

Collaborative Piano Skills Within Class Piano Curricula:  
an Examination of Arizona Collegiate Institutions and

Selected Group Piano Textbooks

by

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A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved April 2022 by the  
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May 2022

## ABSTRACT

Collaborative piano skills are not only important for pianists. Many of the skills that collaborative pianists use regularly are the same skills used by music educators, music therapists, and vocal and instrumental professionals. If these skills were included in the class piano curriculum of music majors for whom piano is not their primary instrument, students might be better prepared for essential tasks they will accomplish in their future careers.

This study seeks to discover the extent to which collaborative piano skills such as sight-reading, collaboration with a singer or instrumentalist, and score reduction are incorporated into the class piano courses offered in Arizona. A survey was sent in 2021 to all community college and university instructors of class piano in Arizona, asking them about the role, frequency, and assessment methods of collaborative piano skills in their courses. Public information was also gathered from institutional websites regarding course curriculum. To collect more detailed information regarding the pedagogical practices of Arizona class piano educators, I interviewed four professors who develop and implement class piano curricula in Arizona.

The results of this study suggest that Arizona class piano educators desire to incorporate more collaborative piano skills in their courses. The goal of this research is to bring awareness to the discrepancy in class piano curriculum standards with regards to collaborative piano skills across Arizona and spur pedagogical dialogue among educators regarding ways to improve programs. These enhancements will ultimately serve to give each student the best possible preparation for a career in music.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Andrew Campbell, whose sixteen years of mentorship, guidance, and encouragement have been instrumental in making me the collaborative pianist and educator I am today. Your confidence in me for almost two decades has allowed me to develop confidence in myself.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my doctoral committee members for their time and investment in me over the past four years. Professor Russell Ryan, Dr. Amy Holbrook, and Dr. Amanda DeMaris: I have learned so much from each of you. Thank you for caring so deeply about your students.

Thank you to my friends, family, and church family, especially Raynham and Cheri, for your support, prayers, and pep-talks. I could not have completed this degree without you.

To my parents, who have been my biggest cheerleaders from day one: thank you. For your love, your time, your listening, your advice, and your unwavering belief that I could do whatever I set my mind to, even when I didn't believe it yet myself.

And finally, to Jon, who has shown me what it means to love unconditionally: thank you for being my partner on this journey and the wind beneath my wings.

*Soli Deo gloria*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Personal Narrative

After teaching class piano for a few years at the local community college, I came to realize how critical this course was for my music major students whose primary instrument was not the piano.<sup>1</sup> I reflected on many of the skills that I used on a regular basis as a collaborative pianist, and thought how helpful they would be to my students in their future music careers. Even though very few of these skills were listed as official course competencies, I began incorporating course segments on these topics so that my students would be better equipped to enter the professional music world. The textbooks we used either provided few exercises or none at all in these skills, so I searched for supplements and activities that would enrich my students' experience. I decided to compare my own curricula to those of other Arizona universities and community colleges in a quest for more ideas. The results surprised me: the collaborative piano skills that I thought necessary for music majors to acquire were largely missing from some of these programs. This discovery led to more questions and exploration that served as the origin of this research project.

#### Background

For over fifty years researchers and pedagogues have discussed which functional piano skills should be included in the collegiate class piano curriculum. The National

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this paper the term “performer” will refer to non-pianists (i.e. singers, violinists, flutists, etc.) who need functional piano skills. The term “pianist” will always refer to musicians whose primary instrument is the piano.

Association of Schools of Music (NASM) requires students receiving a baccalaureate degree in music or a teaching degree with certification to achieve “keyboard competency,” but offers no further guidance on what skills should be included in this competency.<sup>2</sup> It is no surprise then that every music program interprets keyboard proficiency differently. Such an ambiguous directive places the onus on individual institutions to define competency and decide which keyboard skills are most important for their students.

Multiple studies exist exploring standard keyboard competencies for undergraduate music majors at colleges and universities across the United States. In 1984, Carleen Ann Graff conducted a survey of music instructors in northern New England to discover which functional keyboard skills instructors thought were most essential for undergraduate music education majors.<sup>3</sup> This study revealed that instructors thought the following skills were the “most necessary”: sight-reading,<sup>4</sup> accompaniment, transposition, harmonization, and playing chord progressions. Of moderate importance for music education students were score reading, improvisation, playing by ear, playing modulations, playing patriotic songs, pianistic technique, and ensemble playing.

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<sup>2</sup> “Handbook 2021-22,” Standards and Guidelines, National Association of Schools of Music, 101, accessed February 2, 2022, <https://nasm.arts-accredit.org/accreditation/standards-guidelines/handbook/>.

<sup>3</sup> Carleen Ann Graff, “Functional Piano Skills: A Manual for Undergraduate Non-keyboard Music Education Majors at Plymouth State College” (DA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> In this document, I will use sight-reading as the spelling for this concept. Publishers and authors use various spellings of this concept, and when referencing their works, I will use the spelling they prefer.

Steven Ray McDonald's 1989 study also focused on functional piano skills taught to undergraduate piano majors, but on a national scale.<sup>5</sup> McDonald sent a survey to the piano department chairs at 449 collegiate institutions asking them about functional piano skills instructional methods and courses. The study found that in group piano classes for piano majors the primary skills addressed were sight-reading, accompanying, transposition, ear training, harmonization, and playing chord progressions. Other skills taught but given secondary emphasis were score reading, improvisation, modulation, and playing ensemble repertoire.

In 2000, Linda Christensen surveyed 472 band, orchestra, choral, and general music educators from across the United States to determine which functional piano skills primary and secondary teachers use most frequently.<sup>6</sup> The study found that school music teachers deemed score reading, accompanying, harmonization, and sight-reading the four most important functional piano skills for their profession. These results are echoed in Margaret Mary Young's 2010 study that surveyed performing musicians, private music teachers, and music faculty regarding their regular use of functional piano skills.<sup>7</sup> The research revealed that most of these musicians routinely transpose melodies and sight-

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<sup>5</sup> Steven Ray McDonald, "A Survey of the Curricular Content of Functional Keyboard Skills Classes Designed for Undergraduate Piano Majors" (PhD diss., The University of Oklahoma, 1989).

<sup>6</sup> Linda Christensen, "A Survey of the Importance of Functional Piano Skills as Reported by Band, Choral, Orchestra, and General Music Teachers" (PhD diss., University of Oklahoma, 2000), xi.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Mary Young, "The Use of Functional Piano Skills by Selected Professional Musicians and Its Implications for Group Piano Curricula" (DMA diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2010), vi-vii.

read accompaniments. Teachers frequently played from open scores and both performers and educators transposed accompaniments.

Similarly, in 2005, Jamila L. McWhirter asked secondary choral instructors about their use of functional piano skills and what skills they thought choral student interns should possess.<sup>8</sup> The study showed that these educators advocated for the following piano competencies for choral music education majors: “playing a single vocal part at sight, playing warm-ups, playing open score, playing simple accompaniments, and singing one part while playing others.”<sup>9</sup>

The studies above reveal four common functional piano skills recommended for secondary piano study by professional musicians and music educators: sight-reading, score reading, transposition, and playing accompaniments. Interestingly, all four of these skills are employed regularly by collaborative pianists. Yet while these studies approach undergraduate keyboard competency from many different perspectives, none of them comes from the perspective of a collaborative pianist.

Why might it be valuable to look at keyboard competency from a collaborative pianist’s point of view? First, collaborative pianists are functional pianists; they use the piano as the primary tool to complete their job. Next, there is a great deal of overlap between the skills necessary to be a successful collaborative pianist and the mainstream functional piano skills taught to undergraduate music majors. Finally, many collaborative

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<sup>8</sup> Jamila L. McWhirter, “A Survey of Secondary Choral Educators Regarding Piano Skills Utilized in the Classroom and Piano Skill Expectations of Student Teaching Interns” (PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> McWhirter, 76.

piano skills are the same functional piano skills that music majors will use in their careers as music educators, ensemble directors, and music therapists.

In a 2006 dissertation entitled “A Resource Manual for the Collaborative Pianist: Twenty Class Syllabi for Teaching Collaborative Piano Skills and an Annotated Bibliography,” Dian Baker enumerates sixteen skills necessary to collaborative pianists.<sup>10</sup>

The sixteen skills or competencies are:

1. Sightreading and score reading
2. Transposition and clef reading
3. Continuo and figured bass realization
4. Instrumental collaboration and ensemble/rehearsal techniques
5. Orchestral reduction and transcription
6. Recital program-building
7. Career issues, auditions, competitions
8. Style, interpretation, and performance practice
9. Effective piano preparation and practice
10. Functional pianistic technique
11. Cultural, historical, and aesthetic aspects
12. Song translation, lyric diction, International Phonetic Alphabet
13. Vocal collaboration
14. Educational materials and research
15. Collaborative listening and the psychology of collaboration

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<sup>10</sup> Dian Baker, “A Resource Manual for the Collaborative Pianist: Twenty Class Syllabi for Teaching Collaborative Piano Skills and an Annotated Bibliography” (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2006), 3-4.

## 16. Repertoire development and maintenance

Certainly not all of these skills would be useful to students pursuing a broad range of musical professions, but some of these skills do have more universal applicability. Sight-reading, score reading, transposition, clef reading, instrumental collaboration, and vocal collaboration are skills listed in many of the previously mentioned studies as commonly taught or desired among future music educators and performers.

Baker also lists one form of score reduction—orchestral reduction—which involves taking music that was written to be played by an orchestra and reformatting it to be played on a piano. While this is not a skill that most music educators, music therapists, and non-piano performers will use frequently, there is another type of reduction that collaborative pianists employ on a regular basis, often in sight-reading situations: taking a complex piece of music that was written to be played on the piano and simplifying it to suit one’s technical ability. Score reduction is a skill that can be used by musicians in many occupations. Despite its prevalence and practicality, however, it is “rarely included in collegiate piano training.”<sup>11</sup>

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent collaborative piano skills are found in Arizona collegiate class piano curricula and to what extent these skills are found in contemporary collegiate class piano textbooks. The following is a list of questions that this study seeks to address:

1. How are collaborative piano skills similar to and/or different from the existing functional keyboard skills taught in collegiate class piano courses?

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<sup>11</sup> Young, 119.

2. Should collaborative piano skills be incorporated into the collegiate class piano curricula? If so, which skills and when in the course sequence?
3. Which collaborative skills do the mainstream collegiate class piano textbooks incorporate and when in the course sequence?
4. Which of these textbooks provides the most comprehensive selection of activities in collaborative piano skills?
5. Which collaborative piano skills do Arizona collegiate class piano instructors incorporate in their curricula? To what extent are these techniques practiced and when in the course sequence?
6. How can Arizona collegiate class piano curricula be improved to include more collaborative piano skills useful to a broad range of musicians?

