Getting the Most out of Practice: Practice Logs/Journals

What is a practice log/journal?

A practice log/journal is a place for you to reflect on your practice, to critically assess performance and learning, and to keep track of your progress over time. There are lots of ways to keep a practice log, depending your preferences & your instructor's guidelines—you can write it like a diary, like a letter, like a lab report, or something else… whatever works for you! Although your instructor will likely read and comment on your practice log, the log is for you—its purpose is to help you grow and learn.

Why keep a practice log/journal?

Acquiring a new skill takes time, effort, and reflection. Your practice log helps you to:

- Structure your practice & your time spent on self-assessment and reflection, including setting goals, breaking down complex goals into smaller ones to be addressed one by one, and increasing self-accountability.
- Critically assess your performance on practice activities, including identifying patterns of strength/weakness.
- Think through issues that arise as you learn and grow.
- Keep track of—and become more aware of—your own progress over time.

What should I include about when I write about practice?

- You should include a description of the practice activity, information about the goals you set for the practice activity, a detailed assessment of your performance on the activity, and plans for future practice. Think about the following questions:
  - What material did I use? What did I do with the material?
  - What goal did I set for myself?
  - Did I reach the goal? (If not, did I give specific examples of problem areas?)
  - What went well (give specific, detailed examples!)?
  - What didn't go so well (give specific, detailed examples!)?
  - What goal will I set for next time (be specific!)



What else can be included in my practice log/journal?

Your instructor may give you specific prompts, which you should make sure to respond to thoughtfully and in detail. Whether or not there is a prompt, you can write about things other than practice, such as things that happened or were discussed in class, real-life interpreting situations that you encounter, or anything else that is related to your learning and growth, or is affecting you as a learner. When you write in your practice log, make sure to react to the things you write about—don't just relate information. Think about things like:

- How do the things you are writing about connect with your prior experience/knowledge?
- What is new/interesting/surprising to you?
- What you are struggling to understand or achieve?

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