Level 4 Assignment

Plan - Lecture - Practising Habits For New Parents

**Introduction**

Part of wider Parent Education discussions for new parents which include demonstration performance from existing pupils, introduction to the philosophy of Suzuki Method, plan of Suzuki commitments and expectations throughout a year, goals for Year 1 including importance of listening.

This Lecture:

* Sets out practice expectations
* Value of practice
* Includes practical advice
* Opportunity to hear from existing Suzuki Parents and Q&A
* Hand-outs to take away

**Why Practice? Why bother?**

* Learning to play the violin can bring so much **joy** to a child and their family’s lives. It teaches the child to appreciate music, building creativity and sensitivity and many other transferable and technical skills
* Practice builds **confidence** – child sees themselves getting better and better
* So much can be achieved through **hard work** – satisfaction of success and enjoying being good at something
* Teaches children about the importance of **commitment and perseverance** – qualities for the future
* Rare opportunity for one-on-one **parent and child** time – working together – supported by teacher
* If child practises hard for a concert performance – **pride** and satisfaction of playing in front of people
* Playing with other children – practice to keep up with peers and **have fun together**

**Structure and Routine**

Routine = fundamental to successful practice

Start as you mean to go on and have high expectations – no giving in – rewards will be huge in the long term. Use examples of general discipline – would you give in to your child always wanting sweets?

You believe practice has to happen, the child will

Teaching child about commitment

Make practice part of your routine – brushing teeth each day at the same time – if your child did not want to brush their teeth, would that be OK?

Children accept routine

Time

Choose an appropriate time each day and stick to it

Before school is best – factor in practice as you would factor in getting dressed and having breakfast – will become normal and acceptable

Time has to work for you and the child – don’t choose a time when you are both tired

Environment

Calm environment – no distractions

Separate room to siblings/other activity

Child gets violin out each day – kept in the same place

Have practice chart and other materials to hand

Length

Manageable length

10 golden minutes are more valuable than a 30 min struggle

Little and often, particularly at Pre-Twinkle stage

Make child aware of goals and stick to them

‘Today we are going to practice making ten good bow holds’

Practice can’t be as long as a piece of string…

If practice isn’t working – stop and try again the next day

Planning

Plan your practice time – same structure throughout the week

If necessary, ask teacher to help plan your practice time

Refer to the lesson in your practice

One practice session per week can be driven by child – give child choice – would you like to do this or that?

**Content: Repetition, Variety, Motivation, Creativity**

Practice is about learning and improving. Repetition is absolutely key and it is important to expect **good repetitions** of the skill/musical passage you are improving. Child needs structure and praise around repetitions – achievable goals. Parent shouldn’t expect child to do x number of repetitions all in the same way.

Staircase of Learning – show diagram and talk it through – achieved through good repetitions

Unconscious Incompetence

Conscious Incompetence

Conscious Competence

Unconscious Competence

Repetition Games

* Changing physical environment – repetitions in different rooms/on different steps/in different corners
* Putting pennies in pot – physical representation of repetition – demonstration
* Playing to different toys
* Adding building blocks to structure each time do a repetition
* Charts / colouring sheets – show examples
* Pyramid of good repetitions – show examples

To prepare repetitions, skills and music should be broken down into **manageable chunks**. When child is learning pieces, they should not just play the piece all the way through. Start with tricky bits and practice with repetitions.

Examples:

* Coloured boxes in music
* Blowing up bits of the music and separating them from the rest of the piece

Practice also needs to be **fun and varied**. Use other games and mix up ideas. As a parent, you will need to be creative. Don’t let this scare you, your teacher will give you lots of ideas – you should execute them effectively with your child.

Examples:

* Lucky Dip Cards – demonstration
* Finding cards around the room
* Home concerts
* General Practice Charts – Reward Charts – long term and short term achievements – show examples

Case Study: Short talk from (successful!) Twinkle Parent about experiences with practice. Opportunity to ask questions later.

**HELP! Practice Isn’t Working…**

What should you do?

* Be honest with the teacher – ask for advice as you will most likely need some new ideas for practice
* Teacher speak to child about practice in the lesson
* Change routine – alter location, time of practice and trial that for two weeks
* Video practice to show to the teacher
* New ideas for motivation – charts and goals
* What are you working towards? Make the child aware
* Talk to other parents – teacher will provide opportunities – share ideas and discuss solutions to problems
* Don’t give in!

**Developing Practising Habits**

As the child develops and their technical ability and understanding surpasses that of the parent, the amount of parental involvement will naturally decrease. If practice habits and routines have been successfully introduced at Pre-Twinkle stage, the gradual move into independent practising will be easier.

At any level of learning, organised, regular and thoughtful practice which involves repetition, chunking and variety is invaluable. Through foundations laid by teacher and parent, your child learns *how to learn*. The child will use practising habits learnt from a young age to help them to solve new problems and perfect techniques independently.

Looking forwards – your role as a Suzuki parent with practice:

* Going from home ‘teacher’ to home ‘supporter’
* Teacher will support this – reinforce the importance of parent’s involvement to child in lesson
* Still come to lesson and take notes. At home, help to prompt child – points from the lesson
* Provide a calm environment for practice
* Help to maintain practice routine
* Be there to hear what is achieved – set goals together
* Support child through ‘tricky’ practice moments – refer back to previous practice methods e.g. be involved in repetition games

Case Study: Short talk from (successful!) ‘experienced’ Suzuki parent about practice habits. Opportunity to ask questions later.

**Practising Habits – Transferable Skills**

Suzuki Method practice teaches transferable skills for the future – helps children in school, with revision for exams and in later life.

* Suzuki children learn creatively, working at problems in an organised and committed way. They have been taught that they can succeed if they work hard
* The ‘manageable chunks’ approach works well when learning for exams – use examples of coloured boxes etc.
* Suzuki practice helps to develop memory and teaches children about effective memorisation – useful for revision/exams

**Q&A**

With teacher, new parent, ‘experienced’ parent and teenage pupils

**Hand-outs**

* Staircase of Learning Diagram
* Inspirational Articles e.g. Spectator
* Example Practice Charts Pre-Twinkle Practice Ideas