This study is comprised of three parts: the first is a review of collegiate class piano textbooks currently in use to explore the incorporation of collaborative piano skills (Chapter 2). The second part is a survey of collegiate class piano instructors in Arizona to discover the breadth of collaborative piano skills included in their curriculum as well as their opinions on these competencies (Chapter 3). The third part contains interviews with four Arizona class piano educators regarding the scope of collaborative piano skills in their course sequence (Chapter 4). The last chapter of the paper, Chapter 5, provides summaries and conclusions based on all three sections of the study and offers recommendations for teaching collaborative piano skills.



## Definitions

Functional Piano Skills: fundamental skills that allow one to use the keyboard as a tool or aid in educational or professional musical pursuits. Not an exhaustive list, skills in this category include the following: sight-reading, harmonization, score reading, technical facility in playing scales, arpeggios, and cadences, playing by ear, duet and ensemble playing, accompaniment, improvisation, transposition, and playing chord progressions.

Collaborative Piano Skills: skills used by pianists who play with singers or instrumentalists. Not a comprehensive list, skills in this category are as follows: sight-reading, score reading, transposition, instrumental collaboration (also known as instrumental accompanying), vocal collaboration (also known as vocal coaching), and score reduction. Instrumental and vocal collaboration require skills such as listening and musically responding, watching for physical cues like breathing or bow changes, and an awareness of how to match entrances with one's collaborator, (e.g., accounting for reed delays or aligning a chord with a singer's vowel rather than the initial consonant).

Vocal Collaboration: a situation in which one pianist plays with one singer

Instrumental Collaboration: a situation in which one pianist plays with one instrumentalist (non-pianist).

Ensemble Playing: a broad term describing all situations in which one pianist plays with one or more musicians. The most common examples are piano duets, larger piano ensembles, choral groups, and orchestras.

## CHAPTER 2

### CLASS PIANO TEXTBOOK REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter will explore current collegiate class piano textbooks in order to discover which collaborative piano skills are incorporated and the breadth and depth of their incorporation. Books were chosen based on their appearance in other studies concerning functional piano skills and collegiate group piano courses: Larsen,<sup>12</sup> Williams,<sup>13</sup> and Young.<sup>14</sup> Textbooks were also selected by searching university websites for schools across the United States to find currently offered piano classes and their required textbooks. The following textbooks will be analyzed:

1. *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1 and Book 2* by E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, 2<sup>nd</sup> Editions (2008).
2. *Alfred's Piano 101, Book 1 and Book 2* by E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, 1<sup>st</sup> Editions (1999).
3. *Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults, Book One* by James Lyke, Tony Caramia, Geoffrey Haydon, and Ronald Chioldi, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition (2019).

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<sup>12</sup> Laurel Larsen, "The Use of Keyboard Improvisation to Reconcile Variations in Keyboard Approaches Between Music Theory and Class Piano Curricula" (DMA diss., University of South Carolina, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Marian Kay Williams, "An Alternative Class Piano Approach Based on Selected Suzuki Principles" (PhD diss., Texas Tech University, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Margaret Mary Young, "The Use of Functional Piano Skills by Selected Professional Musicians and Its Implications for Group Piano Curricula" (DMA diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2010).

4. *Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults, Book Two* by James Lyke, Tony Caramia, Geoffrey Haydon, and Ronald Chioldi, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition (2010).
5. *Piano for the Developing Musician* by Martha Hilley and Lynn Freeman Olson, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (2006).
6. *Group Piano: Proficiency in Theory and Performance* by Karen Ann Krieger, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (2019).
7. *Contemporary Class Piano* by Elyse Mach, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (2016).
8. *Keyboard Strategies: Master Text I* by Melvin Stecher, Norman Horowitz, Claire Gordon, R. Fred Kern, and E. L. Lancaster, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (1980).
9. *Keyboard Strategies: Master Text II* by Melvin Stecher, Norman Horowitz, Claire Gordon, R. Fred Kern, and E. L. Lancaster, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (1984).
10. *Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators* by Josh Massicot, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (2012).

Each of the textbooks listed above will be examined for their inclusion of the following collaborative piano skills:

- A. Transposition<sup>15</sup>
- B. Clef Reading
- C. Sight-reading
- D. Score Reading
- E. Piano Duet and Ensemble Playing
- F. Vocal and Instrumental Collaboration

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<sup>15</sup> Transposition in this paper will refer to two skills: the ability to play music written for transposing instruments at concert pitch, and the ability to transpose a song or piece to a different key.

## G. Score Reduction

These skills were chosen based on the research of other collaborative pianists, notably Dian Baker, as well as my own experience as a collaborative pianist, and are the most commonly used functional skills across music disciplines.

### *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults*

*Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1* and *Book 2*, by E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, have been formatted to cover four semesters, or the first two years of class piano study for music majors whose primary instrument is not the piano. Both books are organized in twenty-six units, and Lancaster and Renfrow intend for each unit to correspond to one week in the semester: thirteen units for the first semester of study (or third in the case of *Book 2*) and thirteen units for the second semester (or fourth in the case of *Book 2*). The strength of *Book 1* is that it provides many opportunities for transposition. With the exception of solo repertoire, almost every exercise in this book has a corresponding transposition suggestion. Most of the suggestions for four- to eight-measure examples of music ask students only to transpose up or down a step (sometimes whole steps, sometimes half steps). Lancaster and Renfrow also ask students to transpose many technical exercises such as scales, chords, and harmonic progressions into all major keys (or minor keys).

*Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1* also includes a section dedicated to sight-reading within each unit, beginning with Unit 3. The material in these sections corresponds to the new elements and skills introduced in that unit. Each section begins with a few suggestions on how to tackle the sight-reading examples, recommending

actions like tapping one hand while speaking note names and then repeating this with the other hand. Offering sight-reading activities in each unit of the book gives students who faithfully practice a strong advantage in this skill area.

Lancaster and Renfrow also provide piano duet and piano ensemble activities. Within the first thirteen units there are two duet pieces and four four-part ensemble pieces. The second half of the textbook also offers six collaborative experiences with one duet piece and five four-part ensemble numbers. The CD that comes with the book is another great resource for duet-like activities: except for solo repertoire, there is a track to accompany almost every exercise.

*Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1* excels in providing a plethora of exercises in transposition and sight-reading. Like its prequel, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 2* also offers opportunities for transposition in every unit. Many of these exercises are for sight-reading or harmonization (as in *Book 1*) but *Book 2* also introduces transposing instruments (the B-flat clarinet and trumpet, the E-flat alto saxophone, and the French horn) and teaches students how to transpose music for these instruments to concert pitch. The first half of *Book 2* contains five instrumental scores with which students can explore various combinations of instruments, some two-part and some three-part ensembles. These ensembles also display different groups of transposing and non-transposing instruments in a sequential fashion. Transposing instruments are introduced as single-line excerpts, then paired with a non-transposing instrument, and finally combined with another transposing instrument (transposing to a different interval) and a non-transposing instrument. Rarely will a band or orchestra director—a position to which

many music education majors taking class piano aspire—need to play something of this difficulty on the piano. The exercise seems more intellectual than practical.

Units 14-26 of *Book 2* begin with three-part instrumental scores and move to four-part scores. At the end of each half of *Book 2* the authors incorporate a band score of seven or eight instrumental parts. These ensemble numbers involve the four transposing instruments listed above and begin with directions suggesting students play different combinations of two and three instruments all on the piano.

The many instrumental scores in *Book 2* are pedagogically appropriate occasions for students to practice their score-reading skills. Vocal scores are also introduced at the beginning of *Book 2* starting with two-part ensembles and gradually incorporating more voices each unit. By the end of the book, students are playing excerpts from choral scores by Brahms, Mozart, and Schubert written for a full ensemble of voice parts. Lancaster and Renfrow do an exceptional job of teaching students how to approach a choral score at the piano, often giving suggestions of which hand to use for the alto and tenor parts. They also offer similar ideas for playing the second violin and viola parts in the string quartets. Any educator striving to develop functional pianists will be pleased with the number of scores in this text: There are ten choral exercises and six instrumental scores in the first half of the book and eighteen choral and instrumental scores in the second half of the book, divided evenly between types.

*Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 2* also incorporates clef reading beginning in Unit 14, which corresponds to the fourth semester of class piano. In the first unit of the last semester of class, Lancaster and Renfrow introduce the alto clef and offer viola excerpts for practice. Subsequent units include one violin and viola score, one viola, cello

1, and cello 2 score, and four string quartets. Perhaps the authors of this text decided to focus on the alto clef to offer activities with the concept of clef reading.

In addition to choral and instrumental scores, *Book 2* also contains many duets and ensembles for the piano. Units 1-13 encompass four duets that are titled “Harmonization with Two-Hand Accompaniment.” These duets offer students the experience of creating accompaniments from chord symbols as well as playing with a melodic line. The first half of this text also includes three four-part ensembles and a band score with piano accompaniment. The first and only piano duet in the *Alfred’s Group Piano for Adults* series appears in the second half of *Book 2*, in Unit 16. Here both the “Primo” and “Secondo” parts require two hands and are of equal difficulty. The second half of the text includes three more harmonization duets, four more three- or four-part ensembles, and one more band score with piano accompaniment. Overall, this series provides students with ample opportunities to develop ensemble-playing skills.

Finally, this series presents fifteen vocal and instrumental duo pieces, and most of the repertoire used is of a suitable difficulty level for the average student in their third or fourth semester of class piano. The authors also thoughtfully choose repertoire for singers and instrumentalists that would be easily accessible and cover a wide range of styles. Units 1-13 of *Book 2* provide one instrumental piece for trumpet and piano: a simple arrangement of “Aura Lee.” The two vocal and piano duo works are a children’s song and Schubert’s “Heidenröslein” for soprano and piano. Units 14-26 offer a variety of duo pieces: one for French horn that contains a repetitive piano accompaniment and a piece with cello that presents an easy arrangement of a Bach March; students can also play Mozart’s “Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling” and Schumann’s “Ich grolle nicht” for voice

and piano. Although the Mozart piece is not a widely popular song, the vocal part mostly outlines the tonic triad and often moves in stepwise motion. The octave range is accessible to many sopranos and mezzo sopranos, and the piano doubles the vocal melody. The Schumann song is beloved and chances are good there will be a tenor in the class capable of singing it. In addition to the vocal and instrumental works listed above, *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book Two* includes eight more pieces in an appendix titled "Supplementary Instrumental and Vocal Accompaniments." Included in this group are instrumental pieces for clarinet, French horn and alto saxophone, another band score, and four more vocal pieces. Two of the vocal pieces are children's songs, and while they may not be appealing to undergraduate students, they are easier tunes for beginning one's accompaniment journey and are written with English texts. The other two vocal pieces are more useful to students because they are vocalises, exercises all collaborative pianists play with singers at some time or another.

Overall, the *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults* series is not only comprehensive from a functional piano perspective but also from a collaborative piano skills perspective. Students are given abundant, level-appropriate exercises in sight-reading, transposition, score reading, ensemble and duet work, and vocal and instrumental collaboration. I highly recommend this text series to class piano instructors seeking a balanced and thorough foundation for their students in functional and collaborative piano skills.

