share what their partners wrote

Planning out your practice (10 min)

- Be intentional about what you want to practice and for how long
- Structure makes progress easier
- Using a practice scheduling sheet and/or creating routine can be helpful
- **Activity: Write down what you want to practice today**
 - Use this as an opportunity for students to think about *where* they want to write it down. Do they want to use the practice scheduling sheet provided, an app, a notebook?
 - Think (2 min)
 - Share: Have students share what they wrote down and where

Instrument-specific fundamentals (10 min)

- Technique is about having the ability to play whatever you want to play so that your ability doesn't determine your musical decisions
- Tone
- Endurance
- Flexibility
- Range
- Dynamic Control
- Response/Suppleness
- How do you practice?
 - Scales and long tones
 - Etudes
 - Charlie Parker songs
- **Activity: Practice technique can be a drag; what are some ways that you make it fun or power through it when you practice?**
 - Think (1 min)
 - Pair (2 min)
 - Share (2-3 min)

Musical fundamentals (10 min)

- Time
- Sight Reading
- Transposition
- Interpretation/Style
- **Activity: Practice sight reading a piece**
 - Have students raise their hands to share what is important to pay attention to before playing (meter, key, style, tempo, clef, any tricky portions on their instrument)
 - Have everyone clap the rhythms of the sheet music together

Practicing Improv (25 Min)

- What's the difference between practicing and playing?
- Exhaustive Practice
 - Practice concepts as many ways as you can think of. Different keys, ranges, rhythms, starting notes, etc.
- Diatonic examples

How to Learn Tunes (20 min)

- Why is memorizing tunes important?
- Focused Listening
 - **Activity: Listen to Mack the Knife**
- Learn melody
 - **Activity: Sing melody to Mack the Knife**
- Learn chords
 - **Activity: Sing root movement to Mac the Knife**
- Test your knowledge
 - Play in all twelve keys or try an improv game on it

Closing (jump to homework if time is tight)

- Practice intentionally and exhaustively
- Have a good balance of the different components of practice (instrument fundamentals, musical fundamentals, improvisation, and learning tunes)
- Homework for next session: Bring back a practice journal