A CURRICULAR OUTLINE FOR TEACHING BEGINNING IMPROVISATION

IN THE HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ ENSEMBLE BASED ON A SURVEY OF BAND

DIRECTORS' PRACTICES AND OPINIONS

BY

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Accepted by the faculty of the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Music Education.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my research committee members for their expertise, encouragement, and patience as I completed this project.  I will value their mentorship always.

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DIRECTORS' PRACTICES AND OPINIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the practices and opinions of high school band directors regarding the teaching of beginning improvisation in jazz ensemble rehearsal. The secondary purpose was to outline a curriculum for teaching beginning jazz improvisation in said rehearsals. Participants ($N = 57$) for the Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Instruction Questionnaire were Indiana high school band directors. Regarding whether or not improvisation should be taught in a large jazz ensemble setting, an overwhelming majority (93%) of respondents felt that the skill should be taught in rehearsal. Concerning an appropriate amount of jazz ensemble rehearsal time to dedicate to improvisation, the largest percentage (42%) selected was 11-16 minutes. However, at the time the IJIIQ was distributed, the largest percentage of directors (46%) allotted only 5-10 minutes. Regarding what to include in a beginning jazz improvisation curriculum, the highest rated item, considered "extremely important," was listening to expert recordings. Other items considered "very important" were chord-scale relationships, ear training, aural imitation, call and response, melodic embellishment, guide tones, and melodic devices. Concerning what is most difficult about learning to improvise, directors most frequently reported "playing the right notes/chord changes" when referring to their own playing. In the case of their students, "fear" was most frequently reported. Finally, with regard to what is most difficult about teaching jazz improvisation, directors most frequently reported "student inhibitions."

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Improvisation is central to the performance and study of jazz music (Baker, 1988; Coker, 1989; Fleming, 1994; Gridley 2000; Hill, 2002). A leader in jazz education research, May (1998) points out that in much of the literature concerning jazz, the terms jazz and improvisation often go hand in hand. Moreover, jazz historian Charles Edward Smith stresses that jazz becomes "sterile when it strays too far away from its oral traditions—including improvisation" (Hentoff & McCarthy, 1959, p. 26).

Unfortunately, the teaching of improvisation in public school music programs is grossly neglected (Schmidt, Baker, Hayes, & Kwan, 2006; Strand, 2006). This can be attributed, at least in part, to a music teacher's lack of personal ability, confidence, or training (Madura, 2000; Madura Ward-Steinman, 2007; Marks, 1994). In spite of the implementation of the National Standards for Arts Education (1994), in which achievement standards exist for teaching improvisation in K-12 music classes, many teachers continue to fail to include improvisation in their instruction.

In the early part of the 20th century, jazz existed only outside of the classroom. Even since its embrace by the likes of jazz education pioneers David Baker and Jerry Coker, a myth that the art of improvisation is not teachable has persisted (May, 1998), perhaps making it easy for others to avoid it. Specifically regarding instrumental music teachers, it is not uncommon that they be required to lead a jazz ensemble as part of their teaching assignment. While they may produce musically and technically proficient ensembles, they are often deficient in their lack of jazz knowledge (Newman, 1982). According to Baker (2002), these teachers are often under-qualified to teach jazz

compared to the other music disciplines in which they have been trained. Baker (1989) also asserts that "fear and ignorance on the part of the teacher" contribute to the problem. He continues, "Many times, the teacher's only qualification for leading the jazz band is a love for jazz, adequate as a prerequisite for learning, but insufficient for teaching others" (p. 14).

Awareness of students' and instructors' perceptions and knowledge of jazz improvisation can greatly impact the effectiveness with which it is taught. In my experience, students feel inhibited when called on to improvise because they lack the knowledge and skills to do so, which is often due in part to the shortcomings of the director. Too often I have heard statements such as, "Play what you hear," or "Use the letter names of the chords" as strategies for constructing improvised solos. Unfortunately, that is where improvisation instruction begins and ends in many high school jazz ensembles. Treinen (2011) suggests that college-trained music teachers lack the skills to teach jazz due to the absence of jazz education courses in music education curricula.

Several studies on the subject of preservice music teacher preparedness help corroborate Baker and Treinen's observations. In California, Marks (1994) discovered that only 25% of colleges and universities required courses in jazz pedagogy or improvisation even though teachers expressed the need for them. A survey of 28 graduate and 14 undergraduate music education students revealed that among the National Standards, the students were least prepared to incorporate improvisation and composition into their instruction (Froseth, 1996). Furthermore, a study by Wollenzien

(1999) revealed that many undergraduate music education programs in the north central United States did not offer courses in teaching improvisation.

Studies on the lack of improvisational instruction in public schools are also very telling. In California, Riveire (1997) found that about 25% of string teachers incorporated improvisation into their lessons, but only at a very basic level, citing the need for more time dedicated to the task. A survey of K-12 music teachers in New York revealed that improvisation and composition were considered the most difficult standards to implement (Bell, 2003). Additionally, in a survey of Indiana public schools, a random sample of 200 elementary general music teachers reported spending less than 7% of instructional time on improvisation and composition (Schmidt, Baker, Hayes, & Kwan, 2006).

Madura Ward-Steinman (2007) pointed out that in jazz education research, not much has been done to examine the reasons why so little time is devoted to teaching improvisation in public schools. However, recent surveys of vocal music teachers suggested that confidence level plays an imperative role in the amount of time music teachers spend teaching improvisation. In the studies, subjects rated teaching ability in improvisation generally low, correlating to their own improvisational ability. They did, however, express interest in learning more about how to teach improvisation, preferably at intensive summer workshops (Madura, 2000; Madura Ward-Steinman, 2007).

Regarding confidence in performing jazz improvisations, Wehr-Flowers (2006) conducted a study in which female participants were significantly less confident, more anxious, and had a poor attitude towards learning how to improvise in a jazz setting when compared to males. She offers that females may feel less inhibited and more positive

about learning to improvise if instructed in gender-centric (all female versus all male) instructional settings.

On the subject of jazz improvisation achievement, May (2003) examined the underlying factors of improvisational achievement among undergraduate wind students either enrolled in jazz ensemble or who had taken at least one course in jazz improvisation. She constructed three measures to determine subjects' achievement in jazz theory, aural skills, and aural imitation. Among all predictors in May's study, self-evaluation of improvisation achievement was revealed to be the most significantly correlated predictor to improvisation achievement as a whole with aural imitation being the second most significantly correlated predictor. Moreover, Watson (2010) examined the effects of aural versus notated teaching methods. Results of his study revealed that subjects who received purely aural jazz improvisation instruction learned how to improvise more effectively than those who received notated instruction. Watson also found that self-efficacy in subjects improved from pre- to post-instruction. Subjects greatly felt that they could become proficient at improvising in a jazz style both before and after receiving instruction and enjoyed the challenge of improvising in a jazz context after receiving instruction.

Regarding improvisational thinking, Norgaard (2011) suggests that beginning improvisers, although less sophisticated than professional jazz musicians, can employ similar thought processes while improvising. Furthermore, he suggests that a blend of a theory approach and a playing approach may be ideal for beginning improvisers. Being aware of what one is improvising while one is playing it, may help in the playing of thoughtful, well-constructed solos.

Also importantly relevant to this study is the subject of teacher preparation in jazz education. Over the last 30 or more years, scholars such as Fisher (1981), Knox (1996), and Treinen (2011) have conducted surveys examining the attitudes and opinions of high school and college music educators toward jazz education. Results have consistently suggested that music educators are often unprepared to teach jazz due to lack of formal training. Therefore, music educators at both levels tend to agree that courses in jazz pedagogy, jazz ensemble, jazz improvisation, and jazz history should not only be taken by music education majors, but be required for music teacher certification.

The survey results of the current study help to reveal the perceived stresses of learning to improvise and teach improvisation in a jazz context. In spite of what some may believe, jazz improvisation can be taught (Aebersold, 1992; Fleming, 1994), and when done with time, care, and attention to the individual needs of the ensemble, it can be taught quite effectively, yielding thoughtful, well-constructed, creative improvised solos.

*Purpose of the Study*

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the practices and opinions of high school band directors regarding the teaching of beginning improvisation in jazz ensemble rehearsal. The secondary purpose of this study was to broadly outline a curriculum for teaching beginning jazz improvisation in said rehearsals informed by the results of this survey and prior research. To encourage confidence, the curricular outline is designed for the comprehension of band directors who lack experience playing or teaching jazz. The outline is also intended for instrumentalists who are mostly proficient on their instruments but have had little or no experience improvising in a jazz context.

The material in the outline is designed for application to common jazz chord progressions found in the standard repertoire. The contents of the outline can be implemented and accelerated at the discretion of the director based on his or her instructional needs. For the purpose of this study it is assumed that a separate jazz theory, improvisation, or combo course is not offered concurrently with the curricular outline.

*Research Questions*

The following questions were posed to band directors in the author-constructed Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Instruction Questionnaire:

1. Should improvisation be taught in a large jazz ensemble setting?

2. What is an appropriate amount of jazz ensemble rehearsal time to dedicate to improvisation instruction?

3. What kinds of topics/exercises should be included in a beginning jazz improvisation curriculum?

4. What is most difficult about learning how to improvise?

5. What is most difficult about teaching jazz improvisation?

*Definition of Terms*

Jazz: An American genre of music rooted in ragtime and the blues (Jazz, 2012) that is mainly improvisatory but also comprises written-out and arranged elements (Gridley, 2000).

Jazz Ensemble: An instrumental ensemble that performs jazz music with one player per part (Fleming, 1994), typically comprising four to five trumpeters, four to five trombonists, five saxophonists who may also play additional woodwind instruments such

as flute and clarinet, a pianist, a guitarist, a bassist, and a drummer who may also play a melodic percussion instrument such as vibraphone.  Used interchangeably with *jazz band*.

Jazz Improvisation: The spontaneous production of melody (May, 1998) combined with learned material and personal inflection within the jazz tradition.

Jazz Theory: Scales, chords/chord symbols, arpeggios, patterns/licks, and harmonic progressions that collectively inform jazz improvisation.