### *Alfred's Piano 101*

*Alfred's Piano 101, Books 1 and 2* are also written by E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow but have a different target audience. Each of these two books contains fifteen



units and is intended to serve the first and second semester, respectively, of collegiate class piano for non-music majors.<sup>16</sup> The authors mention in the preface to the first book that it is “designed for adults with little or no keyboard experience who want to study piano for fun.”<sup>17</sup> Despite this designation, multiple colleges in the state of Arizona use one or both of these books for the first semester (or two semesters, if using both books) of class piano for music majors. Since the books are regularly used in piano curricula, it is worth exploring the amount of collaborative piano material incorporated in them.

*Alfred's Piano 101, Books 1 and 2* focus primarily on reading and technical development. Each unit contains a reading section dedicated to sight-reading, and since each unit is meant to cover one week of class, this adds up to at least one sight-reading activity per week over the course of two semesters. These two books also contain many piano duet and ensemble activities. Thirty-six pieces in the first book have a corresponding teacher accompaniment, assisting novice musicians in maintaining a steady beat and even rhythm. *Book 1* incorporates two student/teacher duets in which the student plays the primo part and the teacher plays the secondo. There is only one ensemble piece: a four-part piece found in Unit 14. *Alfred's Piano 101, Book 2* offers significantly fewer piano duet and ensemble activities: there are only two student/teacher duets and two four-part ensembles. Ultimately, the collaborative activities in this book are a result of the book's goal: to facilitate recreational piano-playing rather than functional playing.

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<sup>16</sup> E. L. Lancaster and Kenon D. Renfrow, *Alfred's Piano 101, Book 2* (Van Nuys: Alfred Publishing Co., 1999), 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

### *Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults*

Another textbook series used by educators for class piano is *Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults (Book One and Book Two)* by Lyke, Caramia, Haydon, and Chioldi. *Book One* is organized into eight chapters, which are intended to provide material for the first year of class piano for non-pianist music majors. Chapters 1-4 serve the first semester and chapters 5-8 are intended for the second semester. Similarly *Book Two* contains eight chapters intended for use during the second year of class piano. In terms of collaborative piano skills, the primary strength of this text series is the prominence it gives to accompaniment fluency. The authors' goal with this text is to assist in creating students who are versatile pianists.<sup>18</sup>

The preface to *Book One* enumerates a variety of skills that the versatile pianist should possess including sight-reading, transposition, harmonization of melodies, improvisation, and composition. It goes on to say that “the first-year keyboard student also develops necessary technical skills to function well in ensemble and accompanying situations. With these things in mind, this book is organized sequentially, with technical work and practice in accompanying in each chapter.”<sup>19</sup> These accompaniment exercises come in the form of student/teacher duets, in which the teacher plays the melody and the student plays a two-handed accompaniment, incorporating the new technical concepts introduced at the beginning of the corresponding chapter. Each chapter provides two accompaniment pieces as well as two pieces of ensemble repertoire, which are also

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<sup>18</sup> James Lyke et al., *Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults, Book One* (Champaign: Stipes Publishing Co., 2019), Preface.

<sup>19</sup> Lyke et al, *Keyboard Musicianship, Book One*, Preface.

mostly student and teacher duets; in these ensemble pieces, however, the two parts share melodic responsibility.

*Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults, Book Two* continues this pattern of placing importance on developing accompanying skills. It again offers multiple duets in the Accompanying section in which the teacher plays the melody and the student plays common accompanimental patterns with both hands, incorporating more complex harmonic structures over the course of the book. Many of these accompanying duets are jazz or popular standards that have vocal parts, and students will appreciate that the authors included the lyrics under the teacher's melodies. Although the directions for these assignments do not suggest this, these would be ideal projects for singers in the class to pair up with classmates on the piano and work together as duos. The authors do address this need specifically in Chapters 5-7, in which each chapter contains one classical piece for singer and pianist. In Chapter Five, for example, the student encounters the bass aria "O Isis und Osiris" from Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*. The directions for the assignment suggest a voice and piano collaboration: "Encourage a vocal major from the piano class to sing it while accompanied by a student."<sup>20</sup> While the piano reduction is attainable by less experienced pianists and the aria is common for basses (although not necessarily undergraduate basses), I am surprised the authors chose an aria for this voice type rather than a more common one like tenor or even soprano. In my experience more undergraduates sing tenor than bass, and more sing soprano than any other voice type. If students want to practice this piece with a true bass they will likely need to look outside of their piano class for a partner. Chapter Six includes Paisiello's arietta "Nel cor più non

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<sup>20</sup> James Lyke et al, *Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults, Book Two* (Champaign: Stipes Publishing Co., 2010), 178.

mi sento,” which many young singers have in their repertoire. Schubert’s “An die Musik” is the vocal duo piece in Chapter Seven, which is another frequently studied song by young singers. Pedagogically, the three classical vocal/piano numbers are wise choices, and students are likely to find singers to join them for at least two of the three numbers.

The *Keyboard Musicianship* series also shines in its ability to offer activities in two other collaborative piano skills: sight-reading and transposition. Each chapter in *Book One* includes a section entitled “Music for Sight Reading and Transposing.” These three- to six-page segments typically correspond to the technical content introduced at the beginning of each chapter. Students are asked to transpose these exercises up or down by major and minor seconds. The same is true for the transposition exercises in *Book Two*.

The “Music for Sight Reading and Transposing” sections incorporated into every chapter of *Keyboard Musicianship, Book One* are called “Music for Reading, Transposing and Score Reading” in *Book Two*. As in *Book One*, the authors of *Book Two* unequivocally state the book’s purpose: “The primary goal is to develop a well-rounded musician at the keyboard.”<sup>21</sup> With the addition of score-reading and clef-reading exercises, *Book Two* successfully reaches its goal. Every chapter contains at least two score-reading excerpts: one vocal and one instrumental. In the earlier chapters, vocal scores consist of two parts (sometimes soprano and alto, sometimes tenor and bass, sometimes soprano and tenor), and by the end of the text the excerpts are for a full choral ensemble (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass). Likewise, the instrumental excerpts progress from two to four instruments, ending with string quartet scores. In addition to this wealth of score-reading activities, *Book Two* also teaches students how to read music in the alto

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<sup>21</sup> Lyke et al, *Keyboard Musicianship, Book Two*, Preface.

and tenor clefs. The string quartet score in Chapter Seven is the culminating chance for students to practice reading multiple clefs, since the two violin parts are written in the treble clef, the viola is in the alto clef, and the cello is in the bass clef.

In the *Keyboard Musicianship* series, Lyke and colleagues have indeed created a textbook that will help students become versatile pianists. Although these two books move conceptually faster than any other series reviewed in this study, they offer activities pertaining to all of the collaborative piano skills evaluated except for score reduction and instrumental collaboration. Students will find extensive accompaniment, score-reading, and transposition exercises.

#### *Piano for the Developing Musician*

Authors Martha Hilley and Lynn Freeman Olson tout this book as “the only text strictly focused on the music major who must pass a piano proficiency before graduating.”<sup>22</sup> Intended for use in all four semesters of class piano, this text serves as a comprehensive resource.<sup>23</sup> There are no delineations regarding which of the fourteen chapters should correspond to which semesters of the course. Chapters 5 and 11 end with holiday music, so it seems likely that these serve as the final chapters of the first and third semesters. Chapter 9 begins with an upbeat piece by Olson and asks students to review all the major scales that begin on a white key. It also offers clef-reading examples for the first time, making it a logical first chapter for the third semester of study. I recommend

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<sup>22</sup> Martha Hilley, *Piano for the Developing Musician* (Belmont: Thomson Schirmer, 2006), xviii.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

the following chapter groups be used with the corresponding four semesters: Chapters 1-5, Chapters 6-8, Chapters 9-11, and Chapters 12-14.

*Piano for the Developing Musician* takes a different approach to transposition than the other class piano textbooks. Hilley and Olson encourage students to think several steps ahead while they prepare to transpose a piece. Beginning with Chapter 2, every chapter has multiple four-bar musical excerpts asking the student to transpose up or down a tritone. These consistently difficult intervallic exercises over the course of four semesters will create students who are confident and proficient sight-readers. Chapter 2 also introduces the transposition direction: “Do not play in the written key.”<sup>24</sup> This advice is not mentioned in any of the other textbooks. Taking away the step of playing the example in the original key forces students to think rather than rely on muscle memory. One particularly creative transposition activity that requires quick student thought occurs in Chapter 9.<sup>25</sup> Students are given a simple, single-line melody that is four lines long and are asked to play the piece as a four-part round. At the end of each line the teacher will mention a new key, and students must immediately transpose the next line to that key. While this exercise might seem silly to students at the time, it encourages the spontaneous flexibility with transposition that music educators and music therapists demonstrate regularly.

Other strengths of the transposition curriculum in *Piano for the Developing Musician* include transposition to different modes and extensive transposing instrument activities. Beginning in Chapter 9, which likely corresponds to the third semester,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 244.

students regularly transpose excerpts written for the clarinet in B-flat, French horn, and the clarinet in A. Most of these examples come in the form of two-part scores for one transposing instrument and one concert pitch instrument.

*Piano for the Developing Musician* also includes many practical suggestions that help students internalize and physicalize collaborative piano skills. Chapters 3 and 4 contain reading exercises that ask the student to play the piano with one hand and simultaneously conduct with the other.<sup>26</sup> This multi-tasking prepares students for opera coaching and ensemble directing. Another skill collaborative pianists use regularly to prepare vocal music is singing while playing the piano. Voice teachers and choir directors must be competent in this skill in order to play even simplified accompaniments with their students. In Chapter 14 of *Piano for the Developing Musician*, Hilley and Olson challenge students to play “The Water is Wide” twice: “On the repeat, sing as you play.”<sup>27</sup> Although this is a commendable request, the book’s setting of the assignment makes it impractical. The text is listed in two stanzas after the music rather than included in the score. Students would first have to know the syllabification and then write in every word (or sing by memory). This piece is the last project in the book, and it is the only time that students are asked to do this particular task. However, the skill of playing and singing simultaneously is so important to the collaborative pianist that the authors could have served their purpose better by more regularly suggesting that the student sing and play the pieces that are being studied.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 62 and 88.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 400.

In addition to its strength in transposition development, *Piano for the Developing Musician* contributes a robust array of score-reading and clef-reading activities. This textbook introduces the alto clef in Chapter 9 (the beginning of the third semester) and throughout the remainder of the book includes duos for viola and various other instruments. Chapter 11 contains the first examples of the vocal tenor clef as well as six three-part vocal excerpts of various arrangements. Hilley and Olson again in this section succeed in spurring student thought about the topic and fostering independent learners by adding these directions to the first three-part vocal excerpt: “Even though there are three staves, reading will be more efficient if you place all three parts in your right hand. It will make it easier to think chord shapes.”<sup>28</sup> They continue this thought-provoking process in the directions for the next excerpt: “How would you group this example? What keeps you from playing it all in one hand?”<sup>29</sup> Instead of telling students how to divide the notes between their hands, the authors ask leading questions, thus teaching students how to determine the best hand division on their own.

