

The *Different*

USING MUSICAL
IMPROVISATION TO ENGAGE
AND EMPOWER

Drummer

Goals

1. Examine the neurologic intersections between music and language.
2. Practice some simple improvisation games.
3. Take away ideas, resources, and inspiration for trying improvisation with your students.

My Background

BA, English, Saint Joseph's University, Philadelphia - 1995

Certification - Music for People Musicianship and Leadership,
2013

MA - Individualized Studies - Music and the Brain - Goddard
College - 2018

25 years of teaching - English and Music

Not a scientist - an English teacher who plays the drums

Who is the Different Drummer?

*The basic rock groove leads to a question
with many answers ...*

One Answer ... Improvise!

Immediately scalable up or down

Honors all experience levels simultaneously

Visceral and rigorous, but gentle and intuitive

Can be leveraged to target neurologic intersections between music and language

Beat Synchronization

Neural Oscillation – the energy-saving syncopation of electronic pulses around the brain, often referred to as phase coherence or neural synchrony

One way that impairment occurs is when neural pathways fall out of sync.

Dynamic Attending Theory

The internal rhythms of our brain synchronize with external rhythms in the environment.

Krauss tells us that training in music can strengthen the brain's ability to synchronize neural oscillations

Training in one domain (music), can influence performance in another (language).

Melodic Perception

Prosody – the changes in pitch, duration, and volume that give much of language its meaning

Rise Time Perception – the amount of time it takes for a sound to reach its maximum volume in our perception

Temporal Sampling Theory – as we grow, the brain takes temporal snapshots of various rise times and recalls them

Temporal Sampling Theory

The rise and fall in pitch, amplitude, and duration that characterizes melody is reflected in prosody.

Training our students to follow changes in melody in a way that mimics language exercises their ability to follow prosodic cues that give language meaning.

Training in one domain (music), can influence performance in another (language).

Improvisation is the key

The neurologic aptitudes of beat synchronization and melodic perception come together when we improvise due to ...

Mirror Neuron Systems

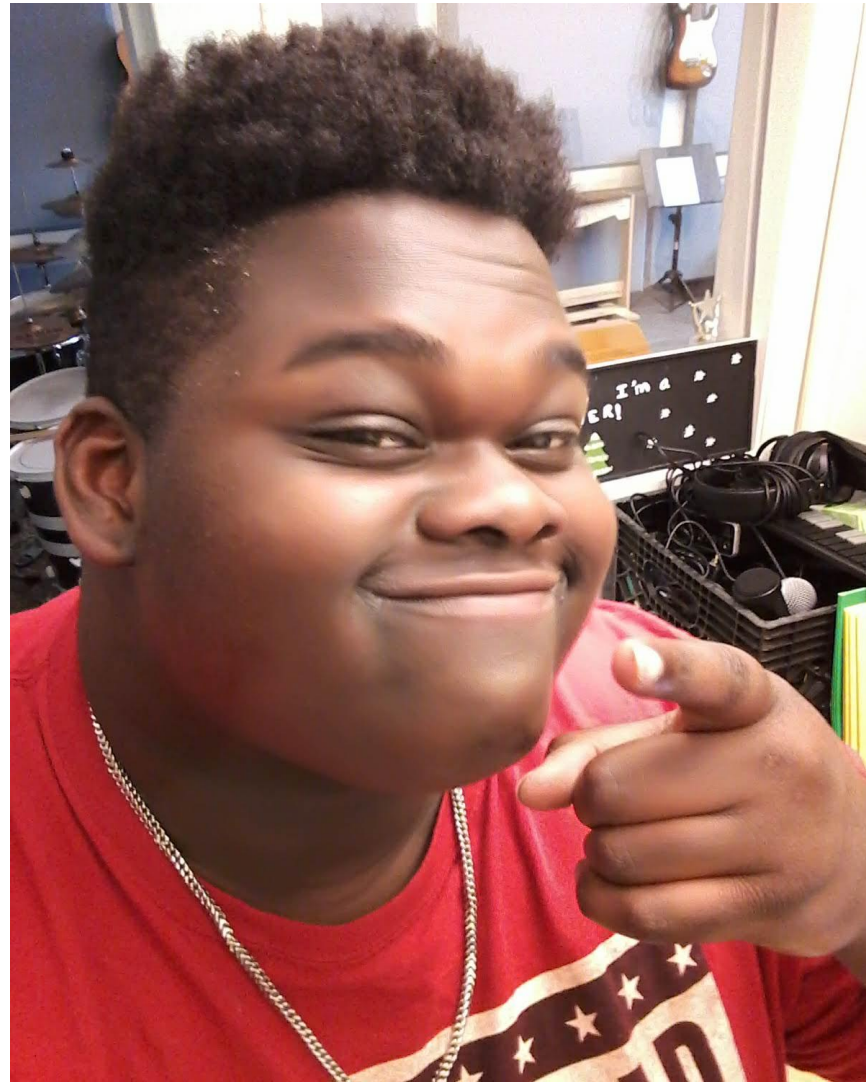
A neural mechanism that is designed for imitation

Stick your tongue out at a baby ... What happens?

The same is true for language and music!

“Me-ness” = “You-ness”

Transcendence!





Big Ideas

Our ability to make music is intimately linked to our ability to communicate through language.

Training in musical communication can influence verbal and written communication.

Improvisation empowers our students to find the music inside themselves, in their own time and in their own way.

Music awakens us, and bolsters our creativity and our sense of identity.

Let's play!

One Authentic Sound

The Infinity Loop

Fruit Loops

The Magic Factory

The Polyphonic Dance Party

What am I doing about it?

Serafine Learns to Sing: A Storybook Guide to Musical
Improvisation

serafinelearnstosing.com

What can you do about it?

Try to do some improvising with your students.

Ask them, “What do you have to say?”

Make time to play with your students. Really play with them!

Allow your students to embrace their mistakes!

Contact Me!

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Resources

- <http://serafinelearnstosing.com/>
- <https://brainvolts.soc.northwestern.edu/music/>
- Berkowitz, Aaron - *The Improvising Mind*
- Blakeslee, Sandra and Matthew - *The Body Has a Mind of Its Own*
- Faulkner, Simon - *Rhythm 2 Recovery: A Practical Guide to Using Percussion, Voice, and Music for Social and Emotional Development*
- Kaufmann, Scott Barry - *Ungifted: Intelligence Redefined*

Resources

- Knysh, Mary – *Boom Do Pa: A Creative Guide to Ethnic Influenced Music Improvisation*
- W.A. Mathieu – *Bridge of Waves, The Listening Book*
- Nachmanovitch, Stephen – *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art*
- Patel, Aniruddh – *Music, Language, and the Brain*
- Wooten, Victor – *The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search for Growth Through Music*