

Thrive in Practice

A Proposal for a Practice Journal to Increase Joy and Success in Practicing (Practical Project)

Melina Paetzold

Problem:

Error-focused practice is widespread — as Mahler (2007) describes, practicing often turns into a recurring issue in the life of many musicians, emotionally and closely tied to the constant question of how to practice in the best and most meaningful way.

Question:

Is there a simple and time-efficient way to change how we perceive and experience practicing – and to make it more effective?

Proposal:

A journal with simple reflection prompts, centered around the following two key points:

- 1 Simple but not easy: reflection questions that shift attention toward what feels good and what's improving — to balance out self-criticism.

 What did I achieve today?

 What did I learn or realize?

 What brought me joy during today's practice?

- 2 Enhancing the classical to-do list of pieces and etudes with a task-based approach that prioritizes quality over quantity.

WHAT IS THERE TO PRACTICE?	WHAT I LIKE TO IMPROVE HERE?
What piece or etude, bar etc.	A bouncing staccato, a lovely tone etc.

Feedback:

Feedback from (amateur) musicians and educators who use the journal with their students indicates that it helps them practice more consciously and solution-oriented while also fostering greater independence in setting goals and making long-term plans.

The journal is intended as a suggestion and is continuously developed based on feedback.

“[I]t helps me to share the responsibility for the preparation with the students. I'm no longer the only one who has to constantly keep the goal in mind and steer the work. Students take on part of the responsibility and thus learn to plan and organize their practice independently.” *

**Fanny Mas Instrumental music educator
flute and accordion**

“Through your journal, a lot has changed for the better in my practice. The harsh self-criticism and constant self-doubt are becoming gentler, and I'm starting to experience more joy and ease while practicing.” *

- Anna, music student

References:

*translated from the German by the author
Mahlert, U. (Hrsg.). (2007). Was ist üben? In Handbuch Üben: Grundlagen, Konzepte, Methoden (2. Auflage). Breitkopf & Härtel.



Melina Paetzold | 2025
www.melinapaetzold.de
hallo@melinapaetzold.de

Insight into the Journal