Although Chapters 9-14 of *Piano for the Developing Musician* provide many three-part vocal examples, only Chapter 14 contains three-part instrumental samples. Chapter 14 also contains the following excerpts: one string quartet, one four-part choral score, and a quintet for clarinet and string quartet. This textbook also provides piano duets and ensembles, with an average of four or five per semester. Hilley and Olson again offer constructive, creative applications for these assignments in the form of practice suggestions. Multiple four-part or larger ensembles ask students to play the piece four

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 296.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.



times, playing a new part on each repeat. One piece with two repeated sections advises students to “trade parts at each repeat.”<sup>30</sup> Students and teachers alike will appreciate the variety of classical, popular, and folk repertoire used for the ensembles.

Vocal and Instrumental collaboration does not seem to be the focus of *Piano for the Developing Musician*. While there are short excerpts for piano and instrument combinations peppered throughout the text, usually as score-reading examples, none of them takes up an entire page. The only example that suggests students play the piano with an instrumentalist is on page 387, in an excerpt from Mozart’s *Quintet in A Major*. The piece is not even written for the piano and clarinet; it is scored for string quartet and clarinet. It is challenging playing the piano with an instrumentalist when the piano is not one’s primary instrument, and particularly when the student has very little experience accompanying. It is likewise challenging playing string quartet scores on the piano. Putting these two skills together without offering sufficient practice opportunities for each skill independently could be a recipe for frustration and defeat.

Hilley and Olson’s textbook offers only two duets for voice and piano: a four-bar excerpt from Bach’s “Bist du bei mir” and the Vaccai vocalise “Salti de terza.” The vocalise is a perfect choice for students in the fourth semester of class piano in terms of both pianistic and vocal accessibility. Although the textbook’s directions mention nothing about playing with a singer, the Vaccai would be an ideal collaboration for a singer and piano student.

The all-in-one class piano textbook *Piano for the Developing Musician* includes a wide variety of collaborative piano skill exercises that will prepare students to pass a

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 312.

proficiency exam, as long as the exam does not involve vocal or instrumental collaboration. This resource is exceptional in providing consistent and creative transposition activities, which appear in the first chapter and continue throughout the book. It also offers many practice opportunities in score reading, clef reading, transposing non-concert-pitch instruments, and piano duets and ensembles.

*Group Piano: Proficiency in Theory and Performance*

This book by Karen Ann Krieger includes twenty-eight chapters and is intended to cover all four semesters of class piano. While there is nothing in the preface that recommends which chapters correspond to which semester, Chapters 7, 14, 20, and 28 are titled “Summary Concepts and Skills Review.” If these chapters align with the end of each semester, then it is likely Krieger intends the breakdown shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Suggestion of Chapter/Semester Correlation for *Group Piano: Proficiency in Theory and Performance***

Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
Chapters 1-7	Chapters 8-14	Chapters 15-20	Chapters 21-28

In the preface, Krieger verbalizes two of her beliefs that describe the book’s ideology. The first, “Teaching students to think and be their own teacher during consistent thoughtful practice is the mantra of this text,” foreshadows her consistent and insightful

assignment tips.<sup>31</sup> The second is a quote from one of her colleagues: “The best life lesson I learned from you is, if you expect more from your students, you will receive more.” This advice predicts the fast-paced, layered-skill approach of the book.<sup>32</sup> Almost every exercise in this text serves multiple purposes and asks students to incorporate a variety of skills. For example, most sight-reading exercises ask students to transpose the excerpt by a specific interval and to one key of the student’s choice. Most duet or ensemble pieces involve an improvisational component. Lead sheets used for harmonization exercises include lyrics and encourage students to sing while they play, then ask students to create a two-handed accompaniment and play it while a classmate sings. Stacking skills within each assignment makes this text a rich cache of functional piano activities.

Krieger’s *Group Piano* is a comprehensive and thorough resource in terms of standard functional piano skills as well as collaborative piano skills. Almost every chapter in the book contains exercises in sight-reading, harmonization, solo repertoire, transposition, piano duet and ensemble work, and a piece with a melody or solo part plus accompaniment. Throughout the text students are encouraged to demonstrate such musicianship skills as playing songs by ear and identifying intervals and chords in the score, then listening for these while playing. Chapter 6 teaches students the solfège syllables of a major scale, and periodically through the course of the book exercises will encourage students to sing a piece’s melody with solfège while playing the melody and accompaniment.

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<sup>31</sup> Karen Ann Krieger, *Group Piano: Proficiency in Theory and Performance* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2019), ii.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Two collaborative piano skill areas at which this textbook excels are transposition and clef reading. Students transpose an exercise for the first time in Chapter 2, and from this point on virtually every reading or sight-reading exercise is followed by a call to transpose it to a specific key and a key of the student's choice. Transposition intervals span everything within the octave, even diminished thirds, although many keys suggested are a whole or half step away from the original. Even clef-reading exercises challenge students to transpose, a task none of the preceding texts have requested. Clef reading is also introduced surprisingly early and subsequently incorporated into the fabric of the curriculum. Both the alto and tenor clefs appear in Chapter 2, and students and teachers alike will appreciate the informative explanations that accompany the examples. The alto clef first emerges on page 22 and is accompanied by the following description: "Violas use primarily the alto clef (often called viola clef) to avoid excessive ledger lines in their lower range." The next page contains multiple tenor clef examples, along with more background information: "The cello, bassoon and trombone use tenor clef to avoid excessive ledger lines in their upper range."<sup>33</sup>

Subsequent chapters periodically incorporate the alto and tenor clefs in all types of exercises, to the point that the student becomes accustomed to the variety of clef options. It is a wise pedagogical decision to incorporate so many clefs early on. Students using this book will not find the alto or tenor clefs odd or difficult to read after four semesters of experience with them. Krieger even asks students to transpose these pieces, starting with their first appearances on pages 22-24, and in doing so further discourages the stigma that students often attach to reading in these clefs. Krieger is so confident in

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 24.

the clef-reading preparation of this text that by Chapter 12 she gives “When the Saints Go Marching In” for sight-reading practice with left-hand accompaniment patterns that are written in tenor clef. Then she challenges students to play this as an ensemble, taking turns improvising a countermelody. By Chapter 24, students are given an eight-measure string quartet excerpt and asked to play it as written in E minor, then transpose it to E-flat minor and D minor. Although students should have no difficulty transposing alto clef music by this point, this is the first string quartet in the book, and only one of the previous exercises asks students to play even three parts at one time. Students may need supplemental exercises playing three- and four-part piano scores before they are ready to play this string quartet excerpt. Likewise, teachers may need to supplement the assignment with exercises involving transposition of multiple-part scores. Chapter 28, the last chapter of the book, offers the only other examples of score reading with two non-piano instruments: a violin and viola excerpt and a soprano and tenor excerpt. I recommend that students play the violin/viola exercise in Chapter 28 before attempting the string quartet exercise in Chapter 24. Aside from the placement of the string quartet excerpt, Krieger’s text serves as a well-structured clef-reading resource.

While clef-reading opportunities abound, score-reading exercises are less abundant. Most score-reading drills are offered as secondary suggestions to piano ensemble activities. The “Wedding March” on page 176 is listed as an “Ensemble for 4 Pianos” in which each person plays one of the four lines. The bottom of the page shows the subtitle “Score-reading,” followed by the directions: “Play the following parts together: I & IV (RH & LH); I & II (both RH); III & IV (RH & LH). Omit doubled

notes.”<sup>34</sup> Likewise, the four-part piano ensemble in Chapter Twenty, an arrangement of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” bears a similar suggestion of part pairings and then adds, “For extra credit, play [parts] 1, 2 and 4 together, then add part 3.”<sup>35</sup> At this point in the text students are at the end of their third semester of class and are being asked for the first time to play three and even four parts at one time. *Keyboard Musicianship, Book Two* incorporates one three-part vocal score at the end of the third semester; *Alfred’s Group Piano for Adults* offers one three-part vocal score and a band score with suggestions for sets of three instrument parts to play together; and *Piano for the Developing Musician* includes six three-part vocal scores. The last seven chapters of the book contain only two such activities: the aforementioned string quartet and a five-part ensemble in which all parts but the top involve playing two notes simultaneously. This last ensemble is a fair score-reading challenge, but it does not provide a realistic scenario that students are likely to encounter in most music professions. Students would be better prepared for ensemble directing and coaching with exercises asking students to play three or four single-line melodies simultaneously.

Although score reading may not be the specialty of *Group Piano*, Krieger’s book does abound in other collaborative opportunities. Chapters 8-14, likely aligning with the second semester of class piano, contain an impressive fourteen piano duet and ensemble activities. Singers and students who may accompany singers at some point will be grateful for the four vocal exercises involving major and minor pentascales, triads, and primary cadences. These warm-up activities incorporate solfège, and directions ask

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 203.

students to “transpose chromatically and sing in 12 keys.”<sup>36</sup> One such activity invites instrumentalists to join in the fun: “Accompany classmates as they sing the warm-up and/or perform the 5-note scales on non-keyboard instruments.”<sup>37</sup>

In the book’s spirit of inclusivity and multifunctionality, many accompanying exercises list vocal and instrumental options. The “First Accompanying Project” on page 137, for example, displays three different clefs with the same melody. It is an arrangement of a fiddle tune entitled “Arkansas Traveler” and the top line is a treble clef that is marked for voice, flute, oboe, or violin. The next line is a bass clef marked for voice, bassoon, cello/bass, trombone, or tuba. The third line is a treble clef for B-flat clarinet or trumpet. The final part is a piano accompaniment written on a grand staff. To involve all musicians in the class, the directions say, “This piece is for soloist with piano accompaniment.” Later chapters contain two other pieces for solo instrument and piano, two pieces for trumpet and piano, one piece for clarinet and piano, and two pieces for voice and piano. The repertoire choices for these duos are particularly practical; students are likely to find themselves playing or singing these selections at some point in their lives, whether as a professional or as a casual hobbyist. The two voice and piano selections, Bach/Gounod’s “Ave Maria” and Franck’s “Panis Angelicus,” are staples in church repertoire, and Krieger informs students that they are “often played at weddings.”<sup>38</sup> The French horn and piano piece is an excerpt from Pachelbel’s famous

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 183 & 248.

*Canon*. These pragmatic selections and the many multi-purpose collaborative options make this book a useful tool in training functional and collaborative pianists.