*Delimitations*

This study deals specifically with teaching instrumental jazz improvisation and not vocal jazz improvisation.  Much of the existing material on teaching instrumental jazz improvisation is of an advanced level.  Even first year collegiate improvisation courses accelerate rapidly.  Therefore, to help fill a learning gap that exists in players at the secondary level, the following curricular outline is designed for beginning jazz improvisers and is not of an advanced nature.

*Chapter 2*

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following studies examine educators' confidence in teaching improvisation, the factors that inform jazz improvisation achievement, the thought processes of jazz improvisers, and teacher preparation of high school jazz band directors.

*Confidence in Teaching Improvisation*

Research suggests that confidence in the area of jazz improvisation affects one's ability to teach it (Madura, 2000; Madura Ward-Steinman 2007; Wehr-Flowers, 2006). Coker (1989) states that "jazz programs are proliferating at a considerable pace" (p. 13); however, few undergraduate music education students are required to take courses in jazz pedagogy or improvisation (Marks, 1994), even though they will likely conduct jazz ensembles of some sort as professional music teachers. Although the National Standards for Arts Education (1994) includes achievement standards for improvisation at all levels of K-12 music teaching, teachers often cite that the improvisation standard is one of the most difficult to employ due to lack of training, and therefore confidence (Bell, 2003; Madura, 2000; Madura Ward-Steinman, 2007).

In a replication of her earlier pilot study (2000), Madura Ward-Steinman (2007) examined confidence levels among vocal jazz workshop participants ($N = 213$) at music conventions in the U. S., Australia, and Brazil. Among the 17 items in a survey completed by the participants, 12 addressed confidence in teaching improvisation according to the 12 improvisation achievement standards from the National Standards (1994) on a five-point scale ranging from (1) no confidence at all to (5) great confidence. The remaining five items dealt with participants' own improvisational abilities, interest in

learning more about teaching improvisation, preferred modes for learning how to teach improvisation, and levels, areas, and years of teaching experience. Results indicated that as the National Standard grade grouping increased from K-4 to 9-12, the confidence level for teaching the age-appropriate improvisation skills decreased. The highest means were represented in the K-4 standards: "moderate confidence" in teaching to improvise simple rhythmic and melodic ostinati ($M = 3.70$), "moderate confidence" in teaching to improvise answers to rhythmic and melodic phrases ($M = 3.61$), and "moderate confidence" in teaching to improvise simple rhythmic and melodic variations on familiar melodies ($M = 3.60$). Conversely, the lowest means were represented in the 9-12 standards, indicating "slight" or "almost no confidence" in teaching to: improvise rhythmic and melodic variations on pentatonic and major melodies ($M = 2.84$) and improvise stylistically appropriate harmonizing parts in a variety of styles ($M = 2.40$). Significant differences were found among the means of all grade levels, $F (1.71, 326.08) = 128.62, p < .001$. Overall means for each grade level were as follows: K-12, 3.53 ("moderate confidence"); 5-8, 3.08 ("slight confidence"); and 9-12, 2.62 ("almost no" to "slight confidence").

Self-ratings of improvisational ability were low overall ($M = 2.46$), but interest in learning more about teaching improvisation was the highest rated item on the questionnaire ($M = 3.94$). Preferences for modes of learning to teach improvisation were as follows: summer workshops (127 points), instructional videos (126 points), conference sessions (119 points), college courses (103 points), computer software (85 points), books (84 points), and journal articles (47 points) (Madura Ward-Steinman, 2007).

Using a similar measure, Madura Ward-Steinman (2007) compared confidence levels of undergraduate choral music education majors for teaching improvisation. Subjects were assigned to an experimental group ($N = 13$) that received improvisation instruction in an intensive vocal jazz course and a control group ($N = 19$) that received no such instruction in other choral methods courses. The treatment consisted of listening to milestone vocal jazz recordings, singing jazz standards, singing vocal jazz arrangements, singing with a sound system, constructing bass lines, notating jazz piano voicings, transcribing and memorizing a blues solo, and improvising with the blues scale. From pre- to post-instruction, a significant increase was found in teaching confidence for the experimental group ($p < .001$) (Madura Ward-Steinman, 2007). Although the abovementioned studies dealt specifically with vocal improvisation and vocal jazz improvisation, the surveys and instruction used could be easily adapted for and administered to instrumental music educators.

Another jazz research study by Wehr-Flowers (2006) examined gender differences in the social-psychological constructs of confidence, anxiety, and attitude as they related to jazz improvisation participation. Participants ($N = 137$) comprised 83 males and 54 females ranging in age level from middle school/junior high ($N = 50$) to high school ($N = 43$) to college/adult ($N = 44$). The researcher's null hypothesis stated that there would be no difference between males and females in the aforementioned constructs. The measure used was a modified form of the Fennema-Sherman Mathematics Scales; the term "jazz improvisation" was substituted for "mathematics" throughout. Positive responses ranged from a score of 5 for "strongly agree" to 1 for "strongly disagree" as negative responses ranged from a score of 1 for "strongly agree" to

5 for "strongly disagree." The survey was administered to participants during their regularly scheduled jazz band rehearsal and took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Mean scores for 11 confidence, 12 anxiety, and 12 attitude Likert-type items produced the values for the dependent variables. A higher mean represented greater self-confidence, less anxiety, and a more positive attitude toward learning jazz improvisation. Levene's test indicated homogeneity of variance for the confidence and anxiety variables, however not for attitude. Cronbach's alpha revealed high reliability with coefficients of .93 for confidence, .93 for anxiety, .88 for attitude, and .95 for all statements combined. Results indicated that females were significantly less confident ($p < .01$), more anxious ($p < .01$), and had a poorer attitude ($p < .05$) towards learning jazz improvisation when compared to the males, disproving the researcher's null hypothesis (Wehr-Flowers, 2006).

In her discussion, Wehr-Flowers (2006) offers that females may feel less inhibited and more positive about learning to improvise if they were in gender-centric instructional settings. While this may be a hypothetically sound suggestion based on the present research, it may not be necessarily practical in coeducational settings. Her additional proposal of introducing jazz improvisation in private lessons or smaller groups may be more realistic.

*Jazz Improvisation Achievement and Self-Efficacy*

As some research implies, one's ability to teach jazz improvisation may rely on one's ability to perform the skill (Madura Ward-Steinman, 2007; Newman 1982). That is not to say, though, that those who are proficient at improvising in a jazz style are necessarily qualified teachers. Awareness of the various contributors that make one a

successful jazz improviser informs not only one's teaching, but one's own practice as well (May, 2003). There are, in fact, several factors that contribute to jazz improvisation achievement as discussed in the following studies.

May (2003) examined the underlying factors of improvisational achievement among undergraduate wind students ($N = 73$) at five Midwestern U. S. universities who were enrolled in jazz ensemble or had taken at least one course in jazz improvisation. The researcher constructed three measures to determine subjects' achievement in jazz theory, aural skills, and aural imitation. Furthermore, two recorded performance tasks were used to measure instrumental improvisational achievement: a two-chorus improvisation on F blues and a one-chorus improvisation using the chord progression to *Satin Doll*. For each subject, the following criteria were evaluated by three expert judges using the Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Measure (IJIM): technical facility, melodic and rhythmic development, style, use of harmonic material, expressiveness, rhythmic/time feel, and creativity. Additionally, subjects completed a survey consisting of questions pertaining to instrument type, piano experience, year in school, jazz listening background, and improvisation class experience. Subjects also rated their own improvisational ability using a three-point scale: (1) beginner, (2) moderate ability, and (3) advanced.

Among all the predictors, self-evaluation of improvisation achievement ($r = .73$, $p = .001$) was the strongest significant predictor of improvisation achievement based on the IJIM, followed by aural imitation achievement (the ability to imitate aural stimuli by performance on one's principle instrument) ($r = .60$, $p < .001$), jazz theory achievement ($r = .57$, $p < .001$), improvisation class experience ($r = .53$, $p < .001$), aural

skills (the ability to name and identify specific musical characteristics from an aural stimulus) ($r = .45$, $p < .001$), and finally hours per week of jazz listening ($r = .35$, $p < .01$). May (2003) concluded that while instrumental jazz improvisation is a "single construct," subskills should be developed concurrently with the practice of improvisation for better achievement.

Watson (2010) examined the effects of aural versus notated teaching methods on achievement in instrumental jazz improvisation as well as the relation of achievement and self-efficacy to experience variables. Subjects comprised 62 collegiate instrumental music majors from six Midwestern U. S. universities. Of the total population, 67.7% were music education majors and 17.7% were either performance majors or "other." Subjects had little to no prior experience with jazz improvisation, although 78.8% reported some experience playing in a jazz ensemble. For both pre- and post-instruction, subjects recorded two choruses of improvisation on the chord changes to *Perdido* and were later rated by four expert judges using the researcher's Jazz Improvisation Achievement Measure (JIAM) in the subscales of rhythm, melody, harmony, and style/expression. Self-efficacy was measured using the author's Jazz Improvisation Self-Efficacy Scale (JISES), a five-point Likert-type scale that rated subjects' confidence levels from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Subjects were assigned to two groups: (1) aural instruction and (2) notated instruction, but were taught the same material (rhythmic, melodic, and tonal patterns, expressive devices, etc.) and exposed to identical model improvisations. Instructional treatment of both types was given on an individual basis in three sessions of 70 minutes each.

For the total sample, means of pre-instruction scores ranged from a low of 2.18 ("Use of rhythmic motive development") to 4.52 ("Sense of time"). The composite mean of pre-instruction scores was 73.21 ($SD = 22.47$), indicating moderate variability. The means of post-instruction scores ranged from a low of 2.98 ("Use of stylistically appropriate 8th-note feel") to 5.42 ("Awareness of harmonic form"). The composite mean of post-instruction scores was 89.66 ($SD = 21.14$), with a slight decline in variability from pre-instruction scores. Pre- and post-instruction scores were significantly correlated ($r = .62$, $p < .001$), which indicated moderate stability in subjects' relative performance over time. Results indicated a significant mean increase from pre- to post-instruction ($p < .05$) for both groups. Moreover, subjects in the aural group scored higher on post-instruction recordings for most subscale items, suggesting that aural jazz improvisation instruction was more effective than notated instruction (Watson, 2010).

