

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY TUBA-EUPHONIUM STUDIO TECHNIQUE SYLLABUS FALL SEMESTER 2019

TWYLA THARP'S "THE CREATIVE HABIT"

Confidence is a trait that has to be earned honestly and refreshed constantly; you have to work as hard to protect your skills as you did to develop them. This means vigilant practice and excellent practice habits. You've heard the phrase "Practice makes perfect"? Not true. Perfect practice makes perfect. The one thing that creative souls around the world have in common is that they all have to practice to maintain their skills. Art is a vast democracy of habit.

Twyla Tharp, "The Creative Habit", p. 165

Assignments for this semester will be based on Twyla Tharp's book, "The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life" (Simon and Schuster, 2003). While reading the book is not required, it may help you gain insight to the purpose of each assignment and it is also a wonderful "life guide" from an extremely successful and hard-working artist. The biggest take-away: creative work is actual work and it requires a series of habits to support it.

I have chosen three of the habits that Ms. Tharp suggests and put a bit of my own spin on them. These are "Daily Rituals", "Making Memories," and "Scratching". All students will engage in four assignments related to each of these habits over the twelve regular lessons of the semester via four rotations of three weeks each.

GRADING: A minimum "Mastery" level is indicated for each assignment. Students who exceed this minimum will receive the grade they earned for that week's assignment. Those who do not reach the minimum will receive a grade of "0" for that week's assignment.

Students who receive a grade of "0" may convert that grade into the Mastery percentage for that assignment by attending five Morning Routine sessions.

Mastery	Student's Percentage	Grade entered	TEMR's Attended	New Grade
75	82	82	3	82
75	73	0	4	0
75	68	0	5	75

HABIT 1: DAILY RITUALS

WEEKS 1, 4, 7, AND 10

It's a simple act, but doing it the same way each morning habitualizes it—makes it repeatable, easy to do. It reduces the chance that I would skip it or do it differently. It is one more item in my arsenal of daily routines, and one less thing to think about.
Tharp, pp. 14-15

While Ms. Tharp is talking about “Rituals of Preparation” as the things we do to prepare to begin work, I’m going to adapt it to the beginning of the work itself. You will likely come up with your own “Rituals of Preparation” (choosing a favorite practice room, the walk to the School of Music, etc) that will help you prepare, but I want you to have a ritual means of beginning your actual practice each day.

The purpose of this habit is to develop a series (or several series) of daily routine exercises that can be done easily and repetitively with an open mind and limited physical effort. All routines for brass players share this basis of simple patterns (easy to learn and memorize), ease of physical production, gradual building of range, and emphasis on basic fundamental skills. Having one or more of these routines memorized and prepared will render unnecessary two of the most important decisions you have to make each day:

1. Should I practice today?
2. What should I start with?

Grading: These assignments will be graded by the line (for example “Chromatics” in The Brass Gym has 14 lines—missing two of them would result in a grade of 86 for that portion of the assignment).

Mastery: 90%, meaning any grade lower than 90% will be recorded as a zero.

WEEK 1

1000:	Brass Gym: Chromatics through Smooth Air Movement (with music, performed with recording)
2000-3000:	20 Minute Warm-Up (with music, performed with recording)
4000-5000:	Standard Daily Routine of Student's Choice

WEEK 4

1000:	Brass Gym: Tongue Coordination through Beautiful Sounds (with music)
2000:	Brass Gym (complete): Dr. Wass will choose 5-6 lines at random from each exercise (from memory)
3000-5000:	Brass Gym: Chromatics through Beautiful Sounds (from memory, with recording)

WEEK 7

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|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 1000: | Intro to Olka's "Drill of the Week" |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
- #2 Peanut Butter Long Tones
 - #14 Duck and Weave
 - Performed with video or with metronome at comparable tempo
 - Euph players and B flat tuba players may transpose to B flat

2000-5000: Olka's "Drill of the Week"

- Choose one exercise from #1 Five Octave Minor Scales, #2 Peanut Butter Long Tones, or #20 Peanut Butter and Jelly
- Choose one exercise from #3 In and Out, Out and In, #9 Whack a Mole, #12 Minor Doo Doo, #13 Major Doo Doo
- Choose one exercise from the remaining videos
- Performed with video or with metronome at comparable tempo
- Euph players and F tuba players may transpose as necessary

WEEK 10

All levels: 20-Minute Warm-Up (with music, performed with recording)

HABIT 2: MAKING MEMORIES WEEKS 2, 5, 8, AND 11

Muscle memory is one of the more valuable forms of memory, especially to a performer. It's the notion that after diligent practice and repetition of certain physical movements, your body will remember those moves years, even decades, after you cease doing them.
Tharp, p. 64

In music, we learn our basic patterns of both modal/tonal and atonal constructions in several ways. You will learn to identify them by sight in your music (Theory class), to "see" and "feel" them on the spatial surface of a keyboard instrument (Piano/Keyboard class), to hear them and sing them (Aural Skills class) and to combine all of these skills in executing them on a non-spatial brass instrument (this section of the syllabus). We will also use these basic patterns, particularly in the Clarke studies, to build range, flexibility, intonation, and other skills of tone production as we continue the baseline work from the Daily Rituals.

Grading: All pattern exercises are graded by the scale/arpeggio (miss a note, miss the scale—11 of 12 correct is c. 92%). Clarke studies are graded by the line (same as the Daily Ritual section).