Krieger further assists class piano teachers in their quest to produce functional and collaborative pianists by regularly encouraging students to play the collaborative pieces with classmates on their primary instruments. On page 228 she remarks, “Play the melodies then play the accompaniments...while classmates sing or play instrumental parts.” On page 240 she instructs, “Bring your solo instrument to class and transpose the solo line to fit your instrument range. Sight-read the solo part on your keyboard before you play it on your other instrument. Partner with a classmate and perform it in class.” Yet again on page 248 she recommends, “‘Ave Maria’ is often played at weddings, so for future gigs, experience the piece with a singer or an instrumentalist.” She even shares with students a practical method that collaborative pianists use to prepare music when their partner is unavailable. “For practice,” she suggests, “record and playback the accompaniment on your phone while you perform the solo line.”<sup>39</sup>

While classical excerpts like Paisiello’s “Nel cor più non mi sento” and Werner’s “Sah ein Knab’ ein Röslein stehn” appear in the text, they are not used as collaborative activities but for alternative purposes like developing harmonization skills. Krieger’s multifaceted and engaging activities offer unexpected yet pedagogically sound occasions for student growth. Her textbook material is also refreshingly pertinent to the modern student who enjoys contemporary popular music. The Rhythm Review on page 12 incorporates the following rhythms: tango, rock, country blues hop, folk ballad, and bossa nova. She includes improvisation activities in the style of funk rock, rock ‘n’ roll, rock,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 204.



and hip-hop rap.<sup>40</sup> *Group Piano* provides everything a class piano instructor desires to share with their students and everything today's student wants and needs to learn in order to be a successful musician.

### *Contemporary Class Piano*

This massive textbook contains over 700 pages of music and activities organized in thirteen units and five appendices. Author Elyse Mach calls the book “an introduction to the keyboard designed for college students who are enrolled in a class piano course, whether or not they are music majors and whether or not they have prior keyboard experience.”<sup>41</sup> She also touts it as an appropriate resource “for non-piano majors and prospective elementary teachers who must gain keyboard proficiency.” Aside from identifying her book's audience, Mach does not specify with which levels of class piano she intends this text to be used. The last harmonization exercises utilize secondary chords, but secondary dominants are never taught. The most advanced chord progression exercises in this text involve the I, IV<sup>6</sup><sub>4</sub> and V<sup>6</sup><sub>5</sub> chords. This beginning level of subject matter suggests that the book ends with the third semester of class, or even when some textbooks end the second semester of class. The book includes many diagrams and charts to help explain theoretical concepts to students unfamiliar with beginning music theory. Students who are comfortable with music theory can bypass these aids.

From a collaborative piano skill perspective, the book's greatest resources are found in the appendices and online supplements. Appendix A is entitled “Score Reading”

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 17, 89, 110, & 251.

<sup>41</sup> Elyse Mach, *Contemporary Class Piano* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), xxix.

and contains eight three-part exercises that are for two treble-clef instruments or voices and one bass-clef instrument or voice. It also has nine four-part choral exercises utilizing excerpts from folk songs, original compositions, and choral standards such as Haydn's *The Creation*, Bach's *The Passion According to St. John*, and Mozart's *Requiem*. Mach includes helpful instructions at the beginning of each of these sections with such information as which hand should play each part. She also suggests different combinations of parts students should practice together in order to be prepared to play all parts simultaneously. Appendix A also includes a section entitled "Movable Clefs," in which students are introduced to the alto clef. This segment incorporates three two-hand exercises in which the right hand is in the alto clef and the left hand is in the bass clef, one exercise with both hands playing viola lines, one piece for viola and keyboard, and similar exercises involving the tenor clef. Appendix A also incorporates a six-page section on figured bass realization.

Appendix B is entitled "Vocal and Instrumental Accompaniments" and provides a small collection of duo excerpts. There are five pieces for voice and piano, and these start with simple folk songs and progress to excerpts from Schubert and Schumann art songs. There is one piece for violin and piano, which is an excerpt from Beethoven's Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 5, Op. 24. The students are also exposed to an excerpt of "Scotch Dance" by Beethoven for flute and piano. The final piece in this collection is a piece for alto, bass, trombone, and keyboard.

Mach also provides an online supplement, mentioned in *Contemporary Class Piano*'s table of contents. This supplement is called "Accompanying Transposing Instruments" and completes the student's vocal and instrumental accompaniment

experience. This section connects transposition and accompanying in a highly successful manner. After offering a single line of music and corresponding directions for how to transpose it, the supplement provides piano and instrumental excerpts for the following instruments: French horn, English horn, alto saxophone, A clarinet, B-flat clarinet, and trumpet. The repertoire employed here is a good variety of folk tunes and repertoire common to each instrument, whether orchestral excerpts or piano duo pieces.

*Contemporary Class Piano* offers a few opportunities for students to practice transposition. In general, most transposition suggestions occur alongside such technical activities as five-finger patterns, triads, cadences, and chord inversions. Occasionally the text asks students to transpose a musical example to another key, using a variety of intervals from a half step to a fifth. *Contemporary Class Piano* provides activities in sight-reading, and each unit includes a section devoted to the technique. It also offers helpful practice suggestions before the exercises, such as this set on page 368:

Determine the key of the study. 2. Observe the meter signature, then quickly scan the example to look at rhythmic and melodic patterns and any harmonic patterns. 3. Note changes of fingering where they occur. 4. Observe all dynamic and expression markings. 5. Look ahead in the music as you play. 6. Be sure not to look down at the keys!<sup>42</sup>

In terms of collaborative piano skills, this text also provides opportunities to practice playing piano duets and ensembles. Each unit has an ensemble section, and most units include both student/teacher duets, duets for students, or a 3-, 4-, or 6-part ensemble piece. Ultimately, *Contemporary Class Piano* contains numerous activities involving collaborative piano skills that will prepare students through the second or third semester of class piano.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 368.

### *Keyboard Strategies*

This textbook series by Stecher, Horowitz, Gordon, Kern, and Lancaster moves conceptually more quickly than *Contemporary Class Piano*, and it provides students with more collaborative piano skill activities. The *Master Text I* is created for “college music majors with a primary instrument other than piano” as well as “college non-music majors who want to learn to play the piano.”<sup>43</sup> In the preface, the authors express that it is “planned for use in college classes for an entire year.”<sup>44</sup> The *Master Text I* consists of eleven chapters, and the holiday music at the end of Chapter 7 could be an indication that the first semester closes with this chapter. While the semester delineation is not completely clear, each chapter contains four sections: Keyboard Theory and Technique, Reading, Solo and Ensemble Repertoire, and Creative Activities. Although Stecher and his team recommend that students and teachers utilize four supplemental books—*Keyboard Strategies Solo Repertoire IA and IB*, and *Keyboard Strategies Ensemble Repertoire IA and IB*—teachers will find these supplemental resources difficult to acquire. At the Arizona State University Inter-Library Loan service, for example, none of these was available: they were all part of non-circulating collections in their respective libraries. If these resources were adopted regularly by instructors, then they would be readily available. It is likely that these supplements have not been used for a long time.

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<sup>43</sup> Melvin Stecher, Norman Horowitz, Claire Gordon, R. Fred Kern, and E. L. Lancaster, *Keyboard Strategies: Master Text I* (Milwaukee: G. Schirmer, 1980), iii.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

*Keyboard Strategies, Master Text II* is also intended “for use in second-year college classes for at least two semesters.”<sup>45</sup> Chapters in the second book of the series are significantly larger than those in the first book; there are only seven chapters in total. Almost every one of the numerous technical exercises asks students to transpose to all twelve major and minor keys. These exercises include five-finger patterns, inverted triads, intervals, scales, seventh chords, and myriad chord progressions. Every chapter in the *Master Text I* and Chapters 1-4 in *Master Text II* contain sight-reading examples, and many of them include transposition suggestions to various intervals up to a fifth. Improvisation and creative activities are often accompanied by an option to transpose. After completing four semesters of dedicated study and practice with these two textbooks, students will be confident transposers.

Both texts offer piano ensemble repertoire. Most chapters provide a duet for students or student and teacher, as well as a 3- or 4-part piano ensemble piece. Stecher and his team include a canon at the end of each chapter of *Master Text I*, and often provide an improvisation activity with a teacher accompaniment. Many of these exercises also include a transposition component while also utilizing improvisation activities to layer skills in a single assignment. Like Krieger’s *Group Piano*, the *Keyboard Strategies* series capitalizes on multi-purpose exercises.

The last three chapters of *Master Text II* are brimming with practical information and exercises that are applicable to music majors. Chapter 5 is entitled “Twentieth Century Idioms” and includes cluster chords, pandiatonicism, pointillism, serial technique, mixed meter, polychords, and quartal harmony. In this area it rivals the

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<sup>45</sup>Melvin Stecher, Norman Horowitz, Claire Gordon, R. Fred Kern, and E. L. Lancaster, *Keyboard Strategies: Master Text II* (Milwaukee: G. Schirmer, 1984), iii.

thoroughness of the comparable chapter in *Contemporary Class Piano*. Although students may not encounter these techniques regularly in their music career, it never hurts to have additional practice in contemporary styles. Chapter 6 is entitled “Informal Idioms” and includes segments on blues, ragtime, jazz, boogie-woogie, rock, and Latin rhythms. There are two or three activities that correspond to each style. This chapter could be many students’ favorite part of the class and will prove invaluable to music therapy and music education majors who need proficiency in popular music styles.

The final chapter of *Master Text II*, entitled “Source Materials for Accompanying, Score Reading, and Transposing,” is devoted exclusively to collaborative piano skills. This is the only chapter in the series that includes exercises in clef reading, score reading, and vocal and instrumental collaboration, yet it is 54 pages long and replete with activities. If teachers assign students weekly work in each skill throughout the third and fourth semesters of class, students have the opportunity for a good deal of practice. The chapter opens with a variety of chorales that serve as an introduction to score reading. There is a wide range of selections, including works by Bach, a Gurlitt study, one Schumann piece, and several patriotic arrangements.

The next subsection, “Vocal and Instrument Accompaniments,” contains a selection of classical works frequently studied by undergraduate singers and instrumentalists. There are two intermediate flute and piano excerpts—a Bach *Polonaise* and *Scotch Dance* by Beethoven—and one more advanced: Fauré’s *Fantasia*, Op. 79, for flute and piano. This chapter also includes two brass and piano excerpts, the first being a portion of Haydn’s *Concerto for Trumpet in E-flat Major* in which the piano part is a deceptively difficult orchestral reduction. Students will need sufficient instruction on how

to play reductions, or they may find themselves frustrated by awkwardly written tenths and overlapping textures that are not easily playable without octave displacement. The subsequent Beethoven horn and piano sonata excerpt is much more accessible to students in the third or fourth semester of class piano, although it contains a tricky cadenza at the end. The authors also incorporate into this chapter a wisely-selected set of four art songs that are frequently studied and performed by collegiate singers and collaborative pianists: Schubert's "Heidenröslein," Mendelssohn's "Auf Flügeln des Gesanges," Brahms's "Wiegenlied," and Fauré's "Après un rêve." Overall, these pieces will provide students with plenty of activities pertaining to vocal and instrumental collaboration, but the instructor must facilitate learning by lending tips and advice.

Further onus is on the instructor when the text introduces three-part score reading with two three-staff piano arrangements of Bach fugues. Even in their original two-staff form, Bach fugues are notoriously difficult to play. Instructors will need to help the students navigate the exercise with detailed practice suggestions.

The choral excerpts are all full-score selections with piano accompaniment and are some of the most beloved works in the choral canon, including Schubert's *Mass in G Major*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Brahms's *Requiem*, and Handel's *Messiah*. While these choices epitomize the pinnacle of choral masterpieces, third-semester class piano students may not be ready to play four-part choral scores without practice in simple three-part choral scores. Instructors may need to supplement the choral section with easier pieces to better prepare students for the classics. Additionally, the teacher will need to spend class time discussing certain technical considerations, e.g., how to determine which hand should play the alto or tenor parts.

