

Deliberate Practice

PINPOINT



Elite performers engage in deliberate practice — an effortful activity designed to improve target performance.

Anders Ericsson

10,000 hours

Anders Ericsson found at the West Berlin Music Academy that the top third of students go on to be soloists, the middle third play in the orchestra and the bottom third become music teachers. Each student reported how many hours they had devoted, in total, to practice. The number of hours tallied exactly with their future destinations. Practice trumped talent.

Q *No characteristic of the brain or body constrains an individual from reaching an expert level.*

Anders Ericsson

Q *You have to seek out situations where you get feedback (about your performance). It's a myth that you get better when you just do the things you enjoy.*

Anders Ericsson

Errors

Don't think that practice is all sailing for the elite. Far from it.

Author of **Talent is Overrated**, Geoff Colvin, discovered that Olympic figure skaters fell over a lot in practice.

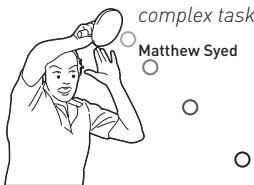


In fact, the best of these elite athletes fell over more than their

competitors. Why? Because they attempted more difficult moves than others — even when measured relative to their superior abilities. They try harder and are more purposeful in their practice.

Q *From art to science and from board games to tennis, it has been found that a minimum of ten years is required to reach world-class status in any complex task.*

Matthew Syed



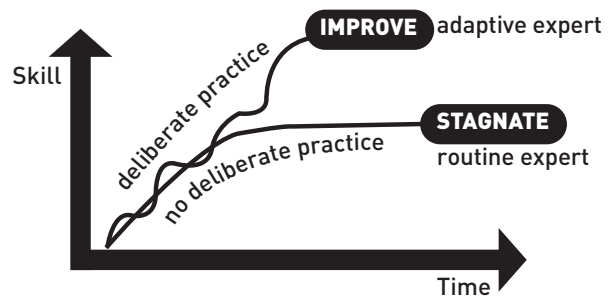
A remarkable street

When author Matthew Syed was young, he played table tennis at what was, in effect, a 24 hour table tennis club. He went on to become an international champion. As did a remarkable number of others who lived in the same street! There was nothing special about the street, the area or the genetics of the players. The only thing that stood out was the unprecedented amount of practice the youngsters put into their formative years.

Expert teachers

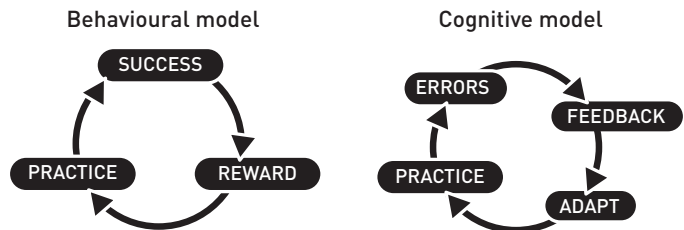
Evidence-based teaching expert, John Hattie has studied expert teachers, noting exactly what distinguished them over merely experienced teachers.

Expert teachers were **adaptive experts** while experienced teachers were **routine experts**. Adaptive experts continually sought to improve whereas the routine experts settled into comfortable behaviours once a certain level of competence was reached. Expertise is born of deliberate practice.



Motivation for deliberate practice

There are two schools of thought about the motivation behind practice. Behaviourists claim that it's just down to appropriate rewards. Simple reinforcement. Cognitive psychologists, however, say it's rather more complex. The urge to improve and attain mastery is motivational enough. It sustains the effort and the willingness to look errors in the face and learn from them. This



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