Self-efficacy results in Watson's (2010) study revealed that the lowest pre-instruction mean for both groups, aural and notated, was 2.03 for the item "I have a talent for jazz improvisation." The highest, however, was 3.66 for the item "I could become proficient in jazz improvisation." The lowest post-instruction mean for both groups was 2.52 for the item "Other people think I have talent for jazz improvisation" and the highest was 3.94 for the items "I could become proficient at improvising in a jazz style" and "I enjoy the challenge of improvising in a jazz context." Although self-efficacy among subjects improved from pre- to post-instruction, achievement scores, generally, did not correlate with self-efficacy scores (Watson, 2010).

The results of Watson's (2010) study suggested that aural jazz improvisation instruction was more effective than notated instruction. The instruction was administered

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privately, however, and the same approach may not be equally appropriate for larger ensembles.  A blend of notated and aural instruction may be more suitable in those cases, warranting further research or replication.

*Descriptions of Improvisational Thinking*

Understanding the thought processes of professional jazz musicians as they improvise may further inform music educators' ability to teach the skill.  In a study by Norgaard (2011), the researcher recorded and transcribed improvised solos by seven expert-level jazz musicians and interviewed them on what they were thinking about as they constructed their solos.  All participants were male and ranged widely in age, location, and experience, but were all established performers in the jazz community (Norgaard, 2011).  Each participant recorded a blues in the key of F of his choice, consisting of a preferred melody and several choruses of improvisation.  Participants then watched a video playback of their performance and were prompted to comment on what was going through their mind at the time of performance.  All of the artists recalled using "sketch planning" (thinking about what one will play before one plays it) when constructing musical ideas in their solos.  Forty-three instances of this strategy were reported.  "Evaluative monitoring" was also employed, meaning that the musicians were consciously evaluating what they were playing as they were playing it.  Twenty-three instances were reported.  Other "generative" strategies included: choosing notes based on harmonic priority (91 instances), recalling well-learned ideas from memory (clichés) and inserting them into the ongoing improvisation (76 instances), repeating material played in earlier sections of the improvisation (27 instances), and choosing notes based on melodic priority (nine instances).

Norgaard (2011) suggests that beginning improvisers can use similar approaches in constructing thought processes while improvising. He also states that a blend of a theory approach and a playing approach may be ideal for the beginning improviser. Being aware of what one is improvising and why one is playing it, rather than approaching the task blindly, may help yield thoughtful, well-constructed solos.

*Teacher Preparation in Jazz Education*

Several surveys have been conducted on the subject of teacher preparation in jazz education. Fisher (1981) examined attitudes and opinions of Pennsylvania secondary and college music educators on the inclusion of jazz education in public schools. Of the educators surveyed ($N = 163$), 95% agreed that colleges should include jazz courses in their curricula. Furthermore, 79% indicated that music education majors should be required to take at least one jazz-related course and 76% agreed that music education majors should take both performing and pedagogical courses in jazz. Among all courses included in the survey, jazz pedagogy, jazz ensemble, jazz improvisation, and jazz history were rated by 92.5% of participants as being courses that ought to be required of music education majors.

Knox (1996) examined the attitudes of Alabama high school and college music educators toward jazz education. Results indicated that 92% of high school band directors surveyed believed that courses in jazz instruction should be required for music education students. Moreover, 86% of college music educators reported that their programs failed to prepare students to teach jazz. Concomitantly, 82% of high school band directors indicated a need for jazz instruction in high school music curricula.

Treinen (2011) examined high school band directors' and college music

educators' attitudes toward implementing required courses in jazz education in music education curricula.  Subjects ($N = 126$) comprised 94 Kansas high school band directors and 32 Kansas college music educators who were asked to evaluate certain skills and competencies needed to teach jazz in a survey based on two former instruments: Barr's "The Jazz Studies Curriculum" and Jones's "Jazz in Oklahoma Music Education Survey" (as cited in Treinen, 2011).  Among all findings, 49 (52%) high school band directors and 20 (63%) college music educators reported that music teacher training programs at Kansas institutions were not preparing students to teach jazz.  Additionally, 81 (86%) high school band directors and 26 (81%) college music educators agreed that music education students should be required to take a least one course in jazz before graduating, and 70 (75%) high school band directors and 26 (81%) college music educators agreed that said students should be required to take at least one similar course before receiving teacher certification.  Furthermore, 74 (79%) high school band directors and 21 (66%) college music educators agreed that jazz improvisation was important.  Among items that should be addressed in a college-level jazz improvisation course, instructional materials, sight-reading jazz chord symbols, and the ability to teach current methods and techniques were valued most by respondents.

In general, results of the above studies indicate that high school band directors and college music educators agree that collegiate music education programs are not preparing music education majors to teach jazz, therefore implying the need for required courses in jazz education as part of said programs.

*Summary*

Research suggests that teachers who admit to neglecting improvisation achievement standards (MENC, 1994) in their instruction often do so because they lack skill and confidence in the area (Madura, 2000; Madura Ward-Steinman, 2007; Wehr-Flowers, 2006).  Getting to the bottom of this dilemma by examining ways to improve teacher confidence levels in jazz improvisation pedagogy has been mainly carried out by Madura (Ward-Steinman) (2000, 2007).  Understanding musical skills and modes of teaching that contribute to the development of successful jazz improvisers have been subjects of interest for important jazz education researchers May (2003) and Watson (2010).  Moreover, understanding how expert jazz improvisers think while improvising can greatly improve music educators' approaches to teaching jazz improvisation (Norgaard, 2011).  Finally, results of surveys conducted over the last three decades (Fisher, 1981; Knox, 1996; Treinen, 2011) indicate that collegiate music education programs neglect to require their students to take courses in jazz, suggesting a reason why many music teachers are ill-equipped to teach even the fundamental elements of the genre, namely improvisation.

The simplest solution to the problem of teacher unpreparedness in jazz would be for more colleges and universities to require music education majors to take courses in the genre; however, such a solution is unlikely.  For those high school band directors faced with the daunting task of teaching jazz improvisation with limited background or training, an accessible, beginning level curriculum comprising clearly defined terms and minimal technical jargon is needed, hence the curricular outline portion of this study.

*Chapter 3*

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate and analyze the practices and opinions of high school band directors regarding the teaching of beginning jazz improvisation in jazz ensemble rehearsal. The secondary purpose was to broadly outline a curriculum for teaching beginning jazz improvisation to complement existing high school jazz ensemble rehearsal formats based on directors' responses to the Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Instruction Questionnaire and former research. It was also my intent to make the curricular outline comprehensible for band directors who may lack experience playing or teaching jazz, and in turn raise teaching confidence levels.

*Subjects*

Participants ($N = 57$) for the Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Instruction Questionnaire were high school band directors from the state of Indiana listed in the *Indiana Directory of Music Teachers* (Bucklin, 2011). Those originally contacted ($N = 314$) were directors whose email addresses were either listed in the directory or available through school websites. Subjects were chosen regardless of years of teaching experience. Questionnaires were distributed by email through www.surveymonkey.com.

*Instrumentation*

The Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Instruction Questionnaire (IJIIQ) was constructed to learn about directors' approaches to jazz ensemble rehearsal and to what extent jazz improvisation is incorporated into instruction. The IJIIQ (see Appendix A) dealt specifically with directors' personal feelings toward jazz improvisation instruction and rehearsal time dedicated to the task. Additional items covered the ability to

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improvise in a jazz setting, confidence in teaching jazz improvisation, and suggestions for what is needed in a beginning jazz improvisation curriculum.

*Procedure*

Before administering the final draft of the IJIIQ to subjects, I consulted with colleagues and professors on the sequence, verbiage, and content of the pilot test questionnaire. I then conducted a pilot study among colleagues who had former experience or were currently teaching high school jazz ensemble at the time of the study (see Appendix B). Upon completion of the pilot study, I distributed the main study version of IJIIQ with its cover letter (see Appendix C).

As I have stated, it was my intent, based on a combination of subjects' responses to the IJIIQ and former research, to construct a broad (and flexible) curricular outline for teaching beginning jazz improvisation to supplement existing rehearsal formats. According to responses and prior research, I assembled exercises that exemplify the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic vocabulary of jazz appropriate to the beginning level. Moreover, I have selected a repertory of standard jazz compositions from *The Real Book* (Volumes I-III) (Hal Leonard, 2004) and a matching discography that directors can purchase to accompany the curricular outline (see Appendix D).

The curricular outline is such that warm-up, theory, and aural activities at the beginning of rehearsal can naturally flow into the rest of the director's lesson plan. Moreover, the improvisation exercises presented in the outline are not only applicable to the tunes in my selected repertory, but also to large ensemble arrangements of said tunes that the director may choose at his or her discretion.

*Chapter 4*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Results*

Participants for this study were drawn from the 314 high school band directors

listed in the *Indiana Directory of Music Teachers* (Bucklin, 2011) whose email addresses

were either printed in the directory or available through school websites.  A total of six

email messages requesting participation in the survey were sent to directors between June

and November 2012.  Although 57 directors (18%) completed the Instrumental Jazz

Improvisation Instruction Questionnaire, respondents occasionally skipped questions,

yielding slightly different totals for each item.  Table 1 shows how long directors had

been teaching an instrumental jazz ensemble.  Almost half had taught for 11 or fewer

years, while 39% had been doing so for 18 or more years.

Table 1

*Frequencies and Percentages for Indiana High School Band Directors' Years of*
*Experience Teaching an Instrumental Jazz Ensemble (N = 57)*

| Years of Experience | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| 1-5 | 16 | 28% |
| 6-11 | 11 | 19% |
| 12-17 | 8 | 14% |
| 18 or more | 22 | 39% |

Table 2 shows how many students in directors' jazz ensembles were already

proficient improvisers.  Most respondents (56%) had four or more proficient improvisers

in their jazz ensembles at the time the survey was administered (56%).

