

THE BIG THREE

Applying Discrimination Learning: Guided Construction

What is Guided Construction?

- Building a reading example from the bottom up and making the steps manageable and progressive.
- Each step is designed to reinforce specific musical concepts.

Step 1: Interval Warmup

- Sing interval warmup. Teacher should play starting pitch in key of reading exercise (from final step).
- Next is to play the interval warm up. Encourage students to sing as they play.

Step 2: Rhythm Isolation

- Tap and speak the rhythm of the right hand.
- Tap right hand and left hand together.

Fun fact! Rhythm exercises are super easy to create in any music notation software!

Musical notation for Step 2: Rhythm Isolation. It consists of two systems of two staves each, in 4/4 time. The top staff of each system contains a melody of quarter and eighth notes. The bottom staff contains a simple bass line of whole notes. The first system is followed by a second system starting with a measure number '5' above the first note.

Step 3: Rhythm + Solfège

- Speak the right hand melody with solfège.
- Tap left hand and speak right hand solfège.
- Tap left hand and **sing** right hand solfège.

All I did was remove the staff. This way the direction of the melody is still obvious, but students don't have to read the pitches (yet).

Musical notation for Step 3: Rhythm + Solfège. It consists of two systems of two staves each, in 4/4 time. The top staff of each system contains a melody of quarter and eighth notes with solfège syllables (Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol) written below. The bottom staff contains a simple bass line of whole notes. The first system is followed by a second system starting with a measure number '5' above the first note.



Step 4: Play with Full Notation

- Tap and speak the rhythm of the right hand.
- Tap right hand and left hand together.



Final Thoughts:

- Breaking music down into smaller, focused activities can help students feel successful at every stage.
- Singing, playing, and moving all work together to reinforce musical concepts.
- This activity encourages students to see how what they learn in theory and aural skills comes alive at the piano.
- There are so many ways to adapt this activity for various skills. Get creative!



Applying Inference Learning: Guided Improvisation

What is Guided Improvisation?

- Improvisation that occurs within specific, teacher set parameters.
- Parameters are designed to help foster learning and creativity.

Activity 1: Rhythm

- Write the assigned time signature and note value on the board.
- Have the first student improvise a one-measure rhythm that uses the assigned note value at least once; repeat until all students in the class have played.
- The transitions between each student should be as seamless as possible. Metronome can be used to facilitate smooth transitions.

Activity 2: Intervals

- Write the interval, key signature, and rhythm on the board.
- Put the students into pairs and have them create a melody within the given parameters that uses the assigned interval twice.
- Have each pair perform their melody for the class as a “duet.”



Activity 3: Triad Qualities (Bonus!)

- Have the students play a C major triad in the left hand.
- Tell them they are allowed to play any desired rhythm with this triad but that they must switch qualities when told.
- The students improvise a blocked chord accompaniment as the teacher plays the attached melody. The teacher chants when students are supposed to switch triad qualities.
- **Variation 1:** transpose the excerpt to a key of the class's choice.
- **Variation 2:** put students into pairs and have one play the melody while one improvises a left hand accompaniment.

Triad Qualities Improvisation

A. Papagno

Starting triad: Major

Min-or-Go!

6

Di-min-ished-now!

11

Aug-men-ted-Go!

Pick the chord you end on here.



References