Mastery: 75%, meaning any grade lower than 75% will be recorded as a zero.

WEEK 2

NOTE: all scales and arpeggios to be performed slurred both directions except in Bell Scales, where indicated articulations should be performed

1000:	All Major Scales, 2 octaves, from memory, in quarter notes at quarter=80
2000:	Bell Scales, complete (with music), quarter=66
3000:	All Major and Minor Scales and Arpeggios, 6 keys 2 octaves, 6 keys 3 octaves, from memory, in eighth notes at quarter=120
4000:	Bell Scales, complete (memorized), quarter=72
5000:	All Major and Minor Scales and Arpeggios, 3 octaves, from memory, in eighth notes at quarter=144

WEEK 5

NOTE: all Clarke Studies to be performed slurred and at soft dynamic throughout. Minimum tempos are as marked in the original Carl Fischer edition (available on IMSLP).

- 1000: Clarke 2nd Study, with music
2000: Clarke 1st and 2nd Studies, memorized, Dr. Wass will choose 5-6 lines from each study
3000-5000: Clarke 1st through 5th Studies, memorized, Dr. Wass will choose 3-4 lines from each study

WEEK 8

- 1000: All Major and Minor Scales, 2 octaves, from memory, in quarter notes at quarter=80
2000: All Major and Minor Scales and Arpeggios, 2 octaves from memory (3 keys 3 octaves), in eighth notes at quarter=100
3000: Bell Scales, complete (memorized), quarter=66
4000: All Major and Minor Scales and Arpeggios, 3 octaves from memory, in eighth notes at quarter=120
5000: Bell Scales, complete (memorized), quarter=76

WEEK 11

- 1000: Clarke 3rd Study, with music
2000-5000: Arpeggio study of student's choice (Arban, Schlossberg, Olka, etc)

HABIT 3: SCRATCHING WEEKS 3, 6, 9, AND 12

I call it scratching. You know how you scratch away at a lottery ticket to see if you've won? That's what I'm doing when I begin a piece. I'm digging through everything to find something. It's like clawing at the side of a mountain to get a toehold, a grip, some sort of traction to keep moving upward and onward...

*...I'm often asked "Where do you get your ideas?" This happens to anyone who is willing to stand in front of an audience and talk about his or her work. The short answer is: everywhere. It's like asking "Where do you find the air you breathe?" Ideas are all around you.
Tharp, p. 95*

At the end of the day, all artists (and all teachers) need to participate in creative habits to continue to grow and to continue to contribute to their fields. Trying new things encourages growth in skill, new collaborations, and discovery of new styles and genres. The search for "mastery" can instead lead us in the opposite direction, where we become expert performers of a few limited tasks and try to create a career or position in our field out of that.

Leaders will always be those who are pushing the boundaries of what is possible and redefining their fields in the process. You won't change the world tomorrow (probably) but a few simple exercises outside of your current skill set and comfort zone may prepare you to do so in the future.

Perhaps one of the most valuable mental and technical skills for an artist is improvisation, the ability to (seemingly) create something out of nothing in a spontaneous way. These exercises are designed to break down improvisation

into component skills of synthesis and metaphor and symbol, with the goal of creating more communicative and creative performers and teachers.

Grading: 50% for completing each assignment, 50% determined by quality of performance and discussion of the thought process that contributed to the performance.

NOTE: Bring all materials used in completing the assignment to your lesson for discussion.

Mastery: 50%, meaning any student who completes the assignment will get at least 50% credit for the assignment.

WEEK 3

- 1000: Transcribe and perform one theme from any of Beethoven's Piano Concertos
2000: Transcribe and perform 30-60 seconds of melodic material from any string quartet by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Bartok, or Shostakovich
3000-5000: Transcribe and perform 20-30 seconds of music from any recording, then apply that performer's stylistic approach to a similar excerpt from a different piece and perform it

WEEK 6

- 1000: Pauline Oliveros: *Thirteen Changes* (available from Dr. Wass). Choose any three and improvise 30-60 seconds on each.
2000: Improvise for c. 2 minutes based on a campus location of student's choice
3000: Improvise for c. 2 minutes based on any person, real or fictional, living or dead
4000: Improvise using material from a standard band or orchestral excerpt for your instrument
5000: Improvise for c. 2 minutes based on subject of student's choice

WEEK 9: BACH CELLO SUITES

NOTE: Students are encouraged to use a quality Urtext edition of Bach Cello Suites for reference, but are free to adjust octaves and even move to different keys. Multiple stops should be executed in the manner of the student's choice.

- 1000: Suite No. 1, Minuets I and II
2000: Prelude of student's choice
3000: Prelude and Allemande or Courante of student's choice
4000: Prelude and Sarabande of student's choice
5000: Any three movements of student's choice

WEEK 12

- 1000: Transcribe and perform an art song (Schubert, Schumann, etc) of student's choice (4 min or less)
2000: Transcribe and perform any piece of music (or an excerpt from such a piece) based on a work of literature (4 min or less). This can be art song, tone poem, character piece, etc
3000-5000: Transcribe and perform any piece of music (or an excerpt from such a piece) based on a work of literature (4 min or less). Then improvise (c. 2 min) based on a passage, character, event, or idea in the same literary work (using material from the first musical work if you wish).