

Practicing with Purpose: What's

the Big **IDEA** 

By Katie O'Hara LaBrie & Tracy Magwire



What's The Big IDEA?



- Go beyond the traditional practice log
- Encourage thoughtful student practice
- Tools you can use in your class on Monday!
- Can be used at Any Level!
- Strategies for Each Musical Concept
- Create well rounded musicians
- Encourage Self Motivated, Life-Long Learners
- Promote Purposeful Practice Anywhere!



What do you
currently do to
monitor at
home
practice?



Practice Log?



Journal?



Quizzes?



Nothing?

QUANTITY



Grading Based on Time



To Tell the Truth?



What is the Goal?



Playing vs. Practicing

VS

QUALITY



Student Goal Setting



Practice Strategies



Self-motivated



Independent Learners

The text "OMG!" is rendered in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a thick black outline. It is set against a black, jagged, starburst-like background that resembles a comic book explosion. This entire graphic is centered within a white rectangular box with rounded corners. The white box is positioned on a purple background that features a fine, diagonal hatching pattern.

Obtainable Musical Goals

Background Knowledge



? Do Students Understand the Fundamentals of Their Instrument ?



? Do Students Know the Musical Concepts & Terms ?



? Do Students Know How to Break Things Down to Create OMGs ?



? Do Students Know a Variety of Strategies to Achieve Goals ?

The Big

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Identify:

What part of the music will you work on?

D

Decide:

What musical concept needs work?

E

Execute:

What strategies will help achieve your goal?

A

Analyze:

How did you do? What worked? What didn't?

I

Identify:

What part of the music will you work on?

D

Decide:

What musical concept needs work?

E

Execute:

What strategies will help achieve your goal?

A

Analyze:

How did you do? What worked? What didn't?



PracticeWithPurpose.Net

The **IDEA** Journal



Step 1

Goal Setting

Teach students to **Identify** & **Decide**

Step 2

How do I reach my goal?

Teach students to **Execute** Strategies

Step 3

How did I do?

Teach students to **Analyze** and Reflect

Step 4

Put it all together!

Practice and Journal using The Big **IDEA**

PracticeWithPurpose.Net

IDEA Journals



IDEA Journal - Step 1 – Creating OMGs

IDENTIFY an Area of study	DECIDE: What musical goal were you working on?	ANALYZE: Were you successful?
Warm-up:		
Spot 1 Title: Measures:	☐ Fingerings/Intonation ☐ Rhythm ☐ Tempo ☐ Tone (from bow) ☐ Bowings/Articulation ☐ Dynamics/Phrasing ☐ Posture (Left hand/Inst) ☐ Posture (Bow hold)	☐ Yes, I have mastered this concept ☐ I'm improving but this still needs work ☐ No, I need to try something else, or get help on this spot
Spot 2 Title: Measures:	☐ Fingerings/Intonation ☐ Rhythm ☐ Tempo ☐ Tone (from bow) ☐ Bowings/Articulation ☐ Dynamics/Phrasing ☐ Posture (Left hand/Inst) ☐ Posture (Bow hold)	☐ Yes, I have mastered this concept ☐ I'm improving but this still needs work ☐ No, I need to try something else, or get help on this spot

Consider...

Practice Strategies: String Edition

the Big IDEA 

Tone:

- ☐ Basics: Is your bow tight? Are you holding the bow correctly? Are you sure? Check your posture!
- ☐ Is your bow at the sound point? (contact point between the bridge and the fingerboard)
- ☐ Follow the LAWS (Location, Amount, Weight, Speed)
 - ☐ Are you drawing your bow straight?
 - ☐ If not – make sure you are utilizing your shoulder, elbow, AND wrist joints.
 - ☐ Are you playing smoothly? Are you pushing too hard?
 - ☐ Are you using enough weight at the start to grab the string & then releasing to let it ring?
 - ☐ Are you keeping your bow moving at a consistent speed?
- ☐ Are your bow hairs tilted towards the bridge?
- ☐ Are you placing your left hand fingers down evenly with weight on the string?
- ☐ Are your left hand fingers curved?

