

Improvisation

Musical improvisation is conversation that follows the parameters, is comprehended, can be recalled, and is spontaneous. It is not just a series of random notes. Keep in mind that only the readiness to learn to improvise can be taught. The ‘readiness’ includes (a) building a repertoire of tunes in a variety of tonalities, meters, harmonic progression and styles and (b) building an aural-oral vocabulary of tonal, rhythm, melodic and harmonic patterns. Hence rote songs and the three-step process (neutral-neutral, syllable-syllable, neutral-syllable) of echoing patterns need to be a part of your daily practice and each class. See Appendix D for additional information and activities.

Part I: Chapter 3

Simple Meter—Quarter Note = Beat Unit; Slur, Tie, Extension Dot

Improvisation Activity

See Appendix D for additional details

Pass the Pattern

- **Process:**
 - Basic: Divide class into teams of 5-8. Using the elements from Part I, Chapter 3, the instructor or Student A chants a known rhythm pattern (neutral syllable or rhythm syllables). Student B improvises a similar but different rhythm pattern that MUST start with the last rhythm element in the pattern chanted by Student A. Student C improvises a similar but different rhythm pattern that MUST start with the last rhythm element chanted by Student B. Each additional student’s pattern must start with the last element.

Pass the Pattern – Basic

The notation shows rhythmic patterns for the 'Pass the Pattern – Basic' activity. Row 1: A (3/4 time, quarter note), B (quarter note), C (quarter note), D (quarter note). Row 2: E (quarter note), F (quarter note), G (quarter note), H (quarter note).

Pass the Pattern – Variation I

The notation shows rhythmic patterns for the 'Pass the Pattern – Variation I' activity. Row 1: A (4/4 time, quarter note), B (quarter note), C (quarter note), D (quarter note). Row 2: E (quarter note), F (quarter note), G (quarter note), H (quarter note).

- Variation I: The instructor or Student A chants a known rhythm pattern (neutral syllable or rhythm syllables). Student B improvises a similar but different rhythm pattern that MUST start with the last rhythm element in the pattern chanted by Student A. Student C improvises a similar but different rhythm pattern that MUST start with the first rhythm element chanted by Student B. Each additional student alternates tasks.
- Variation II: One team improvises on a neutral syllable while the other team(s) writes (dictates) each pattern.
- Variation III: Individually practice *Pass the Pattern* using the MP3 rhythm files found in Part I, Chapters 1-3, located on the Oxford Learning Link.

Improvisation demonstrates transfer of learning.

• **Parameters:**

- Rhythm patterns to be selected from Part I, Chapters 1-3. The instructor or team leader designates the meter (simple-duple, triple or quadruple), physical motion (metric motion, heel march, and/or down–up motion with hands) and then sets the tempo.
- Remember to perform the patterns (a) with inflective expression (foundation of phrasing) and (b) while moving to meter, macro beat, or micro beat (facilitates understanding of rhythm).

The goal is to develop spontaneous, rapid, automatic reaction to what is heard.

Additional Improvisation Activities

• **Call and Response**

• **Add a Rhythm**

• **Same or Different**

• **Parameters:**

- See Oxford Learning Link, Improvisation-Part I, Chapter 2 for instructions to the above improvisation activities.
- Rhythm patterns to be selected from Part I, Chapters 1-3.