

Brighton Middle School Band Practice Log: The Three Things Principle

As a young musician, it is essential to invest time into your musicianship each day. As discussed in the band handbook at the beginning of the school year, students are responsible for practicing a minimum of thirty minutes each day. To keep track of our musical investment, we will create practice logs. These logs are not just the typical write what you are practicing, how long you have practiced, and have your guardian sign it. The log is intended to build you as a musician to see yourself in a positive light.

After each practice session, you are to write down three very specific things:

- Note #1: Write down one specific thing that went well. - Make sure this is something specific. Go into great detail.
- Note #2: Write down one very specific thing that improved. - It may not have been great, or perfect, but it represented an improvement. Again, make sure it is something you can describe in very specific terms.
- Note #3: Write down one instance of great effort. - Such as keeping your inner dialogue positive despite a big mistake or performing a passage with confidence.

This principle can change your whole perspective of how you see yourself as a musician. We tend to only focus on the negative aspects while performing music; the idea is to notice the positive aspects. When you are playing through a passage and something sounds good, you will make a mental note of it, because you know you are going to have to write something down on your practice log. Then you will keep on playing and notice some imperfect things, but then something will go well. By the end of the practice session, you will have paid attention not just to the things that need improving, but the good parts and the parts which have developed. Paying attention to both the good and the bad will contribute to a more realistic and balanced view of how you sound overall.

Each Friday, students will turn in a minimum of five detailed practice logs that are each initialed by a guardian for proof of practice. These logs will include your name, class period, the date, the amount of time invested in practice, and the three specific notes. From an instructional standpoint, Mr. Mayo will be able to use these logs to evaluate each student's work, performance, and individual needs. Also, the logs will be evaluated based on what the student is investing time in. Content can/will include the specific section of music students were told to develop, sight-reading (using sightreadingfactory.com), scales, and technique. The priority will be placed on what students were asked to develop. Please remember that when you practice, you should focus on breaking down what you have problems performing. For Euphonium and Tuba students who do not have access to an instrument at home, they are to complete this assignment by working on fingerings and buzzing in relation to their band music. An example of a practice log for one day is below:

Jeffrey Mayo

1st Period

August 31, 2018 – 39 minutes

1. *Star Spangled Banner* – I had four great run-throughs of the third phrase (measures 19-27), which was what we were asked to focus on in class. The run-throughs contained the correct style (legato), and I performed the correct eighth note rhythm at the beginning of the phrase.
2. Eb Major Scale – I was able to perform my Eb major scale at a tempo of quarter note equals eighty, although I struggled a bit in the upper register. I need to invest more time in lip slurs so that I can more easily play the high notes, but there is a solid foundation there for the scale and future development.
3. Sight Reading Factory Grade 2 – When making a pitch mistake, I was tempted to stop playing, but I kept going through the rest of the passage. After performing, I played the passage again correcting the mistake.