

# Fostering Improvisation for Young Students: Patterns through Partner Lessons

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Partner lessons can be used to teach tonal and rhythm patterns efficiently and can provide creative opportunities for teaching improvisation.

## Exploring Rhythmic Patterns with Black Key Groups

“One must have a stock of tonal and rhythm patterns (musical memories) to manipulate in order to create music.”<sup>1</sup>

Student 1

Student 2

Teacher

## Establishing Tonal Discrimination with Five Finger Patterns

“Improvisation is creativity with restrictions imposed on the performer from an outside source.”<sup>2</sup>

Student 1

Student 2

Teacher

<sup>1</sup> Eric Bluestine, *The Ways Children Learn Music: An Introduction and Practical Guide to Music Learning Theory*, 2nd edition (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2000), 158.

<sup>2</sup> Bluestine, 158.

In the previous example both students are restricted to the C Major five finger pattern in common time. Student two has further restrictions: only whole notes ascending and then descending. Student one has less restrictions: quarter notes, half notes, or whole notes that begin and end on C.

The next example moves to a new key (e minor), changes to triple time, and reverses student restrictions. Depending on the students' skill levels, this could be the paired with the previous example or be the focus of another lesson.

## Developing Audiation with Harmonic Progressions

“Instruction in improvisation is adapted to students’ individual musical differences in groups or individually, but most beneficial results occur when students are taught in groups.”<sup>3</sup>

## Further Reading

- Bluestine, Eric. *The Ways Children Learn Music: An Introduction and Practical Guide to Music Learning Theory*. 2nd edition. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2000.
- Duke, Robert A. *Intelligent Music Teaching: Essays on the Core Principles of Effective Instruction*. Learning and Behavior Resources, 2009.
- Gordon, Edwin E. *Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Music Learning Theory*. 2012 edition. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2011.
- Kinney, Akiko, and Forrest Kinney. *Pattern Play*. Vol. 1. 6 vols. Frederick Harris, 2010.
- Pace, Robert. “Group or Private?” Robert Pace Piano. Accessed September 27, 2017. <https://leerobertsmusic.com/ideas-tips/group-teaching.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Edwin E. Gordon, *Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Music Learning Theory*, 2012 edition (Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, Inc., 2011), 324.