Articulation:

- ☐ Isolate the articulation by playing it on open strings rather than with the fingerings.
- ☐ Listen to music in the same style or from the same time period to get a sense of what the articulation is supposed to sound like.
- ☐ Identify what part of the bow you need to be in.
- ☐ Experiment with bow tilt, and LAWS (Location, Amount, Weight, Speed)

Bowings:

- ☐ Shadow Bow (with or without the fingerings)
- ☐ Think about where you should be in the bow – frog, balance point, middle, tip?
 - ☐ Try a section at different points to determine what is easiest and most useful.
- ☐ Isolate - If something like a slur or string crossing is giving you trouble, isolate it and try to figure out what will make it easier – how much bow are you using, where in the bow, where on the string, etc...

Phrasing:

- ☐ Sing your music!
- ☐ Think of a phrase as a musical sentence. In speech there are natural pauses for periods and commas. Figure out where the natural pauses might be in the music. Then apply different bow techniques to create that space.
- ☐ Identify places that might benefit from addition dynamics, such as hairpins or echoes, & mark them in.
- ☐ MOVE & BREATHE! This should be natural and a part of every musical experience.

Dynamics:

- ☐ Identify the dynamics. Circle things that you have trouble remembering.
- ☐ Ask yourself the following question: WHAT IS MY BOW DOING?
- ☐ Apply the "LAWS of Tone & Dynamics"
 - ☐ Location - where the bow is on the string:
 - ☐ Sound Point (middle) – strong sound, clear tone
 - ☐ Ponticello (near the bridge) – strong sound, often crunchy tone
 - ☐ Sul Tasto (by the fingerboard) – soft sound, often weak tone
 - ☐ Amount – more bow = more sound
 - ☐ Weight – more weight = more sound
 - ☐ Speed – varies the dynamics depending on location, amount and weight
- ☐ Experiment with flat hair vs a tilted bow stick.

LaBrie (2021 edition)

What is your favorite strategy to use for personal practice?

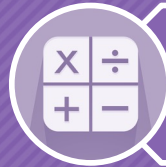
What practice strategies do you encourage your students to use?

GENERAL STRATEGIES

- Repetition **will ALWAYS** be a part of practice, it can't be the **ONLY** part.



Chunk It!



Add a Measure / Add a Note



Play it "Backwards"



Metronome Challenge



The "Penny Game"

The Penny Game



B♭ Trumpet I

FORTIFY

KATHY OTHARA LABRIE
LASCAP

With strength ($\text{♩} = 120$)

f

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2 8

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20 *mp cresc. poco a poco*

26 5

32 *f*

38 14

44 *f*

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B1884

The Penny Game



B♭ Trumpet I

FORTIFY

KATHY O'HARA LABRIE
LACAP

With strength ($\text{♩} = 120$)

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mp cresc. poco a poco

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The Penny Game



B♭ Trumpet I

FORTIFY

KATHY OTIARA LABRIE
LASCAP

With strength ($\text{♩} = 120$)

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B♭ Trumpet 1

FORTIFY

KATHY OHARA LABRIE
(ASCAP)

With strength ($\text{♩} = 120$)

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The Penny Game

Bb Trumpet 1

FORTIFY

KATIE O'HARA LABRIE
(ASCAP)

With strength ($\text{♩} = 120$)

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The “CANDY” Game

B♭ Trumpet I

FORTIFY

KATHY OTIARA LABRIE
LASCAP

With strength ($\text{♩} = 120$)

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Out-of-the-Box Strategies

○ Repetition **will ALWAYS**
be a part of practice,
it's just not the **ONLY** part.

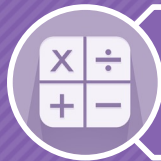
○ Turn it into a **GAME**
Make it **FUN!**



Chunk It!



Play in a New Location



Add a Measure



Play with a Friend



Play it
"Backwards"



Play for your Pet



Metronome Challenge



Record Yourself



The "Penny Game"



Put on a Mock Concert

Practice Makes ~~Perfect~~

Practice Makes Permanent



Concept - Based Strategies



Fingerings



Rhythm & Tempo



Intonation



Tone & Dynamics



Bowing, Articulation,
Phrasing

Write Down
the Fingering

Try
Tunneling(S)

4th Finger?
(violins/violas)
(S)

Isolate a spot

Alternative
Fingering /
Shifting

Double it

Mixed
Rhythms

Tizzle/Sizzle or
Silent
Fingering

Say it then
play it

Concept - Based Strategies



Fingerings



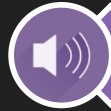
Rhythm & Tempo



Intonation



Tone & Dynamics



Bowing, Articulation,
Phrasing

Write Down
the Fingering

Try
Tunneling(S)