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Table 2

*Frequencies and Percentages for Directors' Students Who Were Already Proficient Improvisers (N =57)*

| Proficient Improvisers | *f* | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 7 | 12% |
| 1 | 2 | 4% |
| 2 | 10 | 18% |
| 3 | 6 | 11% |
| 4 or more | 32 | 56% |

Table 3 contains the following general information pertaining to directors' jazz ensemble rehearsal schedules: Whether rehearsals were curricular or extracurricular, frequency of rehearsals, and length of rehearsals. Trends for the aforementioned categories are as follows: More than half of jazz ensemble rehearsals were extracurricular (58%); most respondents held rehearsal either one or at least five days a week (28% each) with two and three days a week also being common (23 and 21%, respectively); and most rehearsals lasted between 46 and 60 minutes (42%).

Respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on the setting in which jazz improvisation should be taught. As seen in Table 4, an overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) felt that jazz improvisation should be taught by the director in jazz ensemble rehearsal. Concomitantly, most respondents (84%) did not feel that jazz improvisation should be taught only in small settings such as combos, theory classes, or private/group lessons.

Table 3

*Frequencies and Percentages for Jazz Ensemble Rehearsal Schedules (N = 57)*

| Rehearsal Schedules | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Curricular or extracurricular | | |
| Curricular | 24 | 42% |
| Extracurricular | 33 | 58% |
| Day(s) per week | | |
| 1 | 16 | 28% |
| 2 | 13 | 23% |
| 3 | 12 | 21% |
| 4 | 0 | 0% |
| 5 or more | 16 | 28% |
| Length in minutes | | |
| 30-45 | 11 | 19% |
| 46-60 | 24 | 42% |
| 61-75 | 6 | 11% |
| 76 or more | 16 | 28% |

Table 4

*Frequencies and Percentages for Directors' Opinions on Jazz Improvisation Teaching Setting (N=57)*

|  | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Should be taught by director in jazz ensemble rehearsal | | |
| Yes | 53 | 93% |
| No | 4 | 7% |
| Should be taught only in small settings | | |
| Yes | 9 | 16% |
| No | 48 | 84% |

Table 5 contains information pertaining to directors' inclusion of jazz improvisation instruction in jazz ensemble rehearsal. While most directors taught improvisation as part of their rehearsal (81%), 63% of respondents did not employ a published improvisation method in whole or in part. Moreover, an overwhelming number of directors reported that a formal beginning jazz improvisation curriculum designed to accompany their existing jazz ensemble rehearsal formats would be helpful (95%).

Respondents also provided information about the amount of time they spent teaching improvisation during jazz ensemble rehearsal as well as the amount of time they felt was appropriate, as illustrated in Table 6. The majority of respondents (46%) taught improvisation for 5-10 minutes during rehearsal, but felt that dedicating 11-16 minutes of rehearsal time to teaching improvisation was appropriate.

Table 5

*Frequencies and Percentages for Teaching Improvisation in Jazz Ensemble Rehearsal (N = 57)*

|  | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Teaches improvisation on a regular basis | | |
|     Yes | 46 | 81% |
|     No | 11 | 19% |
| Employs published method in whole or in part | | |
|     Yes | 21 | 37% |
|     No | 36 | 63% |
| Considers a formal beginning improvisation curriculum helpful | | |
|     Yes | 54 | 95% |
|     No | 3 | 5% |

As illustrated in Table 7, respondents were asked to select all types of improvisation topics and exercises they addressed in instruction from the following list: melodic embellishment, melodic devices (quotes, stock patterns, etc.), aural imitation, call and response, ear training, chord-scale relationships, guide tones, digital patterns, listening to expert recordings, and transcribing. The most frequently addressed was "call and response" (79%), which was followed by "chord-scale relationships" (75%). An additional category labeled "other" was provided for respondents to specify what improvisation topics and exercises they addressed that were not listed. While all respondents selected this category, only three provided specific responses:

"experimentation," "listening/evaluating each other," and "sustained chord improv."

Table 6

*Frequencies and Percentages for Amount of Time Teaching Improvisation During Jazz Ensemble Rehearsal (N = 54)*

|  | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Time allotted to teaching improvisation in minutes |  |  |
| 5-10 | 26 | 46% |
| 11-16 | 21 | 37% |
| 17 or more | 7 | 12% |
| Appropriate amount of time to teach improvisation in minutes |  |  |
| 5-10 | 13 | 23% |
| 11-16 | 24 | 42% |
| 17 or more | 17 | 30% |

*Note:* Because percentages represent total band directors that selected each item, they do not equal 100%.

Considering potential improvisation topics and exercises to include in a curriculum for beginning jazz improvisers, respondents rated the aforementioned items (those identified in Table 7) using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ("not important") to 5 ("extremely important"). Table 8 shows that means ranged from a high of 4.65 for "listening to expert recordings" (97% of respondents rated this item as "very" to "extremely important") to a low of 2.94 for "digital patterns." All of the items with means greater than 3.5 indicated "very important" topics in respondents' views, which left two items considered only "moderately important." The items "ear training" and

"chord-scale relationships" were skewed, while "listening to expert recordings" was greatly so (*SK* = -3.05), indicating they were rated highly by most respondents.

Table 7

*Frequencies and Percentages for Types of Improvisation Topics/Exercises Addressed in Instruction (N = 57)*

| Topic/Exercise | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Call and response | 45 | 79% |
| Chord-scale relationships | 43 | 75% |
| Listening to expert recordings | 40 | 70% |
| Melodic devices (quotes, stock patterns, etc.) | 38 | 67% |
| Melodic embellishments | 36 | 63% |
| Aural imitation | 34 | 60% |
| Ear training | 27 | 47% |
| Guide tones | 18 | 32% |
| Transcribing | 14 | 25% |
| Digital patterns | 8 | 14% |
| Other (unspecified) | 54 | 95% |
| Other ("experimentation") | 1 | 2% |
| Other ("listening to/evaluating each other") | 1 | 2% |
| Other ("sustained chord improv") | 1 | 2% |

Table 8

*Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), Skewness (SK), and Kurtosis (K) for Improvisation*
*Topics/Exercises Rating Percentages (N = 54-57)*

| Topic/Exercise | NI % | SI % | MI % | VI % | EI % | M | SD | SK | K |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Listening to expert recordings | 2% | 0% | 2% | 25% | 72% | 4.65 | .69 | -3.05 | 12.91 |
| Chord-scale relationships | 0% | 4% | 5% | 46% | 46% | 4.33 | .74 | -1.18 | 1.75 |
| Ear training | 0% | 4% | 11% | 40% | 46% | 4.28 | .80 | -1.00 | .66 |
| Aural imitation | 0% | 2% | 23% | 44% | 32% | 4.10 | .79 | -.32 | -.69 |
| Call and response | 0% | 2% | 23% | 51% | 23% | 3.96 | .74 | -.23 | -.36 |
| Melodic embellishment | 2% | 7% | 33% | 40% | 18% | 3.65 | .92 | -.39 | .10 |
| Guide tones | 4% | 9% | 28% | 42% | 16% | 3.60 | 1.00 | -.61 | .25 |
| Melodic devices | 2% | 9% | 37% | 37% | 16% | 3.56 | .93 | -.26 | -.08 |
| Transcribing | 5% | 18% | 30% | 40% | 5% | 3.23 | .99 | -.49 | -.33 |
| Digital patterns | 9% | 26% | 28% | 25% | 7% | 2.94 | 1.11 | .03 | -.75 |

*Note:* Because percentages represent total band directors that selected each item, they do not equal 100%.
*Note:* NI = not important, SI = somewhat important, MI = moderately important, VI = very important,
EI = extremely important

As illustrated in Table 9, directors were asked to rate the extent of their jazz

ensemble playing experience, jazz improvisation ability, and jazz improvisation teaching

confidence by using five-point Likert-type scales. For jazz ensemble playing experience,

choices ranged from 1 ("no experience") to 5 ("extensive/professional experience") and

the mean was 3.56, indicating that directors overall had "much" experience. For jazz

improvisation teaching confidence, choices ranged from 1 ("no confidence") to 5

("extreme confidence") and the mean was 3.12, indicating that directors generally had

"moderate" confidence. For jazz improvisation ability, choices ranged from 1 ("no

ability") to 5 ("expert ability") and the mean was 2.95, indicating that directors mainly

had "adequate" ability. All three items revealed a fairly normal distribution of responses

by directors.

Table 9

*Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis for Rating Percentages of Directors'*
*Jazz Ensemble Playing Experience, Jazz Improvisation Ability, and Jazz Improvisation*
*Teaching Confidence (N = 57)*

|  | 1 % | 2 % | 3 % | 4 % | 5 % | M | SD | SK | K |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jazz ensemble playing experience | 4% | 16% | 26% | 30% | 25% | 3.56 | 1.13 | -.35 | -.75 |
| Jazz improvisation teaching confidence | 4% | 18% | 51% | 19% | 9% | 3.12 | .93 | .17 | .20 |
| Jazz improvisation ability | 4% | 26% | 46% | 21% | 9% | 2.95 | .87 | .10 | -.07 |

As shown in Table 10, directors reported information regarding the playing of

sample or transcribed solos when they appear in jazz ensemble arrangements by choosing

from the following: "Students play the same solo, as written, each time," "I encourage

students to embellish said solos," "I suggest that students use the solo as a guide, but

eventually improvise their own solos," and "I suggest that students always improvise

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their own solos." By far, the most frequent response (67%) was "I suggest that students use the solo as a guide, but eventually improvise their own solos," with only 5% responding that "students play the same solo, as written, each time."

Table 10

*Frequencies and Percentages for Performance Practice of Sample or Transcribed Solos in Jazz Ensemble Arrangements (N = 57)*

|  | *f* | *%* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I suggest that students use the solo as a guide, but eventually improvise their own solos | 38 | 67% |
| I encourage students to embellish said solos | 9 | 16% |
| I suggest that students always improvise their own solos | 7 | 12% |
| Students play the same solo, as written, each time | 3 | 5% |

In their own words, directors provided information regarding the difficulties of learning and teaching jazz improvisation. Qualitative data were categorized according to recurring themes. As shown in Table 11, respondents most frequently stated that in their own playing experience, the most difficult aspect of learning to improvise was "playing the right notes/chord changes" (keeping track of chord progressions while playing, playing notes that fit chord progressions correctly, recognizing chords, etc.) (23%).

