I. Vocal Improvisation
12-Bar Blues Form in the Key of C

- Standard harmony using only root, third, fifth, and seventh scale degrees of each of the three chords
- Choir sings while instructor performs call & response (2-4 bars length) with one student

Example 1

The chords can also be sung using numbers (scale degrees) for a harmonic/theoretical context and emphasis.
Example 1 can be slightly modified to incorporate a more sophisticated (and fun) jazz rhythm that is quite common. This variation can be sung with either solfege syllables or using scat syllables as shown below.

**Example 2**

Feel free to explore any combination of syllables you like to develop your own vocabulary when it comes to articulating jazz rhythms (especially those rhythms with heavy syncopation).

Try altering the rhythm to increase the amount of syncopation.

**Example 3**

**Example 4**
Alter the rhythms in adjacent measures to increase rhythmic interest and keep students from getting bored singing the same rhythms for 12 measures.

II. Rootless or “Jazzy” re-voiced chord constructions for 12-bar Blues

- The tonic of each chord will never be used but rather replaced with the ninth (2\(^{nd}\)) scale degree
- The fifth scale degree of each chord is replaced with the 13\(^{th}\) (6\(^{th}\)) scale degree

Example 5

III. What to sing for 12-Bar Blues

- There are two scales that work very well with the 12-bar blues form of improvisation
- Minor Pentatonic Scale and the Blues Scale
- The notes in these scales will function well on each of the three chords in the blues form

Example 6 (C minor pentatonic scale)

Example 7 (C Blues Scale)
IV. Listen, listen and imitate
• Jazz is a language and an aural tradition
• Have your students listen to great solo jazz artists, vocal groups, and bands
• Ask them to imitate what they hear by singing along. Have students reproduce an instrumental improvised solo note for note paying careful attention to tone, phrasing, articulation, rhythmic feel, ornamentation, and use of vibrato

V. Vocal Jazz Resources
A. ScatAbility. An app created by vocal jazz educator Michele Weir and available for purchase on iphone/ipad devices.
B. The Vocal Jazz Ensemble by Paris Rutherford published by Hal Leonard
C. The Jazz Singer’s Handbook by Michele Weir published by Alfred Publishing
E. Jazz Singing by Diana Spradling published by Sound Music Publications
ISBN 978-0-9802104-0-8
G. Vocal Improvisation by Michele Weir published by Advance Music ISBN 89221-062-4

Vocal Fusion Repertoire
You’re Nobody ’Til Somebody Loves You (SSATB). Arr. Tim Brent, manuscript.
Spain (SATB). Arr. Todd Buffa, University of Northern Colorado Jazz Press.
Move (SATB). Arr. Tim Brent, manuscript.
Uptown Funk (SSATB). Arr. Tim Brent, manuscript.

About the Presenters
Dr. Tim Brent is the director of Contemporary Vocal Studies program at Miami Dade College Kendall campus. Tim has won 9 DownBeat Magazine awards as an educator, pianist, arranger and performer. He received his BM in Music Education from Western Michigan University and his MM and DMA degrees from the University of Miami in jazz performance and pedagogy. Tim has vocal arrangements published by the University of Northern Colorado Jazz Press, Sound Music Publications, and Walton Music. For more information, visit my website: www.timbrent.com, or email me: tbrent@mdc.edu.

Dr. Brent founded Miami Dade College’s premier vocal jazz ensemble, Vocal Fusion, in 2008. The ensemble is composed of freshmen and sophomores at Miami Dade College, a two-year college in the center of the city. Vocal Fusion received high honors at the Western Michigan University Vocal Jazz Invitational Festival in 2014, and was invited to perform for the Jazz Educators Network annual conference in 2015. The ensemble was also invited to be one of the featured groups to perform at the Association for Popular Music Education Conference in 2015.

Vocal Fusion 2015-2016
Ashley Ditinyak, soprano
Ivhanna Gil, soprano
Diana Motta, soprano
Lina Rodriguez, soprano
Valeria Vargas, soprano
Yami Ayala, alto
Jenna Gunter, alto
Marina Pinagel, alto

Arthur Moschen, tenor
Christian Rodriguez, bass
Julian Rodriguez, bass
Cameron Bainger, piano
Ben Whitman, bass
Jeremy Whitman, drums