4th Finger?
(violins/violas)
(S)

Isolate a spot

Alternative
Fingering /
Shifting

Double it

Mixed
Rhythms

Tizzle/Sizzle or
Silent
Fingering

Say it then
play it

Long – Short / Short – Long
Long Long – Short Short / Short Short – Long Long
Long – Short Short Short

Concept - Based Strategies



Fingerings



Rhythm & Tempo



Intonation



Tone & Dynamics



Bowing, Articulation,
Phrasing

Write out the
counting

SUBDIVIDE

Count the
rhythm aloud

Count the beat
while clapping
rhythm

Count or clap
with
metronome

Play with
Metronome

Shadow bow
Or Tizzle/Sizzling

Play with a
backtrack



Concept - Based Strategies



Fingerings



Rhythm & Tempo



Intonation



Tone & Dynamics



Bowing, Articulation,
Phrasing

Scales

Finger
Patterns

Double-
Stops

Half vs Whole
Steps

Play with
tuner

SING!

Play by
Ear

Intonation
Games

Intervals

Concept - Based Strategies



Fingerings



Rhythm & Tempo



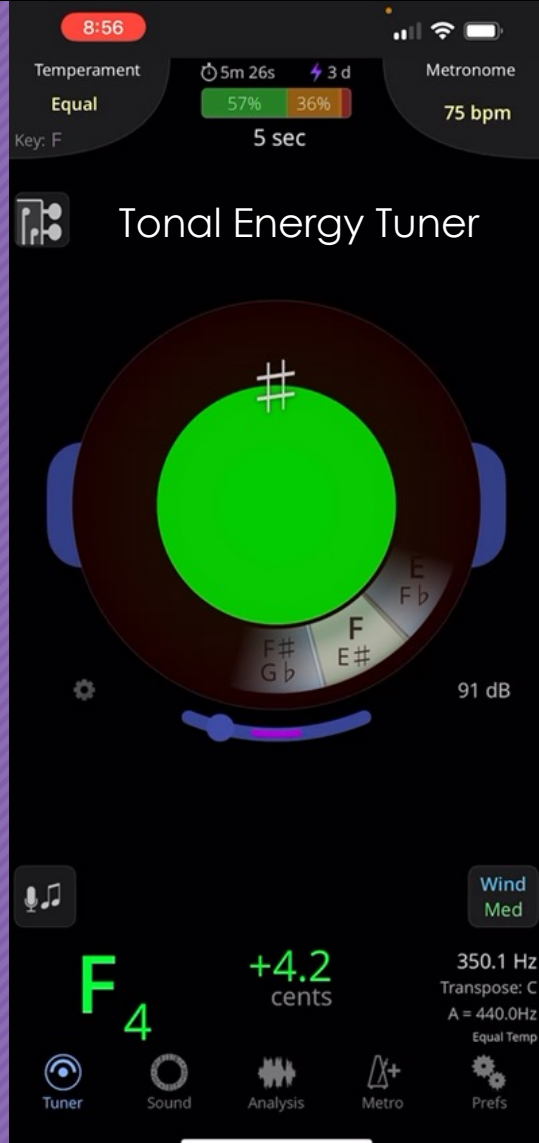
Intonation



Tone & Dynamics



Bowing, Articulation,
Phrasing



Scales

Finger
Patterns

Double-
Stops

Half vs Whole
Steps

Play with
tuner

SING!

Play by
Ear

Intervals

Intonation
Games

Concept - Based Strategies



Fingerings



Rhythm & Tempo



Intonation



Tone & Dynamics



Bowing, Articulation,
Phrasing

Band Tone Strategies

Long Tones

Breathing

Posture

Embouchure

Percussion
(Roll Speed)

Concept - Based Strategies



Fingerings



Rhythm & Tempo



Intonation



Tone & Dynamics



Bowing, Articulation,
Phrasing

LAWS of Tone & Dynamics for Strings

L

Location/Lane

A

Amount

W

Weight

S

Speed

T

Tilt

Concept - Based Strategies



Fingerings



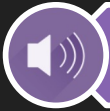
Rhythm & Tempo



Intonation



Tone & Dynamics



Bowing, Articulation,
Phrasing

Exaggerate

Isolate the
Articulation

SCALES

Listen to
music

Sing!

Add
dynamics
for phrasing

Move & Breathe!

