

Lesson 2: Practicing Technique

Featuring: Leo Blanco, Professor at Berklee College of Music

In the second video of this five-video series, you will discover the secret to having an effective practice session by mapping out a clear direction for your entire practice session. Leo Blanco will also guide you through best practices for warming-up while practicing your technique in creative and constructive ways.

Outcomes:

- Identify the three parts of a practice session
- Describe why it is important to warm up and practice technique
- Identify what techniques to practice based on your goals and repertoire
- Establish a practice routine by practicing daily and tracking your practice in your PULSE Practice Journal

Standards:

Creating

Common Anchor #2 – Plan and Make – Select and develop musical ideas for defined purposes and contexts.

MU:Cr2.1.E.5a Select and develop draft melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that demonstrate understanding of characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.

Common Anchor #3 – Present – Share creative musical work that conveys intent, demonstrates craftsmanship, and exhibits originality.

MU:Cr3.2.E.5a Share personally developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.

Performing

Common Anchor #4 – Select – Select varied musical works to present based on interest, knowledge, technical skill, and context.

MU:Pr4.1.E.5a Select varied repertoire to study based on interest, music reading skills (where appropriate), an understanding of the structure of the music, context, and the technical skill of the individual or ensemble.

Common Anchor #4 – Interpret – Develop personal interpretations that consider creators’ intent.

MU:Pr4.3.E.5a Identify expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music that can be demonstrated through prepared and improvised performances.

Common Anchor #5 – Rehearse, Evaluate and Refine – Evaluate and refine personal and ensemble performances, individually or in collaboration with others.

MU:Pr5.3.E.5a Use self-reflection and peer feedback to refine individual and ensemble performances of a varied repertoire of music.

MU:Pr5.3.E.11a Develop and apply appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music, and evaluate their success.

Common Anchor #6 – Present – Perform expressively, with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context.

MU:Pr6.1.E.5a Demonstrate attention to technical accuracy and expressive qualities in prepared and improvised performances of a varied repertoire of music.

Responding

Common Anchor #7 – Analyze – Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response.

MU:Re7.2.E.5a Identify how knowledge of context and the use of repetition, similarities, and contrasts inform the response to music.

Common Anchor #9 – Evaluate – Support personal evaluation of musical works and performance(s) based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

MU:Re9.1.E.5a Identify and describe the effect of interest, experience, analysis, and context on the evaluation of music

Materials:

- Computer with a browser such as Chrome, Safari or Firefox, to access the Berklee PULSE website
- Projector, PA system
- Video 2: Assessment Video Key Points Scavenger Hunt (pdf)
- PULSE Practice Journal (pdf)
- Establishing an Effective Practice Routine, Video Transcript (pdf)

Instructional Activity Ideas:

Exposition of Material: 5-7 minutes (including the video)

1. Teacher provides a very brief introduction (3 minutes) to the video.
2. Teacher shows video.

Identifying Key Concepts and Terms: 10 minutes

3. After the video, provide the students with a handout Video 2: Assessment Video Key Points Scavenger Hunt that helps them find the key points in the video. Go over each of the questions out loud in class.
4. Show the video a second time. This time, students watch the video and take notes on their handout.
5. Teacher then provides a transcript of the video and gives students 5-7 minutes to complete the handout.
6. Students submit the handout, and then move on to part 2 of the lesson, which is to create a practice journal.

Identifying Appropriate Technique Exercises: 10 minutes

7. Teacher: "As we learned, technique should begin each of your practice sessions and should be about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ " of your total practice time. This is the part of the session where you warm up your playing muscles, and then you move on to specific skills. Always, start slowly, and move into faster or more challenging techniques.
8. Your practice plan, and what warm-ups and technique exercises you will practice, depends on your goals. Work with your teacher to decide what will help you most at this point in your musical development.
9. Given the amount of time you devoted to practice in Lesson 1, now write down how much time you will devote to warm-up and technique.
10. Working with your teacher, write down a warm-up/technique routine you should use to start each practice session. This may include long tones, scales, rhythmic exercises, or other—it all depends on your instrument, your teacher, your goals, and where you are toward reaching them.

Lesson Closing

- Submit the "Video 2: Assessment Video Key Points Scavenger Hunt"
- Complete and submit your warm-up/technique plan

- Using your practice plan and goals from Lesson 1, and technique you identified in Lesson 2, practice every day for one week and track your progress in the PULSE Practice Journal

PULSE Resources: Extended Learning

Request a PULSE Demo Account

Practice Room: This area of the PULSE site offers a variety of instrument-specific resources including exercises, interactive practice tools, and instructional videos featuring Berklee faculty. Using the Practice Journal, students define and assess practice goals with the aid of their teacher.

Study Room: This area of PULSE includes curriculum resources devoted to contemporary musicianship and theory centering around the PULSE music library. Ten units of study, broken down into three levels, that focus on different musical concepts that are supported by a variety of materials like books, games, videos, exercises, interactive tools, and assessments.

- Rhythm Level 1

Explore the Rhythm Level 1 unit to establish a foundation in basic rhythmic subdivisions. Reinforce your knowledge through our Beat Balance rhythm game and prepare for the unit quiz with the Multiple Choice Identification and Definitions toolkit.

- Harmony Level 1

Learn more about key signatures, intervals, and triads through the use of Berklee PULSE instructional videos, books, games, and tools. Test your skills by taking the Harmony Level 1 Introduction to Key Signatures, Intervals, and Triads Quizzes.