

29. Practice Activity: Two Slow, One Fast

This idea is borrowed from the sporting world. In sport, the word 'drill' is often used to describe practice. A drill is a specific and focused practice-challenge where all the chaos and uncertainty of the actual game is removed. Instead, a single skill is focused on and repeated. After some time working on a drill, players might then play a game in which the particular skill is tested.

Does this work with study too? With a maths problem or a history essay? The answer is yes.

» **Go slow.** To begin with you should try the equivalent of a drill. You're taking out the stress, worry and complexity, so you're not thinking about the chaos and uncertainty of doing an exam. You're going slowly, paying attention to what you do. That might mean taking half an hour to work through a short answer exam question, twenty minutes on a maths problem, an hour on a couple of science questions or half an hour writing a single killer paragraph for an essay.

» **Go fast.** Then you can try to apply the learning in a 'game' situation – in other words, under exam conditions. Pick an exam question, work out how long you would have in the exam and see whether you can perform at the same level but under the pressure of time.

Two Slow, One Fast describes the best sequence for developing a skill. Do it twice slowly and safely, paying attention to exactly what you're doing and why you're doing it. Then do it fast and see how you cope. You won't be perfect first time, but you will certainly accelerate the speed at which you get better.

Which subjects might this work best with?

Think about your studies at the moment, and make a list of the exam tasks you have ahead of you, that could be intensively practised using the two slow, one fast technique:

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Final Thoughts

Try combining this activity with Right, Wrong, Right, on the next page. Together, they make a powerful combination!