IDEA Journals



IDEA Journal - Step 2 – Executing Strategies

Spot	measures	What is difficult about this spot?	What strategies will you use to improve this spot?
Piece Title 1 Spot 1			



Spot 2			
Piece Title 3 Spot (3)			

IDEA Journals



3-2-1 ANALYSIS

NAME:		Class Period:
DIRECTIONS: For this assignment you will be reflecting on _____. Identify 3 things that went well, 2 things that need improvement, and 1 thing that was interesting and write your comments in the correct place below. Use <u>specific music terminology</u> in each answer.		
3 Things done well	2 Things to fix	1 Thing you found Interesting
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	
3.		

IDEA Journals



IDEA Journal

Student Name: _____ Class: _____ Date Due: _____

Quantity: Check off days that you have a quality practice session: that is at least 30 minutes for SE/Chamber and at least 20 minutes for Primo, Encore and Concert Orchestra. Aim for at least 5 a week in order to receive full credit.

Dates	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Jan 7-13	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Jan 14-20		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Quality: Follow the big IDEA. What are your OMGS? Use your new music for assessment only.

#	IDENTIFY Piece & Measures (small chunks)	DECIDE Musical Concept - what are you trying to achieve / improve on?	EXECUTE What strategies did you use to work on this goal?	ANALYZE Did you achieve your goal? Do you still need work on it? Do you need extra help?
1	Serenade for Strings: measures 53-59	Fingering and speed- getting the notes faster and knowing how to finger it	I slowly increased the tempo of my playing to get faster and did finger drills in 1st gear	Yes, the strategies worked and I can now play quickly and correctly
2	Themes from the Moldau: measure G-H (sorry I don't know the number)	Bowing- getting the slurred 16th notes and staccato parts down	I bowed the section in the air and tried to play the bowings on the open D string	Yes, my bowing is now crisp and precise and I know which notes are slurred
3	Serenade for Strings- measures 1-12	Rhythm- there are many different rhythms in this section, and I need to work on them	I subdivided in my head, played with a metronome, and practiced counting the rhythm out loud while clapping	Yes, I have mostly got it, but I need to pay attention when I play that section
4	Incantations: measures 45-57	Intonation: the key has two flats, which makes it difficult to play in tune	I played with a tuner and recorded myself playing so I could listen to if the notes were played correctly	Yes, I now remember to play E and B flat and have good intonation throughout
5	Incantations: 87-94	Rhythm: I noticed in class that we never play this together	Subdividing eighth notes in my head was extremely helpful for this section	Yes, if I count the eighth notes in my head I can play the rhythm correctly

IDEA Journals



Practice Journal

the Big IDEA 💡

IDENTIFY & DECIDE: What do I need to practice this week?

Day	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Quality Practice							

EXECUTE: What practice strategies did you use this week? (Use your practice strategies list to help.)

ANALYZE: Write a reflection on this week's practice. Feel free to use these questions to help you think (you don't have to answer them all): What parts did you enjoy? What did you struggle with? What improved? Do you have a goal for next week? Do you have any questions to bring up in class?

IDEA Journals



5-5-5 IDEA Journal

the Big IDEA 💡

Goals: Identify at least **5 OMGS** that you will work on over the next two weeks. List the name of the piece, the measures and the musical concept that you were working on (rhythm, tone, intonation, etc....). After practicing, address if you have mastered the spot or if it needs a different approach.

#	Piece & Measures	Musical Concept - what are you trying to achieve / improve on?	Did you achieve your goal, do you still need work on it, or do you need extra help?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Strategies: List at least **5 practice strategies** you will use over the course of the two weeks.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Quantity: Please write down how many minutes you practiced each day.
Practice at least **5 days per week** to receive full credit. 20+ minutes each session.

Dates	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Dates	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	TOTAL

How to Incorporate The Big Idea

1st quarter

- Introduce the Big IDEA & Goal Setting
- Teach Students to Identify and Decide

2nd quarter

- Execute – Teach students to use the strategy guides
- Analyze -

3rd quarter

- The Big IDEA Journal

4th quarter

- Go Beyond The Big IDEA

Beyond The Big IDEA



Music Growth Project

Music Growth Project



Each quarter, all students will complete a “Music Growth Project”.

This project will be 10% of the quarterly grade. Students must earn **10 points per quarter**.

