

Motivational aspects of improvising and composing in the early piano practice: Open and learner-centred processes

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QUESTIONS

Main Question:

How can creative music activities foster students' motivation in instrumental lessons?

Subquestions:

- What can be effective impulses to stimulate musical creativity?
- How does a creative process of improvisation and composition look like?
- How can I as an instrumental teacher stimulate/support creative processes in instrumental tuition?
- What are the benefits of creative activities?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

on creativity and motivation:

- Literature on creativity, improvisation and composition in music
- The theory of self-determination by Deci and Ryan:
 - focuses on **varied degrees of motivation** (from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation) associated with outcomes such as performance, engagement, vitality, and psychological health
 - sustained by satisfaction of 3 psychological needs:
autonomy, competence, relatedness

ELEMENTAL IMPROVISATION AND COMPOSITION

ELEMENTAL

- "fundamental, essential"
- didactic reduction to basic structures
- elemental artistic processes

IMPROVISATION

- free/ non-idiomatic Improvisation: (→ *free material*)
- idiomatic improvisation: (→ *musical style*)

COMPOSITION

- documented through graphic or standard notation (→ reproducibility)
- Impro and Compo as continuum

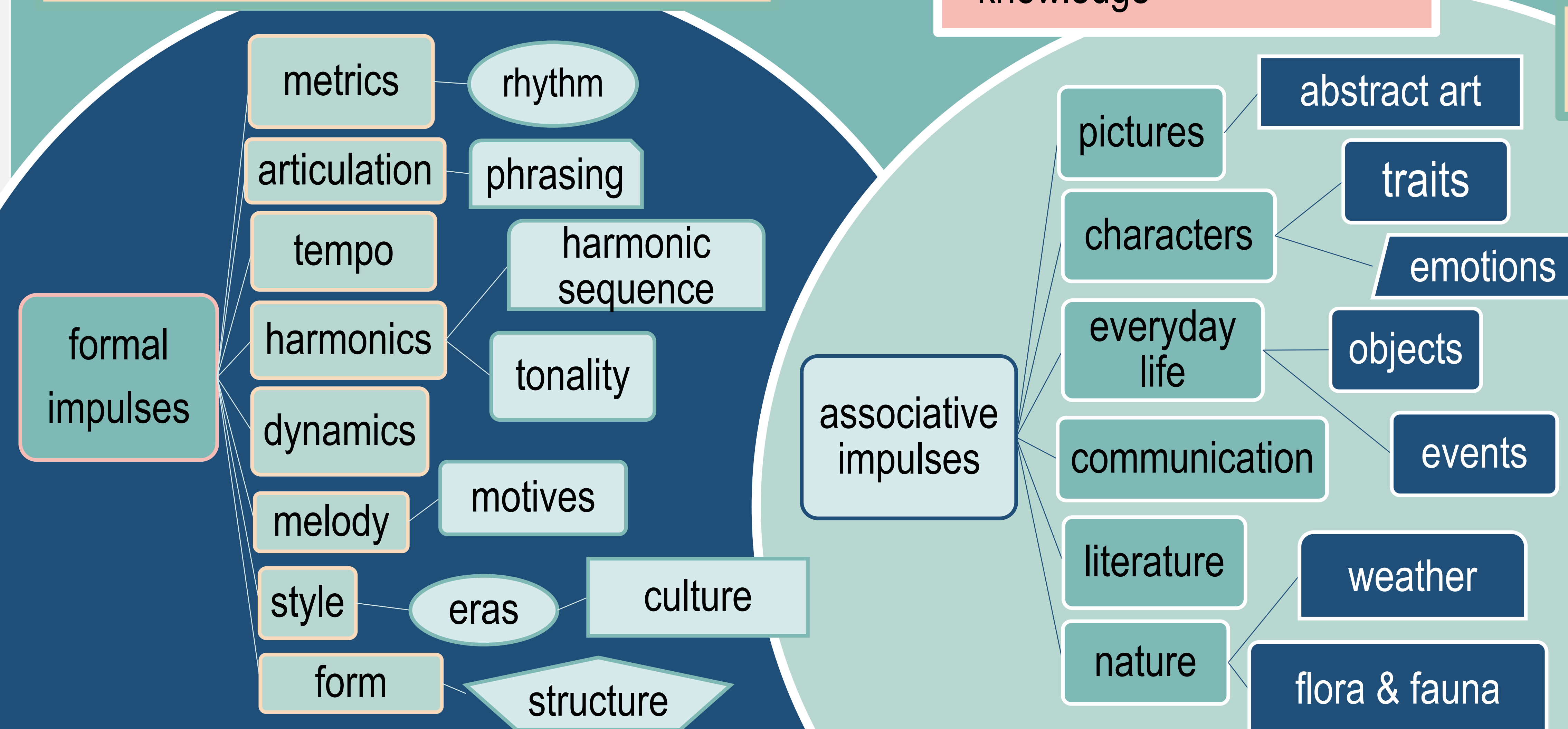
TEACHING STRATEGIES

- elemental approach: orientation to **play** quiz/guessing games / role play / construction play
- impulses as play „rules“, providing space for free development of musical ideas