*Keyboard Strategies, Master Text II* also includes an excerpt from one orchestral score: Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*. While the harmonic rhythm and chord choices are not difficult to play, students have been offered no previous instruction on how to read the alto clef for the viola part, or how to transpose instruments like the clarinet in A or the horn in E. These instructions are provided in the last section of the chapter, so instructors will need to direct students to them when they introduce these concepts. After the symphonic score there are two string quartet excerpts, one by Haydn and the other by Schubert. However, the six-system-long Haydn score has been minimized to fit a single page, rendering it virtually unreadable.

The final segment of this collaborative chapter supplies eight orchestral excerpts of transposing instruments, and finally provides students with directions on how to transpose each one. These excerpts are iconic solos for each instrument, as shown in Table 2.



**Table 2: Transposing Instrument Excerpts in *Keyboard Strategies, Master Text II***

Horn in E-flat	Symphony No. 3 (Eroica): III	Beethoven
Alto Saxophone	Pictures at an Exhibition: The Old Castle	Mussorgsky-Ravel
B-flat Clarinet	Symphony No. 6 (Pastoral): I	Beethoven
Tenor Saxophone	Lieutenant Kijé: Troika	Prokofiev
Horn in F	Symphony No. 5: II	Tchaikovsky
English Horn	Symphony No. 9 (New World): II	Dvorák
Clarinet in A	Symphony No. 4: II	Brahms
Trumpet in D	Messiah: “The Trumpet Shall Sound”	Handel

The benefit of using such archetypal excerpts is that students are theoretically familiar with the tune and can correct themselves aurally as well as visually. Although some of these instruments are less common to the standard band or orchestral repertoire, employing such a wide variety of instruments gives students experience in transposing lines to many different intervals.

Although it sometimes lacks explanations and guidance before new exercises, the *Keyboard Strategies* series, when used by a knowledgeable, creative, and articulate instructor, will prepare students for far more than proficiency tests. Music majors will leave the fourth semester of class piano with both functional and collaborative keyboard skills that will serve them well in a variety of musical professions.

*Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators*

This is a highly practical and applicable textbook for piano students who will use collaborative piano skills regularly. Author Josh Massicot does not waste a sentence in this book; every page includes insightful tips and exercises not just for music therapists and music educators but also for collaborative pianists. Furthermore, Massicot uses understandable terminology and descriptions that make the text easy to apply. The twelve chapters are organized progressively in terms of difficulty:

1. The Nature of Chords
2. Accompanying in Duple Meter
3. Accompanying in Triple Meter
4. Modal and Pentatonic Improvisation and Accompanying
5. Blues
6. Folk, Country, and Bluegrass
7. Gospel
8. Boogie-Woogie and Rock
9. Popular song styles
10. Tango, Calypso, and Bossa Nova
11. Jazz
12. Score Reduction

Massicot suggests that collegiate educators use the book as the main text or as a supplementary resource for the third and/or fourth semesters of class piano.<sup>46</sup> He further suggests that this book

...makes functional piano skills attainable by breaking each concept down to its core elements. The first three chapters cover basics that provide a groundwork for the rest of the book. Each subsequent chapter introduces a particular concept or style of music and uses characteristic tunes as a means of exploring the elements of technique and musicianship needed for confident, convincing renditions of songs and improvisations.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Josh Massicot, *Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators: An Exploration of Styles* (Gilsum: Barcelona Publishers, 2012), xv.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv

*Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators* teaches students how to harmonize from lead sheets in order to create and improvise stylistically informed accompaniments. One area in which this text excels is offering transposition recommendations. Most of the pieces Massicot uses to teach harmonization skills include an exercise in transposing the melody to a new key while singing and playing. As a culminating project, he often asks students to transpose their completed accompaniment. Even modal exercises—other than for the Locrian scale—include transposition suggestions. When the rhythms or coordination needed for a specific style becomes more difficult, the author wisely refrains from including transposition invitations.

Massicot gears his text specifically toward people in careers that will utilize the piano as a tool and aid. To this highly targeted audience, he offers many constructive tips for students to internalize harmonization and accompaniment skills more quickly. Almost every exercise in the book asks students to sing and play in some capacity—an important skill for collaborative pianists working with vocalists. Often Massicot encourages students to start off practicing a new piece by “singing the melody and lyrics.”<sup>48</sup> For the piece “Lightly Row” in Chapter 2, he continues this process and encourages kinesthetic learning with the recommendation to “[sing] while tapping a steady beat.”<sup>49</sup> After students play the right-hand melody, he suggests that they sing the tune while playing the root of each left-hand chord. Finally, he directs students to “[transpose] the melody on voice and piano to a new key.”<sup>50</sup> Another scenario in which Massicot uses singing and

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

playing to develop coordination and collaborative skill is in the Latin rhythms chapter. The piece that incorporates the habanera rhythm is accompanied by an instruction to “improvise simple vocal melodies while playing your left hand.”<sup>51</sup> When he introduces the bossa nova rhythm with his own composition, he asks students to “sing the melody while tapping the son clave.”<sup>52</sup> In the chapter on jazz, Massicot tells students to “sing while snapping your left hand on the off beats.”<sup>53</sup>

While the plethora of singing and playing opportunities emphasizes the importance of employing these two skills simultaneously, Massicot also encourages piano and vocal collaboration between classmates. In Chapter 2 he asks students to practice “The Erie Canal” by “leading a sing-along with a friend at the piano.”<sup>54</sup> Chapter 5 asks students to practice “St. Louis Blues” by “leading a sing-along or play-along with a friend at the piano.”<sup>55</sup> If students follow the practice suggestions in this textbook, then they will be very comfortable singing and playing by the time they complete the book.

*Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators* also provides clear explanations of new concepts and helpful solutions to difficult technical exercises. The first three chapters serve as an introduction to accompaniment and harmonization, and

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 160.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 70.

Massicot uses this opportunity to inform students about the benefits of using a two-handed accompaniment:

A hands-together accompaniment affords the pianist:

- Ease of access to a greater variety of harmonies and voicings
- A greater variety of accompaniment rhythms shared between the hands
- A richer palette of sound by utilizing different octaves of the instrument<sup>56</sup>

Although he encourages the two-handed approach to accompaniment, Massicot is sensitive to the needs and tasks specific to music educators and music therapists, and thus subsequently offers this caveat:

That said, a hands-together accompaniment is not always the most appropriate choice. Playing a left-hand-alone accompaniment, for instance, frees your right hand to play a drum or point to a visual aid. You are encouraged to adapt the accompaniments featured throughout this book to best suit your needs and abilities.<sup>57</sup>

Collaborative pianists, music therapists, and music educators all benefit from this flexibility to arrange pieces to suit various scenarios. One more example of Massicot's ability to succinctly illustrate his point and offer practical solutions can be found in the second chapter of the text, in which he discusses ideal range and registration of accompaniments:

When starting an accompaniment for the first time, challenge yourself to start using a RH voicing that is not a root position triad. The more you are accustomed to using this starting trick, the more comfortable your accompaniment will become and the more access you will have to new and interesting harmonies.<sup>58</sup>

*Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators* is full of similar insightful nuggets of wisdom.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 16.

But this text far exceeds all others in one important collaborative piano skill: score reduction. While none of the other textbooks even discusses this essential skill, *Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators* devotes an entire chapter to it. Massicot lists four over-arching principles of score reduction and then provides multiple examples in solo piano repertoire as well as lieder. This chapter isolates the main stylistic periods and provides astute tips on how to maintain the character and energy of a piece while simplifying the technical demands. The end of the chapter contains a chart that lists the two or three most important elements for creating successful reductions within each of the following styles of music: baroque keyboard music, classical ensemble scores, romantic character pieces, romantic songs, twentieth century late tonal/atonal piano works, Broadway accompaniments, and jazz solos. Anyone who regularly sight-reads these types of works at the piano would benefit from a copy of this chart.

*Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators* is an invaluable resource for students seeking collaborative piano skills. It would make a robust supplement to other textbooks—particularly in the areas of harmonization, improvisation, transposition, vocal accompaniment, and score reduction.

## CHAPTER 3

### SURVEY

#### The Population

The population of the survey portion of this study was twenty-six collegiate class piano teachers in the state of Arizona. To find possible subjects, I first consulted Wikipedia.com to determine all the colleges and universities in Arizona. Then each school's website was explored to determine if class piano was offered at that institution. This search produced a total of five four-year institutions and thirteen two-year institutions that provide class piano courses. Institutional websites provided email addresses for the one or more class piano instructors at each school. Twenty-six email addresses were found, and each was sent a survey, totaling twenty-six surveys. The email request can be found in Appendix A.

#### The Research Instrument

This part of the study used a survey (Appendix B) that I created to gather data. To determine which collaborative piano skills would be incorporated into the survey, I examined several dissertations focused on both collaborative piano skills and functional

piano skills: Amoriello,<sup>59</sup> Baker,<sup>60</sup> Christensen,<sup>61</sup> Graff,<sup>62</sup> Young.<sup>63</sup> In addition to these resources, I considered which skills I use regularly as a collaborative pianist. The skills that appeared most frequently and thus were included in the survey are sight-reading, vocal and instrumental collaboration, ensemble playing, score reading, score reduction, transposition, and melodic harmonization.<sup>64</sup>

The survey was designed to obtain information about which collaborative piano skills were included in the most recent semesters of class piano at each institution. The survey included fifteen questions, of which ten were checkbox questions, four were multiple choice, and one was rank ordering.

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<sup>59</sup> Laura Amoriello, "Teaching Undergraduate Class Piano: A Study of Perspectives from Self, Students, and Colleagues" (DEd diss., Columbia University, 2010).

<sup>60</sup> Dian Baker, "A Resource Manual for the Collaborative Pianist: Twenty Class Syllabi for Teaching Collaborative Piano Skills and an Annotated Bibliography" (DMA diss., Arizona State University, 2006).

<sup>61</sup> Linda Christensen, "A Survey of the Importance of Functional Piano Skills as Reported by Band, Choral, Orchestra, and General Music Teachers" (PhD diss., The University of Oklahoma, 2000).

<sup>62</sup> Carleen Ann Graff, "Functional Piano Skills: A Manual for Undergraduate Non-Keyboard Music Education Majors at Plymouth State College" (DA diss., University of Northern Colorado, 1984).

<sup>63</sup> Margaret Mary Young, "The Use of Functional Piano Skills by Selected Professional Musicians and Its Implications for Group Piano Curricula" (DMA diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> Melodic harmonization was added to the survey portion of the study as a skill used by collaborative pianists who play musical theatre repertoire and vocal/instrumental repertoire of jazz and popular music genres. Many of the scores in these styles are minimally arranged with the expectation that pianists will fill in chords and add stylistically appropriate accompaniment figures.



