

Improvisation

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. Remember to practice singing rote songs and echoing patterns using the three-step process (neutral-neutral, syllable-syllable, neutral-syllable) daily and during each class. See Appendix D for additional information and activities.

Part I: Chapter 4

Terms and Symbols

Improvisation Activities

See Appendix D for additional details

Table of Truth:

- **Process:**
 - Working in pairs or groups of four, students are designated as A and B or A, B, C and D. Each student uses their right-hand finger tips to tap the beat into the palm of their neighbors left hand. The instructor or group leader designates specific beat functions (sustained beats, elongated beats, beat, beat division, beat subdivision, borrowed beat division) to each student. For example: Student A taps beat division; Student B taps elongated/tied beats; and Student C taps beat subdivision. The instructor then changes the beat function assignments, rotating the various functions between the students.

Practice *Table of Truth* in both simple and compound meters. See table below for relationships of beat functions in each meter and visit Oxford Learning Link for videos.

The goal is to silently maintain the beat and beat function, and match the ictus or downbeat.

SIMPLE METER				BEAT FUNCTION	COMPOUND METER					
Beat 1		Beat 2			Beat 1			Beat 2		
ta		ah		ELONGATED BEAT	ta			ah		
ta		ta		BEAT	ta			ta		
ta	di	ta	di	DIVIDED BEAT	ta	ki	du	ta	ki	du

- Variation I: Instead of tapping the right hand into the neighbors left hand palm; students reverse directions and tap with their left hand into the right palm of their neighbor. [Video is available on Oxford Learning Link.]

Improvisation promotes creativity and musical expression.

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.
 - See Oxford Learning Link, Part I, Chapter 3-Improvisation for example of *Pass the Pattern*.
 - 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: Integrate articulation, dynamics, etc. into each pattern.
 - Variation IV: Individually practice *Pass the Pattern* using the MP3 rhythm files found in Part I, Chapters 1-3, located on the Oxford Learning Link.
- **Parameters:**
 - Rhythm patterns to be selected from Part I, Chapters 1-4. 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.

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 1-4.