In the case of their students, respondents most frequently reported that "fear" (of playing in front of fellow students, making mistakes, etc.) (32%) was the most difficult part of learning how to improvise, as illustrated in Table 12. Furthermore, as shown in

Table 13, respondents most frequently reported that the most difficult aspect of teaching

improvisation was "student inhibitions" (37%).

Table 11

*Frequencies and Percentages for Open Response Items Regarding Directors' Own Difficulties in Learning to Improvise (N = 53)*

|  | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Playing right notes/chord changes | 13 | 23% |
| Theory | 10 | 18% |
| Finding time | 6 | 11% |
| Playing what you hear in your head | 6 | 11% |
| Fear | 5 | 9% |
| Making music, not just playing notes | 3 | 5% |
| Difficult keys | 2 | 4% |
| Playing melodically | 2 | 4% |
| Other | 6 | 11% |

*Note:* Because percentages represent total band directors that selected each item, they do not equal 100%.

Table 12

*Frequencies and Percentages for Open Response Items Regarding Difficulties in Learning to Improvise in Students' Experience, as Reported by their Directors (N = 55)*

|  | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Fear | 18 | 32% |
| Theory | 10 | 18% |
| Playing right notes/changes | 9 | 16% |
| Making music, not just playing notes | 6 | 11% |
| Finding time | 3 | 5% |
| Playing what you hear in your head | 2 | 4% |
| Instrument proficiency | 2 | 4% |
| Lack of background | 2 | 4% |
| Other | 3 | 5% |

*Note:* Because percentages represent total band directors that selected each item, they do not equal 100%.

Table 13

*Frequencies and Percentages for Open Response Items Regarding Directors' Own Difficulties in Teaching Improvisation (N = 55)*

|  | *f* | *%* |
|---|---|---|
| Student inhibitions | 21 | 37% |
| Finding time | 5 | 9% |
| Differing student ability levels | 5 | 9% |
| Teaching theory | 5 | 9% |
| Getting students to practice | 3 | 5% |
| Student lack of background | 2 | 4% |
| Teaching creativity | 2 | 4% |
| Teaching style | 2 | 4% |
| Demonstrating | 2 | 4% |
| Pacing | 2 | 4% |
| Other | 6 | 11% |

*Note:* Because percentages represent total band directors that selected each item, they do not equal 100%.

*Discussion*

According to these findings, almost all (93%) of Indiana high school band directors surveyed felt that jazz improvisation should be taught by the director in jazz ensemble rehearsal. Only 16% felt that jazz improvisation should be taught exclusively in small settings such as combos, theory classes, or private/group lessons. These results support the need for jazz improvisation instruction in jazz ensemble rehearsal. Also supporting this need, the great majority of directors (81%) reported that they taught improvisation on a regular basis during jazz ensemble rehearsal; but while 63% did not employ a published improvisation method, 95% considered that a formal beginning improvisation curriculum guide would be helpful.

The current study also found that 46% of directors allotted 5-10 minutes of teaching time to jazz improvisation instruction during jazz ensemble rehearsal; 37% allotted 11-16 minutes and only 12% allotted 17 or more minutes. However, 42% of directors felt that 11-16 minutes was an appropriate amount of time to teach improvisation during rehearsal, with 23% selecting 5-10 minutes and 30% selecting 17 or more minutes. While these results reveal that a preferred amount of rehearsal time spent on jazz improvisation instruction is 11-16 minutes, the fact that most directors dedicated 5-10 minutes of rehearsal to improvisation suggests that not enough rehearsal time is allotted for improvisation instruction.

Of the improvisation instruction topics and exercises provided in this survey (melodic embellishment, melodic devices, aural imitation, call and response, ear training, chord-scale relationships, guide tones, digital patterns, listening to expert recordings, and transcribing), the most frequently addressed in rehearsal by directors was "call and

response" (79%), closely followed by "chord-scale relationships" (75%). In rating the importance of these items, however, "listening to expert recordings" was rated highest ("extremely important") by most respondents (72%). Moreover, 97% of respondents rated this item as "moderately important" to "extremely important," emphasizing the importance of listening when learning to improvise in a jazz setting. The remaining items were considered by directors to be "very important," "chord-scale relationships" ($M = 4.33$), "ear training" ($M = 4.28$), "aural imitation" ($M = 4.10$), "call and response" ($M = 3.96$), "melodic embellishment" ($M = 3.65$), "guide tones" ($M = 3.60$), and "melodic devices" ($M = 3.56$). These results form the basis for the application of a method designed for this study.

According to the results of this study, most directors (51%) had "moderate" confidence in teaching jazz improvisation, while most (46%) rated their jazz improvisation ability as "adequate." As both of these responses were three on a five-point scale, it can be argued that directors generally rated their jazz improvisation ability and teaching confidence the same. In contrast, Madura Ward-Steinman (2007) found that subjects in her study reported only being able to "improvise a little" ($M = 2.46$). Subjects ($N = 213$) were participants in the researcher's sessions on vocal jazz improvisation at conferences in the US, Australia, and Brazil. Watson (2010) also reported that subjects' pre-instruction self-rating of jazz improvisation ability was quite low for the survey item "I have talent for jazz improvisation." Subjects ($N = 62$) were collegiate instrumental music majors from one of six Midwestern universities who were instructed in jazz improvisation by the researcher. May (2003) found that subjects in her study rated themselves as "intermediate" to "advanced" improvisers ($M = 2.57$). Subjects ($N = 85$)

were collegiate wind players enrolled in jazz ensemble. Although subjects in May's study generally rated their jazz improvisation ability higher than those in other studies (including the present one), they did so using a three-point researcher-constructed scale, while all other studies employed five-point scales.

Additionally, according to directors' responses to open-ended survey items in the current study, 23% reported difficulties in their own jazz improvisation learning in "playing the right notes and chord changes." Closely following this was "theory" (18%) and then "finding time" (11%). In the case of their students, "fear" (32%) was the most reported difficulty in learning to improvise. This could mean fear of playing in front of others, making mistakes, and the like. Directors also reported that the greatest difficulty in teaching improvisation was "student inhibitions" (37%). Therefore, including strategies for alleviating the specific aforementioned difficulties in learning and teaching jazz improvisation in a formal curriculum is warranted.

Finally, the results of this survey also reveal that when teaching jazz ensemble arrangements that contain sample or transcribed solos, most directors (67%) "suggest that students use the solo as a guide, but eventually improvise their own solos." This, however, does not reveal how directors help students to do so. Therefore, providing steps in a jazz improvisation curriculum by which students can form their own original solos is critical.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*Summary*

The purpose of this study was to survey high school band directors who taught jazz ensemble in Indiana regarding their practices in teaching jazz improvisation as well as topics and exercises they would consider useful in a beginning improvisation curriculum. The purpose was also to develop an outline of a curriculum based upon survey results and former research. In order to gain information, the researcher-constructed Instrumental Jazz Improvisation Instruction Questionnaire was distributed among directors listed in the *Indiana Directory of Music Teachers* (Bucklin, 2011), whose email addresses were either printed in the directory or available through school websites, between June and November 2012. Within the survey, respondents also provided information about their ability to improvise in a jazz setting, their students' ability to improvise, and their confidence in teaching jazz improvisation. Directors were sent a total of six emails, containing an online link to the IJIIQ through www.surveymonkey.com, requesting participation. Of the population of 314 high school band directors, 57 respondents completed the survey for a response rate of 18%. Although this response rate appears low, it can be assumed that not all Indiana high school band directors lead a jazz ensemble, therefore making it impossible for every director in the original population to participate.

Regarding the first research question, relating to whether or not improvisation should be taught in a large jazz ensemble setting, an overwhelming majority (93%) of respondents felt that jazz improvisation should be taught in jazz ensemble rehearsal.

Moreover, most respondents (84%) did not feel that jazz improvisation should be taught only in small settings such as combos, theory classes, or private/group lessons. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (81%) already taught jazz improvisation in some way during jazz ensemble rehearsal at the time the IJIIQ was distributed.

Concerning the second research question, dealing with an appropriate amount of jazz ensemble rehearsal time to dedicate to improvisation, the largest percentage (42%) selected was 11-16 minutes. However, at the time the IJIIQ was distributed, the largest percentage of directors (46%) allotted only 5-10 minutes of rehearsal time to improvisation instruction.

Regarding the third research question, dealing with the kinds of topics and exercises that should be included in a beginning jazz improvisation curriculum, respondents rated such items on a five-point Likert-type scale with 1 being "not important" and 5 being "extremely important." The highest rated item, considered "extremely important," was "listening to expert recordings." Items considered "very important" in respondents' views, are as follows: "chord-scale relationships," "ear training," "aural imitation," "call and response," "melodic embellishment," "guide tones," and "melodic devices."

Concerning the fourth research question, relating to what is most difficult about learning to improvise, directors reported such difficulties in their own playing and that of their students. In their own words, directors most frequently reported "playing the right notes/chord changes" (keeping track of chord progressions while playing, playing notes that fit chord progressions correctly, recognizing chords, etc.) when referring to their own

playing.  In the case of their students, directors most frequently reported "fear" (of

playing in front of fellow students, making mistakes, etc.).

Finally, regarding the fifth research question, relating to what is most difficult

about teaching jazz improvisation, directors, in their own words, most frequently reported

some sort of "student inhibitions."

*Conclusions*

The results of this survey help support the importance of jazz instruction in high

school music curricula (Knox, 1996) and an overwhelming need for jazz improvisation

instruction in high school jazz ensemble rehearsals (Baker, 1988; Coker, 1989; Fleming,

1994; Gridley 2000; Hill, 2002).  At the time of this study, most subjects (81%) taught

improvisation in some capacity on a regular basis.  Moreover, an overwhelming majority

of subjects (95%) considered the creation and implementation of a beginning

improvisation curriculum to be helpful.  These two items alone illustrate an overall strong

value judgment of subjects in favor of jazz improvisation instruction.