### Information About Class Piano Levels Taught

The first question of the survey seeks to determine which levels of class piano each instructor has taught at their given school.

### Information About Each Level of Class Piano (1-4)

This portion of the survey is divided into four sections, with each section corresponding to one of the four levels—or semesters—of class piano. Each section contains three questions that strive to discover when the instructor last taught that level, which collaborative piano skills were included in the course curriculum that semester, and which collaborative piano skills were listed in the syllabus as course objectives or competencies.

### Information About Instructor Opinions of Collaborative Piano Skills

The last two questions of the survey were created to elicit instructor opinions regarding perceived deficits in the incorporation of collaborative piano skills into class piano curricula. In one question, participants were asked to identify collaborative piano skills that were missing from the course competencies and select which level—or levels—they felt those skills should be added to. The final question asks participants to rank possible reasons that the identified collaborative piano skills are missing.

### Collection of Data

The survey was created on [www.jotform.com](http://www.jotform.com) and, using the recruitment email template (Appendix B), sent to email addresses of the identified population. The first round of 26 surveys was emailed on June 9 and 10, 2021, and a second round aimed at garnering more responses was emailed on August 11, 2021. After the first round of

emails 10 responses were received, and one additional response was received after the second email was sent, totaling 11 survey responses—a return rate of 43%.

### Analysis of Data

Once all data was received, information was recorded in a Numbers spreadsheet. Numeric conclusions were made using simple percentages and the analytics features of [www.jotform.com](http://www.jotform.com).

### Results of the Study

#### Question #1: All levels

The first question of the survey asked participants to disclose which of the four levels or semesters of class piano they have taught at their school. Two respondents (18%) said they have taught all four levels of class piano at their current institution. One respondent said the only level of class piano they have taught at their school is a course for music education majors. Eight respondents (73%) did not answer this question. This is the only question that so few participants answered. In questions #2, 5, 8, and 11 all eleven respondents indicated that between the summer of 2020 and the spring of 2021 they had taught all four levels of class piano. This inconsistency in information suggests that there could have been a problem with the survey interface for the first question of the survey.

**Table 3: Survey Question #1 Results: Which levels (semesters) of Class Piano have you taught previously at your current educational institution? Choose all that apply.**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Level 1	2	18%
Level 2	2	18%
Level 3	2	18%
Level 4	2	18%
Other	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Course for Music Education Majors”</li> <li>• “ff” (also clicked each of the 4 levels)</li> <li>• “private lessons at these levels” (also clicked each of the 4 levels)</li> </ul>	27%

Question #2: Level 1

The second question of the survey provided participants with a list of semesters chronologically from the fall of 2019 through the summer of 2021 and asked when participants most recently taught level 1 of class piano. One person chose the summer of 2020 (9%), five people chose the fall of 2020 (45%), and the other five respondents chose

the spring of 2021 (45%). Thus, all eleven respondents had experience teaching level 1 within the 2020-2021 academic calendar.

**Table 4: Survey Question #2 Results: What was the most recent semester you taught Level 1 class piano at your current institution?**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Summer 2021	0	0
Spring 2021	5	45%
Fall 2020	5	45%
Summer 2020	1	9%
Spring 2020	0	0
Fall 2019	0	0
I haven't taught this level	0	0

Question #3: Level 1

The third question of the survey sought to discover which specific collaborative piano skills participants incorporated in their most recent level 1 curriculum. All eleven respondents said they incorporated sight-reading (100%). Three respondents incorporated vocal and/or instrumental collaboration (27%). Nine of the eleven participants integrated ensemble playing (82%), and four participants had a score-reading component in their curriculum (36%). Only two participants addressed score reduction (18%). Ten respondents incorporated transposition activities into the curriculum (91%), and ten people also taught melodic harmonization that semester (91%). Sight-reading, ensemble

playing, transposition, and melodic harmonization were incorporated into most of the respondents' level 1 classes during the 2020-2021 school year.

**Table 5: Survey Question #3 Results: Regarding the most recent semester you taught Level 1 class piano (listed in question #2), which of the following skills did you incorporate into the curriculum? Choose all that apply.**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Sight-reading	11	100%
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	3	27%
Ensemble Playing	9	82%
Score Reading	4	36%
Score Reduction	2	18%
Transposition	10	91%
Melodic Harmonization	10	91%
None of these were included	0	0

Question #4: Level 1

The fourth question asked instructors which of the collaborative piano skills they identified as part of their recent level 1 curriculum were included in the course syllabus. One respondent indicated that none of the listed skills were part of their syllabus. This explains why for each of the first five skills—sight-reading, vocal and/or instrumental

collaboration, ensemble playing, score reading, and score reduction—the number of people who listed the skill on the syllabus is one less than the number of people who taught that skill. Three fewer people included transposition on their syllabus—seven (64%)—than taught the skill—ten (91%). There was also a larger discrepancy between the number of instructors who included melodic harmonization on the syllabus—eight (73%)—than taught melodic harmonization—ten (91%). These results show that most instructors who taught level 1 class piano addressed in class and included the following collaborative piano skills in their syllabus: sight-reading, ensemble playing, transposition, and melodic harmonization.

**Table 6: Survey Question #4 Results: Which of the skills you chose in question #3 were listed as part of the course objectives or competencies in the Level 1 course syllabus?**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Sight-reading	10	91%
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	2	18%
Ensemble Playing	8	73%
Score Reading	3	27%
Score Reduction	1	9%
Transposition	7	64%
Melodic Harmonization	8	73%
None of these were included	1	9%

Question #5: Level 2

Question #5 sought to determine the most recent semester participants taught level 2 class piano. All eleven respondents (100%) indicated that they last taught level 2 in the spring of 2021.

**Table 7: Survey Question #5 Results: Which was the most recent semester you taught Level 2 class piano at your current institution?**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Summer 2021	0	0
Spring 2021	11	100%
Fall 2020	0	0
Summer 2020	0	0
Spring 2020	0	0
Fall 2019	0	0
I haven't taught this level	0	0

Question #6: Level 2

In question #6, participants were asked which of the listed collaborative skills they incorporated into their most recent version of level 2 class piano, which for all respondents was the spring of 2021. The results of this question were very similar to the results regarding level 1 in question #3, with two categories increasing in number: score reading and transposition. Only four participants (36%) taught score reading in their level 1 course, but eight participants (73%) taught the same skill in their level 2 class. The number of instructors teaching transposition in level 2 also increased: ten respondents (91%) taught transposition in their level 1 class, but all eleven instructors (100%) incorporated transposition into level 2.



**Table 8: Survey Question #6 Results: Regarding the most recent semester you taught Level 2 class piano (listed in question #5), which of the following skills did you incorporate into the curriculum? Choose all that apply.**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Sight-reading	11	100%
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	3	27%
Ensemble Playing	9	82%
Score Reading	8	73%
Score Reduction	2	18%
Transposition	11	100%
Melodic Harmonization	10	91%
None of these were included	0	0

Question #7: Level 2

Question #7 sought to discover which of the collaborative skills the respondents added to their level 2 keyboard class appeared on the syllabus. Similar to the results in question #4 for level 1, for question #7 teachers said that they included fewer skills on the syllabus than they taught in class. However, each skill was included on the same or a greater number of syllabi in level 2 than they were for level 1. All instructors who taught sight-reading, vocal/instrumental collaboration, and ensemble playing in level 2 included

these skills on their syllabus. Only five of the eight teachers who taught score reading in level 2 added it to their syllabus. One of the two teachers who taught score reduction in level 2 included it on their syllabus. Even though all eleven participants taught transposition during level 2, only seven teachers added it to their syllabus. Likewise, one of the ten people who taught melodic harmonization in level 2 did not put it on their syllabus. This discrepancy between the number of instructors who taught certain skills and the number of instructors who included those skills as course competencies could exist for a variety of reasons. For those teachers whose course objectives are created by administration or other faculty members at their institution, perhaps they understand the importance of these skills and intentionally added them to the curriculum. Or possibly the teachers created their own syllabi early on and then decided part way through the semester to add these skills and activities when they had extra time in class.

**Table 9: Survey Question #7 Results: Which of the skills you chose in question #6 were listed as part of the course objectives or competencies in the Level 2 course syllabus?**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Sight-reading	11	100%
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	3	27%
Ensemble Playing	9	82%
Score Reading	5	45%
Score Reduction	1	9%
Transposition	7	64%
Melodic Harmonization	9	82%
None of these were included	0	0

Question #8: Level 3

In question #8 teachers identified which semester they most recently taught level 3 class piano. Four of the teachers (36%) offered the class in the spring of 2021 and the other seven teachers (64%) taught it last in the fall of 2020. This discrepancy between semesters from level 2 to level 3 is likely because some schools only offer the odd-numbered courses (levels 1 and 3) in the fall and the even-numbered courses (levels 2 and 4) in the spring.

**Table 10: Survey Question #8 Results: What was the most recent semester you taught Level 3 class piano at your current institution?**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Summer 2021	0	0
Spring 2021	4	36%
Fall 2020	7	64%
Summer 2020	0	0
Spring 2020	0	0
Fall 2019	0	0
I haven't taught this level	0	0

Question #9: Level 3

For the ninth question of the survey instructors indicated which collaborative skills they utilized in their latest level 3 class. The four skills in which teacher participation increased compared to level 2 classes were vocal and/or instrumental collaboration, score reading, score reduction, and melodic harmonization.

Vocal/instrumental collaboration increased from three instructors teaching the skill in level 2 (27%) to eight instructors teaching the skill in level 3 (73%). Score reduction also jumped from two educators teaching it in level 2 (18%) to five participants teaching it in level 3 (45%). Both score reading and melodic harmonization gained one instructor's support in level 3 compared to level 2—from eight to nine instructors and ten to eleven instructors respectively. The only category that decreased in instructor usage was

ensemble playing, which dropped from nine teachers in level 2 (82%) to eight teachers in level 3 (73%).

**Table 11: Survey Question #9 Results: Regarding the most recent semester you taught Level 3 class piano (listed in question #8), which of the following skills did you incorporate into the curriculum? Choose all that apply.**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Sight-reading	11	100%
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	8	73%
Ensemble Playing	8	73%
Score Reading	9	82%
Score Reduction	5	45%
Transposition	11	100%
Melodic Harmonization	11	100%
None of these were included	0	0

Question #10: Level 3

The tenth question sought to determine which skills the level 3 teachers included on their syllabi. All eleven of the teachers included sight-reading, whereas only six of the eight teachers who taught vocal and/or instrumental collaboration included it on the syllabus. All eight teachers who incorporated segments on ensemble playing in their level

3 class mentioned it as a course objective on the syllabus. Nine teachers incorporated score-reading activities in class, but only six acknowledged this in the level 3 syllabus. Likewise, two of the five teachers who addressed score reduction in class did not refer to the skill on the syllabus. Only eight teachers listed transposition as a course objective, although all eleven teachers addressed the skill in their level 3 class. Finally, even though all eleven instructors taught melodic harmonization, only ten had it on the syllabus.

