



## Suzuki Parent Education Week III

### Establishing Good Practice Habits, Part2: Structure

#### I. Why is structured practice important?

- a. It provides clear set of objectives, both long and short-term, for our practice
- b. Structure allows parents and students to work better together, and with greater clarity.
- c. We can better measure our achievements when we track progress
- d. It is satisfying to see the benefits of effective, structured practice.
- e. Structure allows us to effectively prepare for performances.
- f. As we progress through the repertoire, structured review supports further development.

#### II. Three different levels of structure in practice

- a. Daily practice
- b. Weekly goals (between content lessons)
- c. Long-term goals (each term, year, or beyond)

#### III. Structure of daily practice

- a. Focus most on things with the longest-lasting benefits. For pre-twinkle students, this means an enormous emphasis on correct posture and position!
- b. A couple examples for students at different levels of achievement:
  - i. **Student 1 – Working piece is Minuet 2 in Suzuki Book 1**
    1. Short improvisation (under 3 minutes)
    2. Begin by playing the three primary scales in “Pepperoni Pizza” rhythm, concentrating on left hand position, intonation, and great tone.
    3. Review every piece before Minuet 2 carefully, with special attention paid to the teaching points for the review pieces.
    4. Work on practicing the teaching points for Minuet 2
    5. Continue finding the notes for Minuet 3, alternating between listening, singing, and playing sections of the piece.
    6. \*\*\* Listen through all pieces in Suzuki Book 1 and through Hunters’ Chorus in Suzuki Book 2 each day. \*\*\*
  - ii. **Student 2 – Working piece is Handel Bourée in Suzuki Book 2**
    1. Short improvisation (under 5 minutes)
    2. Play through all the Major and minor scales in two octaves, focusing on left hand position, intonation, and tone.
    3. Work through all the pieces on the review chart from Book 1 and up to Handel Bourée in Book 2. Emphasis is on the weaker pieces in Book 2.
    4. Work on teaching points in Handel Bourée
    5. Continue finding the notes for Two Grenadiers and Witches’ Dance.
    6. \*\*\* Listen through the end of Book 2 and to the Reiding Concerto in b minor in anticipation for summer. \*\*\*



**iii. Student 3 – Working piece is Vivaldi Concerto in a minor in Suzuki Book 4**

1. Short improvisation (under 5 minutes)
  2. Play through all 24 Major and minor scales in three octaves, focusing on left hand position, shifting, intonation, instrument balance, and tone.
  3. Review and revise pieces from the review chart from Books 1-4. Emphasis is on most recent pieces; Book 1-2 pieces are simply a play-through with musicality, bowing variation, and enjoyment as goals.
  4. Practice the assigned Wohlfahrt etudes for the teaching points discussed during the lesson. Usually four are assigned simultaneously.
  5. Practice through trouble spots in the Vivaldi concerto, and work on getting difficult passages to a faster tempo.
  6. Practice preview spots in Bohm Perpetual Motion and Bach Double Concerto in anticipation for the next lesson.
  7. Practice any trouble spots in school music, youth orchestra pieces, and the gig book.
  8. \*\*\* Listen through all the pieces of Suzuki Book 4 and through Country Dance in Book 5, plus any youth orchestra pieces and etude recordings, as necessary. \*\*\*
- c. In all three examples, the daily practice structure is as follows:
- i. Warm-up (doodling, improvisation, stretching fingers, finding a good tone)
  - ii. Technique (scales and etudes)
  - iii. Review (polish previous pieces; adding more refinement)
  - iv. Working pieces (finding notes, preview spots, and practicing)
  - v. Other (any other pieces, such as excerpts, school music, gig music, etc.)
  - vi. \*\*\*Daily listening – This is just as important as the practice itself! \*\*\*

**IV. Weekly Practice**

- a. A weekly practice chart is an amazing help to see progress over multiple days!
- b. What is a lesson point?
  - i. A specific desired change
  - ii. Strategies to effect the change
  - iii. Evaluation from the student, parent, and teacher on whether the change is taking place.
  - iv. Adjust strategies, if needed. "leap back" if required.
  - v. Assignments for home practice.
- c. Home practice should mirror the lesson!
- d. See the other handouts for examples of weekly practice charts

**V. Next Week: How much practice? Duration and Consistency.**