Of potential improvisation items to include in a beginning jazz improvisation

curriculum, respondents valued exercises in listening, chord-scale relationships, ear

training, aural imitation, call and response, melodic embellishment, guide tones, and

melodic devices the most.  At the time of this study, most subjects were already

addressing six of these eight items in their instruction: listening, chord-scale

relationships, aural imitation, call and response, melodic embellishment, and melodic

devices, further supporting their importance in subjects' opinions.  Furthermore, four of

these eight highly valued items are associated with aural instruction, supporting Watson's

study (2010) in which participants who were taught to improvise with an aural method

scored higher in post-instruction assessment than those who were instructed with a notated method.

When rating their own confidence in teaching jazz improvisation using a five-point Likert-type scale, high school band directors in this study were generally moderate, whereas music teachers (primarily choral directors) in Madura Ward-Steinman's study (2007) rated their confidence relatively low for grades 9-12 achievement standards in vocal improvisation. Subjects in this study generally rated their own ability to improvise slightly less than their ability to teach improvisation, as did subjects in Madura Ward-Steinman's study (2007). According to these findings, music teachers in general are slightly more confident in teaching improvisation than in improvising themselves. Moreover, it can also be surmised that both jazz improvisation ability and teaching confidence in high school band directors (at least in those of this study) are generally higher than for their choral counterparts.

In their own words, subjects reported what they felt was most difficult about learning to improvise in their own playing experience, with difficulties in "playing the right notes and chord changes" and "theory" occurring most frequently. These results support findings regarding the lack of jazz training in undergraduate music education programs (Fisher, 1981; Knox, 1996; Treinan 2011).

In the case of their students' difficulties in learning to improvise, subjects reported "fear" (of playing in front of fellow students, making mistakes, etc.) most frequently. Similarly, regarding their own difficulties in teaching jazz improvisation, subjects most frequently reported "student inhibitions." These difficulties may derive

from the sheer lack of improvisation instruction, as 46% of directors reported spending 5-10 minutes on the task.

*Implications*

The following curricular outline for teaching beginning jazz improvisation concepts in high school jazz ensemble is informed in part by the survey results of this study as well as former research in jazz education.  The exercises included here are based on the highest means in survey item 21, "When considering what topics/exercises to include in a curriculum for beginning jazz improvisers in an ensemble setting, rate the importance of the following items on a scale from 1-5 (1 = "not important," 5 = "extremely important") (melodic embellishments, melodic devices [quotes, stock patterns, etc.], aural imitation, chord-scale relationships, guide tones, digital patterns, transcribing).  Information is presented in a clear, concise manner to help alleviate any lack of confidence or prior jazz improvisation knowledge on the part of the director as well as student fear or anxiety.  A generous amount of aural instruction is involved; however, some notated musical examples are also provided to aid instruction.  Listening to expert recordings of standard jazz repertoire is a daily expectation.

**Teaching Beginning Improvisation in High School Jazz Ensemble**

The following exercises are intended for use at the beginning of a rehearsal, preferably as part of the warm-up, but should ultimately be applied to arrangements in the ensemble's performance repertoire (music educator Zachary Poulter [2008] has compiled a useful, comprehensive index of jazz ensemble repertoire that includes keys, styles, grade levels, and improvisation formats).  The order in which units appear is merely one possible way for organization.  For the purposes of this curricular outline, it is assumed that the director is already teaching various jazz styles through the ensemble's repertoire.  It is also assumed that students are mainly proficient on their instruments.  If possible, drummers should also learn this material on a melodic percussion instrument such as vibraphone.  These exercises deal primarily with melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic concepts.  Improvisation instruction should last between 11 and 16 minutes daily.

I.     Unit One: Major Concepts Part I
   a.   Suggested materials
        i.   The Real Book: Volumes I and II (C, B-flat, E-flat, and bass clef editions)
        ii.  The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Fats Navarro and Tadd Dameron: *Lady Bird*
        iii. The Italian Sessions—Chet Baker: *Pent-Up House*
        iv.  Never No Lament: The Blanton-Webster Band: *Perdido*
        v.   Nights of Ballads and Blues: *Satin Doll*
        vi.  Colored pencils (green and red)
   b.   Major scales and arpeggios
        i.   Set an expectation to know all major scales (to the ninth) along with major seventh arpeggios (extra challenge: learn scales in thirds, too).
        ii.  Teach construction of major triad and major seventh chord

      iii.  Visual aids may be used at first, but memorization is ultimately preferred.

      iv.  Practice daily on quarter notes and eighth notes using the circle of fourths/fifths.

      v.  Have individual students experiment by freely moving around the major scale over a sustained major seventh chord (played on the piano by the director). Demonstrate this as simply as possible to avoid student inhibitions.

c.  Reading and understanding major chord symbols: Teach the various symbols used to represent a major chord.

      i.  Examples: C, C M, C maj, C Δ, C Δ7, C6

      ii.  Assessment: Students will write and/or play the appropriate scale and/or arpeggio for a given chord symbol.

d.  Ear training: Teach major and perfect intervals.

      i.  Use C major scale as a visual aid.

      ii.  Melodically and harmonically demonstrate M2, M3, P4, P5, M6, M7, P8 on the piano.

          1.  Suggest mnemonic devices/aural cues as appropriate.

          2.  Drill in sets of five and ten.

          3.  Practice on instruments.

              a.  Randomly select a starting pitch and an interval and have students play back.

              b.  Beware of transpositions.

      iii.  Assessment: Students will identify and/or play sets of given melodic and harmonic intervals.

e.  Reading tunes in major keys

      i.  As a group, play any or all of the following easy major-keyed tunes: *Lady Bird, Misty, Pent-Up House, Perdido, Satin Doll*

      ii.  Embellishing the melody

          1.  Have students play four-measure solo statements of the melody as the rhythm sections comps.

<ol type="a" start="1">
<li>They should experiment with the melody by altering rhythms, adding grace notes, displacing octaves, etc.</li>
<li>Demonstrate this as simply as possible to avoid student inhibitions.</li>
</ol>

<ol start="2">
<li>Assessment: With live or recorded accompaniment, students will play and record an assigned four-measure section of one of the above tunes exactly as written, followed by a melodically embellished version of the same four-measure section. They will verbally self-evaluate their performance by listening back and recalling what they were thinking as they played it.</li>
</ol>

<ol type="a" start="6">
<li>Aural imitation/call and response
<ol type="i">
<li>Rhythm alone: On a given pitch, play short four-beat rhythms in a swing style.
<ol>
<li>Students will repeat as a group and individually.</li>
<li>Monitor for mistakes and address accordingly.</li>
<li>Continue process by having individual students be the model.</li>
</ol>
</li>
<li>Rhythm and melody together: In a given major key, play short, easy four and eight-beat melodic cells in a swing style using the first two, three, and five notes of the scale (beware of transpositions).</li>
<li>Examples: 1-2-1; 1-2-3; 1-3-1; 1-2-3-2-1; 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1; 1-5-1; 1-3-5-3-1, etc.
<ol>
<li>Students will repeat as a group and individually.</li>
<li>Monitor for mistakes and address accordingly.</li>
<li>Continue process by having individual students be the model.</li>
<li>Call and response: Follow the above process, but answers to the model will now be unique, not the same.</li>
</ol>
</li>
</ol>
</li>
<li>Melodic devices in major keys
<ol type="i">
<li>Major seventh pattern
<ol>
<li>Teach students the following pattern, built on an ascending major seventh arpeggio, followed by its corresponding</li>
</ol>
</li>
</ol>
</li>
</ol>

descending scale.  Slowly teach by ear, using the visual aid if necessary (beware of transpositions).

a.  C M7:

b.  Practice as a group in all major keys, either at random or by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

2.  Assessment: Students will play the above pattern from memory in all major keys by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

3.  Extra challenge

a.  Have students play the same type of pattern, now starting on the third, fifth, and seventh of the major chord.  The top notes in each arpeggio are extensions of the major seventh chord.

b.  C M7 , etc.

ii.  Quoting

1.  Teach students the following diatonic quote from the tune *All of this and Heaven Too* by Jimmy Van Heusen.  Slowly teach by ear, emphasizing where leaps and stepwise motions occur, using the visual aid of necessary (beware of transpositions).

a.  C Δ:

b.  Practice as a group in all major keys, either at random or by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

2.  Assessment: Students will play the above pattern from memory in all major keys by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

3.  Extra challenge: Have students find other major-keyed tunes to quote from and play in all major keys (e.g. *The Christmas Song, Joy to the World, The Flintstones,* children's songs, etc.).

h. Guide tones

    i. Guide tones help improvisers and rhythm players shift from one chord to another with the least amount of motion. They provide good voice leading in chords and help to form harmonically sophisticated solo lines. They also make improvising background figures behind other soloists very easy.

    ii. Thirds and sevenths define the basic sound quality of a chord (major, minor, etc.) By playing either the third or seventh of a given chord, then moving to the next closest third or seventh of the following chord, you are playing guide tones.

    iii. Example: The bridge of *Perdido* by Juan Tizol is as follows:

        /D7/D7/G7/G7/

        /C7/C7/F7/F7/

        Start on the seventh of D7 (C) and move down to the third of G7 (B). From the third of G7 (B), move down to the seventh of C7 (Bb). From the seventh of C7 (Bb), move down to the third of F7 (A).

    iv. Distribute chord sheets to *Perdido* and have students identify the thirds (in green pencil) and sevenths (in red pencil) to each chord (beware of transpositions).

        1. Play as a group one chorus of thirds, followed by one chorus of sevenths.

        2. In pencil, "graph" a guide tone line by connecting each third or seven of a chord to the next closest third or seventh of the subsequent chord.