The purpose of this project is for students to grow as musicians outside of the normal classroom/rehearsal setting in a way that works for them. You may choose from the options listed below or come up with other ideas – *be sure to get your director’s approval for items not on the list.*

Point Value	Title	Description
Up to 10	All District Band Auditions (2 nd Qtr ONLY)	Students prepare all materials necessary for the audition and perform for judges. Score received at the audition will determine points.
8-10	Solo and Ensemble Festival (4 th Qtr ONLY)	Students prepare and perform a solo/duet/trio, etc. for a judge. Ratings of superior will receive 10 points and ratings of Excellent will receive 8. Those receiving a rating lower than Excellent will not receive project credit. (Registration information will be posted around February)
2+	Private Lessons	Private Lessons are the best way for students to get better at playing their instrument and to get regular individual feedback. 1 lesson = 2 points. Reflection Form must be submitted for credit! More information on website.
1+	Outside Musical Ensembles	Students may receive credit for participating in outside musical ensembles (e.g. Youth Orchestra, Jazz Band, Religious Ensembles). Students will receive 1 point for each rehearsal and 2 for a performance. A Verification Form must be submitted to get credit!
2+	Goal Setting Practice Card	Complete a week long IDEA Journal. Use The Big IDEA and Practice Strategies Guide to find the best way to practice the skill you are working on.
2+	Practice Video	Watch the Practice Strategies video . Create and submit your own practice video using The Big IDEA model.
3	Etude Performance	Prepare an etude or solo to performance quality and play it for their director. If you need assistance in finding music, please speak with the director at the start of the quarter.
5	Listening Project	Complete a month-long Listening Project . Make sure to do the reflection at the end of the assignment. *This option may only be used ONCE per quarter*
3	Essay	Write a 3-paragraph essay on a music related topic. You must follow the Essay Guidelines . <i>All topics must be cleared by the teacher first.</i> *This option may only be used ONCE per quarter*
2	Tuning Chart	Watch the Tuning Chart explanation video. Fill out a tuning chart notating your instrument’s tendencies. *This option may only be used ONCE*
5	Scale Challenge	Record yourself playing five assigned scales. *This option may only be used ONCE per quarter*

Choice Board

Option 1: Performance Review

Attend a public performance as an audience member (amateur, military or professional or high school). Write a critical review of each (like one you would find in a newspaper) about the performance. Include information on the performers, instruments, music, composers etc.... Include your impression of the concert. Turn in your review as well as a program from the concert. I will provide an optional list of free public performances in the area. Must include strings. May not be a sibling's performance.

Option 2: 30 Day Practice Challenge

Practice EVERYDAY for 30 days. Dates will be _____ to _____. Put on a performance of the pieces you have been practicing for a family member near the end of the project. Parents must sign off for full credit at the end of the project.

Option 3: Composition

Write a 16 measure (or more) original composition for your instrument. Must be playable by you or a friend. Use a free composition application or write by hand on manuscript paper. Composition must have a title and all regular musical elements. Turn in the paper and perform the composition (or submit a recording) at the end of the project.

Option 4: Practice Bingo

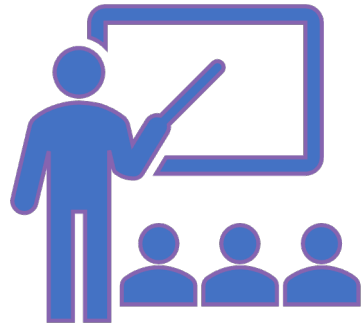
Practice in a variety of ways and places. When you complete a box write the date. You must get 4 bingos (horizontal, vertical or diagonal). This means 4 lines - not 4 boxes! Put on a performance of the pieces you have been practicing for a family member at the end of the project. Parents must sign off for full credit at the end of the project.

Option 5: Performance

Organize a public performance at a local nursing home, religious center, or other location. This can be solo or with friends. Make a program and invite your teacher to attend. If your teacher cannot attend, please take pictures and/or video to submit along with the program.

Option 6: Transcription

Take a song that you enjoy that is not traditionally for your instrument. (it could be a song from the radio for example). Figure out the notes and rhythms and write them out on a piece of music paper (handwritten or use a free app to input the notes). Turn in a copy of the written music as well as a video of you performing the music (or perform during class).



Consider...

**What new ideas or strategies might YOU
add into your classroom?**

Success Stories



Practice with Purpose: *What's The Big IDEA*

Created by
Katie O'Hara LaBrie
& Tracy Magwire

www.PracticeWithPurpose.net



the Big **IDEA** 

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