

# Practice Worksheet Instructions

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### 1. Define the Problem

- ▶ What is the skill or problem you are working on?

### 2. Set an Achievable Goal

- ▶ Simplify the problem to create a goal/task that is achievable in a short amount of time.

### 3. Comprehension

- ▶ What is required to do the task successfully?
- ▶ Imagine that you must program a robot to perform the task. Out loud, can you tell the robot *exactly* what it has to do?
- ▶ Without holding your violin or moving a muscle, can you imagine yourself doing the task correctly? Can you feel it? Hear it? See it?

### 4. Practice Until You Get it Right

- ▶ Can you do the task correctly in three tries or less?
- ▶ If you succeeded, congratulate yourself and continue to Step 5. If you did not succeed in three tries, *stop trying* for the moment. One of several things is possible:
  - ▶ **You are playing too fast.** Slow down. Choose a tempo that allows you to play correctly and maintain a feeling of ease.
  - ▶ **You aren't focused.** Your mind must actively direct your body. As you play, keep your mind engaged by visualizing what you need to do to perform the task correctly.
  - ▶ **You don't fully understand what is required.** Return to Step 3. If you realize that you're missing some information to correctly accomplish the task, no amount of practice will help at this point. Call me for advice.
  - ▶ **Your goal is too large.** Return to Step 2 and change your goal. Look at the problem from a different angle or simplify the task by breaking it down further.
- ▶ After determining what went wrong, repeat Step 4 doing trials 4, 5, and 6. Again, either continue to Step 5 if you succeeded or stop and evaluate why you didn't succeed. Then repeat Step 4 doing trials 7, 8, and 9.
- ▶ If you have not achieved your first success of the day by trial 9, **stop**. Continuing at this point will reinforce the errors. Either move on to something different or call me for advice.

## 5. Make the Success Permanent

- ▶ The final step is to “practice until you can’t get it wrong.”
- ▶ It takes about a week of daily repetition for a new skill to become automatic and part of your long-term memory. For the new skill to become permanent, you must practice the skill on consecutive days. If you wait 48 hours to repeat the skill (skip a day), your retention drops drastically, and by 72 hours, retention is almost zero.
- ▶ To develop consistent control of your new skill, attempt to repeat your success 5 times in no more than 10 trials. Stop as soon as you do 5 correct repetitions, and record your score (i.e. 5/8).

### THE RULES:

- ▶ Each time you try to repeat your success, play through to the end *without stopping*, even if you make a mistake. Do not stop and try to improve it.
- ▶ Between each physical repetition, do a silent mental repetition, visualizing what you need to do to perform the task correctly.
- ▶ After completing 5 successful repetitions, stop and move on to something completely different. Do not try to add more detail to what you have worked on.
- ▶ Tomorrow, return to Step 4 until you achieve your first success. Do not increase the difficulty of your goal.
- ▶ If you don’t achieve 5 successes in 10 tries, **stop**. Either return to Step 2 or start again tomorrow.
- ▶ If after 5 days you don’t achieve at least 5/6, **stop**. You either need more information or your goal is too large.