        3. Play as a group one chorus of guide tones starting on the seventh.

        4. Play as a group one chorus of guide tones starting on the third.

        5. Assessment: Have students prepare one of the major-keyed tunes from e.i. above by playing one chorus of melody

followed by one chorus of guide tones. This should be done from memory, though a chord sheet may be provided.

II.  Unit Two: Mixolydian Concepts

    a.  Suggested Materials

        i.  The Real Book: Volumes I, II, and III (C, B-flat, E-flat, and bass clef editions)

        ii.  Cookin' with the Miles David Quintet: *Blues by Five*

        iii.  Kind of Blue: *Freddie Freeloader*

        iv.  Takin' Off: *Watermelon Man*

        v.  Colored pencils

    b.  Mixolydian scales and arpeggios

        i.  Set an expectation to know all mixolydian scales (to the ninth) along with major-minor (dominant) seventh arpeggios (extra challenge: learn scales in thirds, too.).

        ii.  Review construction of major triad and teach dominant seventh chord. Visual aids may be used at first, but memorization is ultimately preferred.

        iii.  Practice daily on quarter notes and eighth notes using the circle of fourths/fifths.

        iv.  Have individual students experiment by freely moving around the mixolydian scale over a sustained dominant seventh chord (played on the piano by the director). Demonstrate this as simply as possible to avoid student inhibitions).

    c.  Reading and understanding major-minor seventh chord symbols

        i.  Teach the chord symbol used to represent a dominant seventh chord.

            1.  Example: C7

            2.  Assessment: Students will write and/or play the appropriate scale and/or arpeggio for a given chord symbol.

    d.  Ear training

        i.  Review major and perfect intervals.

        ii.  Introduce minor seventh.

      1. Drill in sets of five and ten.

      2. Practice on instruments (beware of transpositions).  Randomly select a starting pitch and an interval and have students play back.

      3. Assessment: Students will identify and/or play sets of given melodic or harmonic intervals including all major and perfect intervals and the minor seventh.

e. Reading tunes with prominently dominant harmonies

    i. Teach the harmonies to the basic blues form:

        I7-I7-I7-I7

        IV7-IV7-I7-I7

        V7-IV7-I7-I7

    ii. As a group, play any or all of the following blues or blues-like tunes:

      1. *Blues by Five, Freddie Freeloader, Watermelon Man*

      2. Discuss common harmonic variations in the blues.

    iii. Embellishing the melody

      1. Have students play four-measure solo statements of the melody as the rhythm sections comps.

        a. They should experiment with the melody by altering rhythms, adding grace notes, displacing octaves, etc.

        b. Demonstrate this as simply as possible to avoid student inhibitions.

      2. Assessment: With live or recorded accompaniment, students will play and record an assigned four-measure section of one of the tunes from e.ii. above exactly as written, followed by a melodically embellished version of the same four-measure section.  Students will verbally self-evaluate their performance by listening back and recalling what they were thinking as they played it.

f. Aural imitation/call and response

    i. Rhythm and melody together

    ii.  In a given mixolydian key, play short, easy four and eight-beat melodic cells, using any scale degrees, but especially emphasizing movement between one and seven (beware of transpositions).

    iii.  Examples: 1-2-1; 1-7-1; 1-2-3-2-1-7-1; 1-3-1-7-1, etc.

1. Students will repeat as a group and individually.
2. Monitor for mistakes and address accordingly.
3. Continue process by having individual students be the model.
4. Call and response: Follow the above process, but answers to the model will now be unique, not the same.

g.  Melodic devices in mixolydian keys

    i.  Dominant seventh pattern

1. Teach students the following pattern, built on an ascending dominant seventh arpeggio, followed by its corresponding descending scale. Slowly teach by ear, using the visual aid if necessary (beware of transpositions).

    a.  C7: 

    b.  Practice as a group in all mixolydian keys, either at random or by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

2. Assessment: Students will play the above pattern from memory in all mixolydian keys by using the circle of fourths/fifths.
3. Extra challenge

    a.  Have students play the same type of pattern, now starting on the third, fifth, and seventh of the dominant chord. The top notes in each arpeggio are extensions of the dominant chord.

    b.  C7: , etc.

    ii.  Stock pattern

1. Teach students the following dominant seventh lick. Slowly teach by ear, emphasizing where leaps and stepwise motions

occur, using the visual aid of necessary (beware of transpositions). Note the use of the major seventh as a passing tone.

   a. C7:

b. Practice as a group in all mixolydian keys, either at random or by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

2. Assessment: Students will play the above pattern from memory in all mixolydian keys by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

3. Assessment: Have students prepare one of the abovementioned blues tunes by playing one chorus of the melody followed by one chorus of a melodic device transposed appropriately to fit each chord. This should be done from memory, though a chord sheet may be provided for reference.

h. Guide tones: Distribute chord sheets to *Watermelon Man* and have students identify in pencil the thirds (in green) and sevenths (in red) to each chord (beware of transpositions).

    i. Play as a group one chorus of thirds, followed by one chorus of sevenths.

    ii. In pencil, "graph" a guide tone line by connecting each third or seven of a chord to the next closest third or seventh of the subsequent chord.

    iii. Play as a group one chorus of guide tones starting on the seventh.

    iv. Play as a group one chorus of guide tones starting on the third.

    v. Assessment: Have students prepare one of the abovementioned blues tunes by playing one chorus of melody followed by one chorus of guide tones. This should be done from memory, though a chord sheet may be provided.

i. Final improvisation assessment: Students will prepare one of the abovementioned blues tunes by mapping out a logical set of guide tones on a chord sheet. Students will also record one chorus of the melody of said tune followed by one chorus of improvisation. Students may draw from melody,

patterns, quotes, and guide tones to create their improvisation. Students will verbally self-evaluate their performance by listening back and recalling what they were thinking as they played it.

III. Unit Three: Dorian Minor Concepts
   a. Suggested Materials
      i. The Real Book: Volumes I and III (C, B-flat, E-flat, and bass clef editions)
      ii. Kind of Blue: *So What*
      iii. Milestones: *Milestones*
   b. Dorian scales and arpeggios
      i. Set an expectation to know all Dorian scales (to the ninth) along with minor seventh arpeggios (extra challenge: learn scales in thirds, too).
         1. Teach construction of minor triad and minor seventh chord.
         2. Visual aids may be used at first, but memorization is ultimately preferred.
      ii. Practice daily on quarter notes and eighth notes using the circle of fourths/fifths.
      iii. Have individual students experiment by freely moving around the Dorian scale over a sustained minor seventh chord (played on piano by the director). Demonstrate this as simply as possible to avoid student inhibitions.
   c. Reading and understanding minor seventh chord symbols: Teach the chord symbols used to represent a minor seventh chord.
      i. Examples: C-, C-7
      ii. Assessment: Students will write and/or play the appropriate scale and/or arpeggio for a given chord symbol.
   d. Ear training
      i. Review all prior intervals.
      ii. Introduce remaining minor intervals.
         1. m2, m3, m6
         2. Drill in sets of five and ten.

3. Practice on instruments
    a. Randomly select a starting pitch and an interval and have students play back.
    b. Beware of transpositions.
4. Assessment: Students will identify and/or play sets of given melodic or harmonic intervals including all major, perfect, and minor intervals.

e. Reading minor modal tunes
    i. As a group, play either or both of the following modal tunes:
    *Milestones, So What*
    ii. Embellishing the melody
        1. Have students play four-measure solo statements of the melody as the rhythm sections comps.
            a. They should experiment with the melody by altering rhythms, adding grace notes, displacing octaves, etc.
            b. Demonstrate this as simply as possible to avoid student inhibitions.
        2. Assessment: With live or recorded accompaniment, students will play and record an assigned four-measure section of one of the tunes in e.i. above exactly as written, followed by a melodically embellished version of the same four-measure section. Students will verbally self-evaluate their performance by listening back and recalling what they were thinking as they played it.

f. Aural imitation/call and response. Rhythm and melody together: In a given Dorian key, play short, easy four and eight-beat melodic cells, using any scale degrees, but especially emphasizing the third and seventh (beware of transpositions).
    i. Examples: 1-2-1; 1-7-1; 1-2-3-2-1-7-1; 1-3-1-7-1, etc.
    ii. Students will repeat as a group and individually.
    iii. Monitor for mistakes and address accordingly.

  iv. Continue process by having individual students be the model.

  v. Call and response: Follow the above process, but answers to the model will now be unique, not the same.

 g. Melodic devices in mixolydian keys

  i. Minor seventh pattern

   1. Teach students the following pattern, built on an ascending minor seventh arpeggio, followed by its corresponding descending scale. Slowly teach by ear, using the visual aid if necessary (beware of transpositions).

    a. C-7:

    b. Practice as a group in all Dorian keys, either at random or by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

   2. Assessment: Students will play the above pattern from memory in all Dorian keys by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

   3. Extra challenge:

    a. Have students play the same type of pattern, now starting on the third, fifth, and seventh of the minor chord. The top notes in each arpeggio are extensions of the minor chord.

    b. C-7:             , etc.

  ii. Quote

   1. Teach students the following Dorian minor quote from *Scarborough Fair*. Slowly teach by ear, emphasizing where leaps and stepwise motions occur, using the visual aid of necessary (beware of transpositions).

    a. C-7:

    b. Practice as a group in all Dorian keys, either at random or by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

2. Assessment: Students will play the above pattern from memory in all Dorian minor keys by using the circle of fourths/fifths.

3. Extra challenge: Have students find other tunes in Dorian minor to quote from and play in all Dorian minor keys.

h. Final improvisation assessment: Students will prepare one of the abovementioned modal tunes by recording one chorus of the melody followed by one chorus of improvisation. They may draw from melody, patterns, quotes, and guide tones to create their improvisation. Students will verbally self-evaluate their performance by listening back and recalling what they were thinking as they played it.

