



Why Repetition is Not Enough: The Contextual Interference Effect and Interleaved Practice

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Part 1: Concept

- A. Repetition
- B. Desirable Difficulties and the Contextual Interference Effect
- C. Interleaved Practice
- D. Research
- E. Possible Mechanisms
- F. Benefits of an Interleaved Practice schedule

Part 2: Implementation - Ideas for Interleaved Practice

Beginner:

1. Mark challenging measures in one piece and interleave (serial or random). Repeat the series 3-4x or for 1-2 minutes
2. Divide Rep 1 into 4 parts and interleave. 3x or 1-2 minutes
3. Half of Rep 1 / Half of Rep 2 / Half of Rep 3. Reflect & Repeat 3x (next day do other half)
4. Rep / Scale / Sight read 4 m. / Technical exercise. Reflect & Repeat 3x

Intermediate:

1. Mark challenging measures or passages in one piece and interleave (serial or random). Repeat 3-4x or for 5-10 minutes.
2. Divide Rep 1 into 4 parts and interleave. 3x or 5 minutes
3. 8 m. of Rep 1 / Scale / 8 m. of Rep 2 / Triad. Repeat 3x or set time. Choose a different scale or triad every 2 practice sessions.
4. Piece 2 / Sight read 8 m. / Technical exercise 8 measures. Reflect & Repeat

Advanced:

1. a) Divide pieces in major thematic/structural sections, eg., exposition, development, and recapitulation and interleave.
b) Divide each section into parts that you can make some progress on in 3 minutes (could be 3 measures or a page) and play in random order.
c) Interleave the large sections of Rep 1 with Rep 2 and Rep 3
- 2.

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
Scales - variation 1	Repertoire 2	Repertoire 4
Repertoire 1	Scales - variation 2	Scales - variation 3
Sight-reading	Repertoire 3	Jazz/improvisation/pop

Selected Sources

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