Jazz Improvisation Lesson Plan – Hard Bop
Bailey Petersma

Materials
Recording of tune: Moanin’ (Art Blakey version)
Changes for all instruments (learn head by rote)
Recording of changes

Goals
2. Students will be able to play head of tune
3. Students will be able to play roots of the chord changes with accompaniment
4. Students will be able to improvise by embellishing and varying the head of the tune
9. Students will be able to play patterns based on the chord changes with accompaniment
10. Students will be able to create a guide tone line from the chord changes in the tune
11. Students will be able to improvise 4-bar phrases

Procedure
1. Provide brief overview of hard bop style:
   - Developed from bebop, incorporates elements of gospel, soul, R&B
   - Art Blakey = prominent example of hard bop, influential in making the style popular
2. Play excerpt of recording – at least through the head and first solo to demonstrate style
3. Model the head on piano one time through. Give ensemble the concert key of the tune, and then model just the first two measures of the head; ask students to play back.
   - Listen for correct articulation and note lengths in addition to correct pitches, and repeat as necessary.
4. Continue on in “chunking” method to teach the rest of the head; teach the next couple of measures, and then group to form a longer phrase.
5. Once students are comfortable playing the head in its entirety, play along with changes.
6. Using this same recording (as well as the sheet of changes), instruct ensemble to play roots of the chords.
7. Now that students have the basic chord changes in their ears, ask them to collectively play through the head twice, this time altering the melody any way they choose.
8. Returning to the chord changes, have students play (1-2-3-1) on each chord, altering as necessary for instances with two chords per bar. (If time permits, choose another pattern: 1-2, 1-3-5-1, etc.)
9. To help solidify chord changes, ask students to construct a guide tone line beginning on the 3rd of the first chord. Play through slowly and without recording at first. Repeat, this time beginning on the 7th. (If time permits, add recording.)
10. Have each student play 4 bars of improvisation along with the recording*, reminding them of their improvisation options:
   - Alter head of tune
   - Use patterns derived from chord changes (adding “filler notes”)
   - Focus on 3rd s and 7th s from guide tone line – can provide assistance for note choices
* Create a simple form (and tag) for students to follow:
   Ex: head 2x – solos over 2 choruses of changes – head 2x – more solos – head – tag