IV. Unit Five: Major Concepts Part II: The Major ii7-V7-(I)

a. Suggested materials

i. The Real Book: Volumes I and II (C, B-flat, E-flat, and bass clef editions)

ii. The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Fats Navarro and Tadd Dameron: *Lady Bird*

iii. The Italian Sessions—Chet Baker: *Pent-Up House*

iv. Never No Lament: The Blanton-Webster Band: *Perdido*

v. Nights of Ballads and Blues: *Satin Doll*

b. Teaching the major ii7-V7-(I) chord progression

i. Review the Ionian (I), Dorian (ii), and Mixolydian (V7) modes

1. Diagram a diatonic scale starting on C.

2. Illustrate that all modes beginning on any degree of a diatonic scale share the same key signature.

a. Play the Ionian, Dorian, and Mixolydian modes based on C.

b. Have students play these scales slowly (beware of transpositions).

ii. Teach students what to look for when identifying ii7-V7 and ii7-V7-I chord progressions in a tune.

1. -7 for minor, 7 for mixolydian (dominant), and some version of a major chord symbol for I.
2. Explain that the progression doesn't always resolve to I and sometimes ends on V7.
3. Assessment: Distribute chord sheets to *Pent-Up House* by Sonny Rollins and have students identify in pencil any ii7-V7 or ii7-V7-I progressions that they see.
    a. Example: The first four measures outline a ii7-V7-I progression in G major: /A-7/D7/G M7/(G M7)/
    b. Beware of transpositions.
4. Extra challenge: This exercise can be done with any of the major-keyed tunes in this outline as well as others in which the ii7-V7 and ii7-V7-I progressions are prevalent.

iii. Playing over the major ii7-V7 and ii7-V7-I progressions
1. Knowing that the chords in these progressions all share the same notes, the aforementioned patterns and quotes can now be easily applied here as well.

   a. C M7: 

   b. C M7: 

2. Assessment: Have students prepare one of the abovementioned major-keyed tunes by playing one chorus of the melody followed by one chorus of a pattern or quote transposed appropriately to fit each ii7-V7 or ii7-V7-I progression. This should be done from memory, though a chord sheet may be provided for reference.

V. Unit Six: Other Scales
   a. The blues scale and its use: The blues scale, comprising scale degrees one, flat three, four, sharp four (flat five), five, and flat seven, can be used ad nauseum

in any blues tune, but should only be used for variety.  It can also be used sparingly over minor seventh chords.

   b.  The minor pentatonic scale and its use: The minor pentatonic scale is essentially the same as the blues scale without sharp four (flat five) and can be used in the blues and over minor seventh chords.

   c.  The dominant bebop scale and its use: The dominant bebop scale has both the major seventh and the minor seventh and is typically used in a descending passing fashion over dominant (major-minor) seventh chords.

*Recommendations*

   While this study provided important insight to the needs and opinions of Indiana high school jazz band directors who valued teaching improvisation as part of their rehearsal, further research or replication in multi-state regions or on the national level may be warranted to learn about this subject on a larger scale.  Regarding survey items that dealt with the amount of jazz ensemble rehearsal time allotted to teaching improvisation, subjects were asked to report this information in minutes.  As rehearsal periods vary in length, it would be more accurate to ask subjects what percentage of rehearsal time is spent on the task in future versions of this study.

   Even one unit of study from the above curricular outline will provide students with the creative act of improvising in a jazz context; therefore, band directors should not feel obligated to complete the entire curriculum in one specified period of time (semester, trimester, academic year, etc.).

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INSTRUMENTAL JAZZ IMPROVISATION INSTRUCTION QUESTIONNAIRE
(FOR HIGH SCHOOL BAND DIRECTORS)
PILOT AND MAIN STUDY

Please click on the appropriate response.

**✱1. Is jazz ensemble a curricular or extracurricular activity at your school?**

◯ Curricular

◯ Extracurricular

**✱2. How often do you have jazz ensemble rehearsal?**

◯ 1 day a week

◯ 2 days a week

◯ 3 days a week

◯ 4 days a week

◯ 5 or more days a week

**✱3. Typically, how long are your jazz ensemble rehearsals?**

◯ 30-45 minutes

◯ 46-60 minutes

◯ 61-75 minutes

◯ 76 or more minutes

**✱4. How long have you been teaching an instrumental jazz ensemble?**

◯ 1-5 years

◯ 6-11 years

◯ 12-17 years

◯ 18 or more years

**✱5. Do you feel that jazz improvisation should be taught by the director in the jazz ensemble?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**✱6. Do you feel that jazz improvisation should be taught only in small settings such as combos, theory classes, or private/group lessons, not in large jazz ensemble?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**✱7. Do you teach improvisation as part of jazz ensemble rehearsal on a regular basis?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**✱8. Do you currently employ a published jazz improvisation method, in whole or in part, in jazz ensemble rehearsal?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**✱9. Do you feel that a formal beginning jazz improvisation curriculum designed to supplement your existing rehearsal format would be helpful?**

◯ Yes

◯ No

**✱10. How many of your current jazz ensemble students are already proficient improvisers?**

◯ 0

◯ 1

◯ 2

◯ 3

◯ 4 or more

If you do not teach improvisation as part of jazz ensemble rehearsal on a regular basis, please proceed to the next page

Please click on the appropriate response(s).

### 11. How much time do you currently allot for teaching improvisation during jazz ensemble rehearsal?

◯ 5-10 minutes

◯ 11-16 minutes

◯ 17 or more minutes

### 12. How much instruction time do you feel is appropriate to dedicate to improvisation during jazz ensemble rehearsal?

◯ 5-10 minutes

◯ 11-16 minutes

◯ 17 or more minutes

### 13. What types of improvisation topics/exercises do you currently address in your instruction? Choose all that apply.

☐ Melodic embellishments

☐ Melodic devices (quotes, stock patterns, etc.)

☐ Aural imitation

☐ Chord-scale relationships

☐ Guide tones

☐ Digital Patterns

☐ Transcribing

Other (please specify)

[                                        ]

Please click on the appropriate response.

**\*14. Using the following choices, rate your own jazz ensemble playing experience.**

|  | no experience | some experience | moderate experience | much experience | extensive/professional experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have _____. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**\*15. Using the following choices, rate your own jazz improvisation ability.**

|  | no ability | minimal ability | adequate ability | very good ability | expert ability |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have _____. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**\*16. Using the following choices, rate your confidence in teaching jazz improvisation.**

|  | no confidence | slight confidence | moderate confidence | a lot of confidence | extreme confidence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I have _____. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**17. For the following scenario, choose the response that most represents your instruction.**

**When rehearsing/performing jazz ensemble arrangements that contain sample or transcribed solos, _____.**

○ students play the same solo, as written, each time

○ I encourage students to embellish said solos

○ I suggest that students use the solo as a guide, but eventually improvise their own solos

○ I suggest that students always improvise their own solos

Please answer the following questions in your own words in the space provided.

**\*18. In your personal playing experience, what is most difficult about learning to improvise?**

**\*19. In your students' experience, what is most difficult about learning how to improvise? You may generalize your response.**

**\*20. In your experience, what is most difficult about teaching improvisation?**

**\*21. When considering what topics/exercises to include in a curriculum for beginning jazz improvisers in an ensemble setting, rate the importance of the following items on a scale from 1-5 (1 = "not important," 5 = "extremely important").**

|  | 1. Not important | 2. Somewhat important | 3. Moderately important | 4. Very important | 5. Extremely important |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Melodic embellishments | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Melodic devices (quotes, stock patterns, etc.) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Aural imitation | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Chord-scale relationships | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Guide tones | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Digital patterns | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Transcribing | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**22. Thank you for completing the pilot version of this questionnaire; your input is very valuable to my research and jazz education research as a whole. Please take a moment to make additional comments and/or suggestions so that I may refine this questionnaire for broader distribution.**

COVER LETTER
PILOT

April 2012

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is John Porter and I am a graduate student completing my master's degree in music education at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.  As part of my degree requirements, I am creating a practicum in beginning jazz improvisation that will supplement high school jazz ensemble rehearsals.

Because I value your opinion, you have been selected to participate in a pilot study that will assist the development of the measure I will use in my full study.  Please take 15 minutes to complete the survey below.  If you are not currently teaching high school jazz ensemble, but have in the past, please make your responses reflect your most recent high school teaching experience.  Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Here is a link to the survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx


Sincerely,

John Christopher Porter

COVER LETTER
MAIN STUDY

XX/XX/2012

Dear Sir or Madam:

My name is John Porter and I am a graduate student completing my master's degree in music education at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music.  As part of my degree requirements, I am creating a practicum in beginning jazz improvisation that will supplement high school jazz ensemble rehearsals.

Because I value your opinion, you have been selected to participate in a study that will assist the development of my practicum.  I have obtained your contact information from the *Indiana Directory of Music Teachers*.  Please take 15 minutes to complete the survey below.  Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Here is a link to the survey:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx


Sincerely,

John Christopher Porter

*Appendix D*

SUGGESTED REPERTORY AND DISCOGRAPHY

1. *Blues by Five* (William "Red" Garland)

   Miles Davis: Cookin' with the Miles Davis Quintet (Prestige Records #61046)

2. *Freddie Freeloader* (Miles Davis)

   Miles Davis: Kind of Blue (Columbia #90887)

3. *Lady Bird* (Tadd Dameron)

   Fats Navaro and Tadd Dameron: The Complete Blue Note and Capitol Recordings of Fats Navarro and Tadd Dameron (Blue Note #33373)

4. *Milestones* (Miles Davis)

   Miles Davis: Milestones (Columbia #CK-40837)

5. *Pent-Up House* (Sonny Rollins)

   Chet Baker: The Italian Sessions (RCA Victor #09026685902)

6. *Perdido* (Juan Tizol)

   Duke Ellington: Never no Lament: The Blanton-Webster Band (Bluebird RCA/Bluebird #82876508572)

7. *Satin Doll* (Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington and Billy Strayhorn)

   McCoy Tyner: Nights of Ballads and Blues (Impulse!/GRP #221)

8. *So What* (Miles Davis)

   Miles Davis: Kind of Blue (Columbia #90887)

9. *Watermelon Man* (Herbie Hancock)

   Herbie Hancock: Takin' Off (Blue Note #TOCJ-9053)

**All compositions are available in *The Real Book Volumes I-III* published by Hal Leonard.**