TEACHER'S ROLE

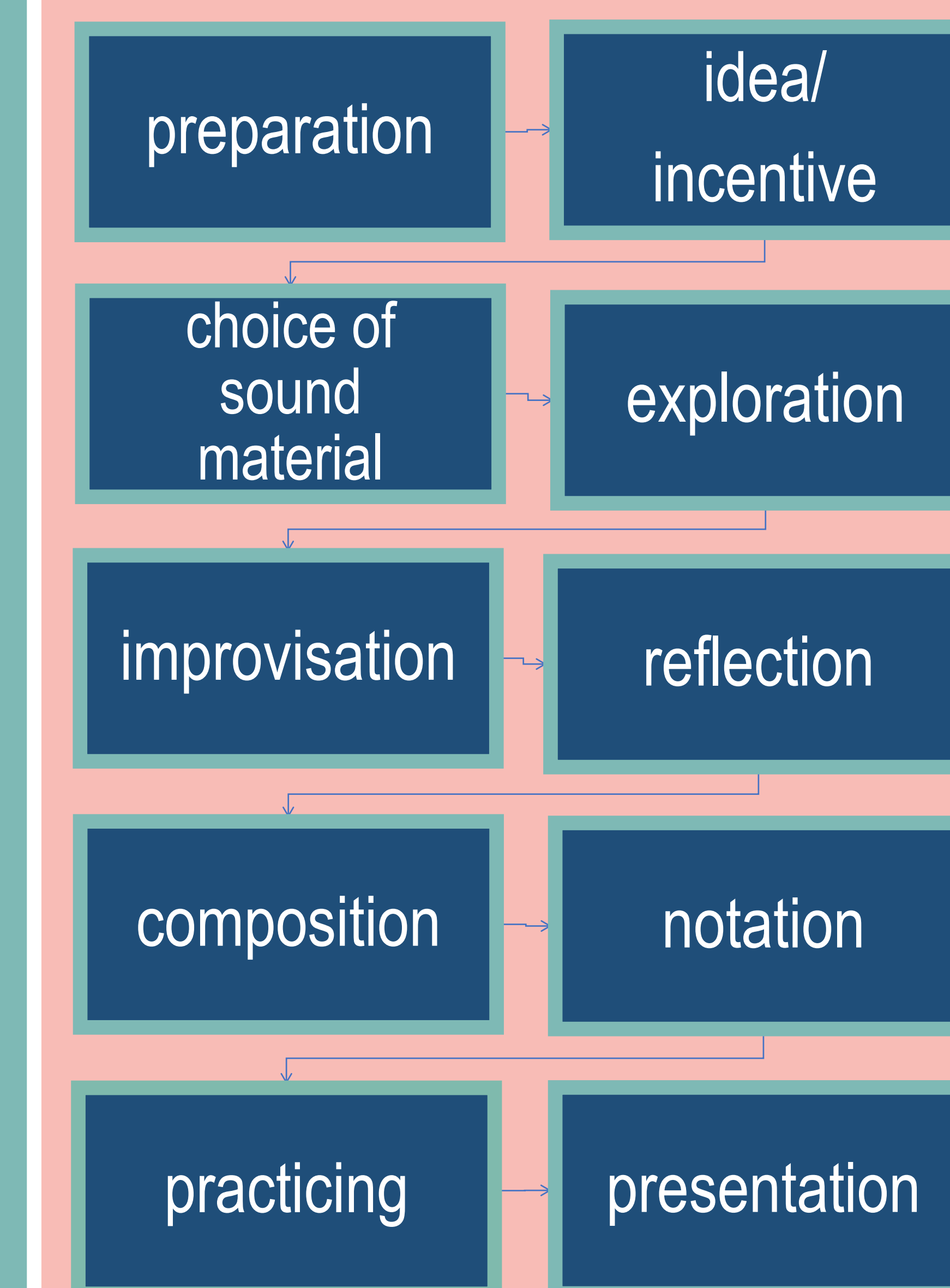
- safe, judgment-free space
- time for autonomous exploration
- constructive feedback
- open questions
- examples and modeling of ideas
- expanding musical knowledge

STARTING POINTS/ IMPULSES



THE CREATIVE PROCESS

- non linear, often cyclical
- different profiles according to goals/outcomes



EXAMPLES

- Improvisation plays: playing and guessing animals/landscapes/events constructing melodies based on ostinato rhythms
- Improvisation and composition based on a picture impulse
- Composition based on a harmonic sequence

CONCLUSIONS

Motivation is stimulated by creative musical activities through the **perceived sense of freedom and self-determination**. **Autonomous personal choice** and organization of the sound material and musical elements enables performers to express their own feelings, thoughts, fantasies and ideas through music. Improvisational and compositional activities support the **development of confidence** in the uninhibited use of the instrument and promotes **self-directed playing** as well as the **development of an aesthetic sense of style**. The skills acquired can influence and enrich other learning areas regarding the instrumental lesson and affect the **understanding of music theory and interpretation**. For the teacher, creative activities can provide **information about students' musicality**, level of development, creative abilities, and musical preferences and strengths.

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