**Table 12: Survey Question #10 Results: Which of the skills you chose in question #9 were listed as part of the course objectives or competencies in the Level 3 course syllabus?**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Sight-reading	11	100%
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	6	55%
Ensemble Playing	8	73%
Score Reading	6	55%
Score Reduction	3	27%
Transposition	8	73%
Melodic Harmonization	10	91%
None of these were included	0	0

Question #11: Level 4

Question #11 asked teachers which semester they most recently taught level 4 class piano at their school. Ten participants (91%) indicated that they taught level 4 last in the spring of 2021, while one participant (9%) indicated that they taught level 4 last in the fall of 2020.

**Table 13: Survey Question #11 Results: What was the most recent semester you taught Level 4 class piano at your current institution?**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Summer 2021	0	0
Spring 2021	10	91%
Fall 2020	1	9%
Summer 2020	0	0
Spring 2020	0	0
Fall 2019	0	0
I haven't taught this level	0	0

Question #12: Level 4

In the twelfth question, teachers were asked which collaborative piano skills they added to their level 4 curriculum. Compared to the skills instructors added to level 3 studies, sight-reading, vocal/instrumental collaboration, and score reading stayed the same: eleven instructors (100%), eight instructors (73%), and nine instructors (82%) respectively. Ensemble playing and score reduction both increased in popularity, with

ensemble playing rising from eight to nine instructors between levels 3 and 4. Score reduction increased as well: only five teachers discussed the skill in their level 3 classes while seven teachers discussed it in their level 4 classes. Interestingly, two categories decreased from level 3 to level 4 courses; although all eleven teachers applied lessons in transposition and melodic harmonization to their level 3 classes, only ten teachers offered lessons in those categories in their level 4 courses.

**Table 14: Survey Question #12 Results: Regarding the most recent semester you taught Level 4 class piano (listed in question #11), which of the following skills did you incorporate into the curriculum? Choose all that apply.**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Sight-reading	11	100%
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	8	73%
Ensemble Playing	9	82%
Score Reading	9	82%
Score Reduction	7	64%
Transposition	10	91%
Melodic Harmonization	10	91%
None of these were included	0	0



#### Question #13: Level 4

Question #13 was designed to discover which collaborative piano skills participants listed as course competencies in their most recent level 4 syllabus. Based on the instructors' feedback, each of the listed skills was taught more frequently than it was communicated as a competency in the syllabus. Ten of the eleven people who incorporated sight-reading activities into their level 4 courses listed it as a competency. Similarly, one person who taught melodic harmonization did not include it as a competency—ten people taught the skill but nine people listed it on the syllabus. For four of the skills, two fewer people than taught it added it as a competency: vocal/instrumental collaboration dropped from eight instructors to six, ensemble playing dropped from nine teachers to seven, score reading likewise dropped from nine to seven teachers, and score reduction diminished from seven participants to five. The biggest discrepancy occurred with those who taught transposition: ten teachers offered a class segment on the skill, but only six listed it as a competency.

**Table 15: Survey Question #13 Results: Which of the skills you chose in question #12 were listed as part of the course objectives or competencies in the Level 4 course syllabus?**

Chosen Response	Number of respondents who chose this option	Percentage of respondents who chose this option
Sight-reading	10	91%
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	6	55%
Ensemble Playing	7	64%
Score Reading	7	64%
Score Reduction	5	45%
Transposition	6	55%
Melodic Harmonization	9	83%
None of these were included	0	0

Question #14: Ideal competencies

The fourteenth question provided participants an opportunity to share their opinion regarding which collaborative piano skills should be added as competencies to which levels of class piano. This question asked respondents to identify the skills for each level that they wish were on the syllabi as course objectives but were not. None of the respondents chose sight-reading as a category that they wanted to see on syllabi more often. The two skills that participants deemed most lacking as current class piano

competencies were transposition and vocal/instrumental collaboration. Regarding vocal/instrumental collaboration, as the level of the class increased so did the number of teachers who desired for it to be a course objective. One participant wanted vocal/instrumental collaboration to be added as a level 1 competency, two participants wanted it added to level 2 courses, three participants wanted it added to level 3 classes, and four respondents (36%) chose it to be incorporated into level 4 courses.

Transposition was another skill that many teachers felt was missing as a core component from various levels of classes, although the majority of those who responded thought it should be added to level 2. One person voted for transposition to be included as a level 1 competency, four people (36%) voted for it to be included in level 2, three people wanted it to be added to level 3, and two participants thought it should be a level 4 requirement. Both ensemble playing and melodic harmonization received few votes: only one person wanted melodic harmonization to be added to level 2. Levels 1, 2, and 4 all received one vote for adding ensemble playing. Some participants would prefer that score reading was incorporated as a competency to levels 2, 3, and 4—which received one vote, two votes, and two votes respectively. Unfortunately, five participants did not answer this question, which equates to 45% of the survey respondents.

**Table 16: Survey Question #14 Results: If any of the aforementioned specific skills were not listed as course objectives or competencies in one of the four class piano courses mentioned previously, are there any you would like to see added to the courses you teach? Please click on these skills next to the corresponding level you wish they would be added to.**

Chosen Response	Level 1	%	Level 2	%	Level 3	%	Level 4	%
Sight-reading	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vocal and/or Instrumental Collaboration	1	9%	2	18%	3	27%	4	36%
Ensemble Playing	1	9%	1	9%	0	0	1	9%
Score Reading	0	0	1	9%	2	18%	2	18%
Score Reduction	0	0	1	9%	2	18%	4	36%
Transposition	1	9%	4	36%	3	27%	2	18%
Melodic Harmonization	0	0	1	9%	0	0	0	0
Didn't answer question	5 45%							

### Question #15: Reason for lacking competencies

The final question of the survey asked participants to rank the reasons why the competencies they chose in question #14 were omitted from their courses. The question provided six possible explanations and also included an “other” option, in which participants could type their own ideas. Respondents were instructed to number the options in order of importance, using a scale in which 1 was the most important factor and 7 the least important. Based on the answers to this question, participants held multiple interpretations of this question’s instructions. The question was written with the thought that each person would use all the numbers from 1 to 7 one time. However, some participants used the same number for multiple options. The wording of this question could have been clearer to provide more consistent interpretations and results. It is also valuable to note that one person did not answer this question.

The first possible choice listed as a reason for the lack of collaborative piano skill competencies was that the current curricula for class piano is extensive, leaving little class time for additional course objectives. Five of the ten participants who answered this question (50%) assigned it a rating of 1, meaning this reason was of primary importance for them. This was the highest response for a single rating out of all the reasons. Two people gave this option a rating of 2, meaning it was still quite important to them. One person assigned this reason a rating of 6, indicating that it was not an important factor in their situation. This choice also received the greatest number of responses rated 1 or 2, with seven people identifying it as such. Thus, most respondents acknowledged that the greatest reason they did not incorporate some of the collaborative piano skills as

objectives is a lack of class time and an abundance of existing functional piano objectives.

The second listed reason for the absence of collaborative piano course objectives in class piano was that the students do not have the pianistic technique to employ these skills. Rankings were more evenly distributed between 1 and 7 for this choice, although most respondents (six people) gave it a 1, 2, or 3, highlighting the validity of this rationale for the educators surveyed. Two participants ranked it at 1, two participants ranked it at 2, two participants ranked it at 3, one respondent gave it a 5, and one person gave it a 6.

The third choice of explanations for missing collaborative skills was that these skills are not the most important ones music students need for success in their future careers. Responses to this choice indicated that most instructors do not agree with this philosophy. One participant labeled this choice with a 2, two instructors rated it a 4, and four participants gave it a 7.

The next possible reason that collaborative skills were not listed as course objectives was that the course competencies are determined by other faculty members at the instructor's institution. Participant responses indicated that five of the ten respondents to this question thought that this was an important or relatively important factor in their scenario. Three instructors rated this reason 1, two instructors rated it 3, and two instructors rated it 6.

Another listed choice for question #15 was that many of the missing collaborative skills are also missing from the currently used course textbook, and the instructor does not have the freedom to change textbooks at this time. Participants had a wide variety of

opinions regarding the importance of this factor in their situation, spanning numbers 1 through 7. One instructor gave it a 1, one person gave it a 3, and two people gave it a 7. Two participants ranked it 2 and two participants ranked it 5. None of the respondents chose 4 or 6. Because four of the rankings were less than 4 and three of the rankings were greater than 4, more instructors thought this was a relevant factor than not.

The next choice also concerned textbooks and stated that the instructor is not familiar with class piano textbook options that contain both functional and collaborative piano skills. Once again, instructor opinions differed widely, although in this case most respondents thought the statement was not an important reason compared to the other options. One participant ranked it 1 and one participant ranked it 2, while two instructors rated this reason 4—halfway between the extremes. One respondent gave it 6 and two respondents gave it 7.

The last option in this question’s list of reasons for fewer collaborative competencies than were taught was labeled “other,” and offered instructors a textbox to type their own answers. One participant rated this choice a 7 but did not provide a description in the textbox. Two instructors gave this choice a 1 ranking and did not rank any other options. Although both participants offered insight into their choice, one appeared confused by the question: “None of the above responses correspond to what we do. Answers provided really don’t make sense.”<sup>65</sup> The other respondent seemed to have carefully thought through the issues and intricacies of this situation and created his or her own solutions:

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<sup>65</sup> This quote and the following quote in this chapter are taken from surveys, which were anonymous.

By the end of the four-semester sequence, I include all of these competencies. They are carefully sequenced throughout the curriculum to ensure positive and successful interaction with these skills. I do not include score reading, vocal/instrumental collaboration, or score reduction in level 1, except through a final project option, just due to the level of the students in this beginning class. However, we launch into these competencies throughout the second semester and beyond. I have found textbooks and sequenced examples from standard literature to ensure students are proficient in these competencies by the time they finish the four-semester sequence.

**Table 17: Survey Question #15 Results: Lack of Time**

**“There is barely enough time in the semester to teach the listed competencies already.”**

Importance Factor (1=most important, 7=least important)	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
1	5	45%
2	2	18%
3	0	0
4	0	0
5	0	0
6	1	9%
7	0	0



**Table 18: Survey Question #15 Results: Lack of Student Technique**

**“I don’t think the majority of students in these courses have the piano technique to handle these skills.”**

Importance Factor (1=most important, 7=least important)	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
1	2	18%
2	2	18%
3	2	18%
4	0	0
5	1	9%
6	1	9%
7	0	0

**Table 19: Survey Question #15 Results: Not Applicable to Future Careers**

**“I don’t think the skills listed above are the most important piano skills that these students will use in their future careers.”**

Importance Factor (1=most important, 7=least important)	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
1	0	0
2	1	9%
3	0	0
4	2	18%
5	0	0
6	0	0
7	4	36%

**Table 20: Survey Question #15 Results: Competencies Determined By Others**

**“The course competencies are determined by other faculty members at my institution or district. I don’t have a say in which are officially listed for my course.”**

Importance Factor (1=most important, 7=least important)	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
1	3	27%
2	0	9%
3	2	18%
4	0	0
5	0	0
6	2	18%
7	0	0

**Table 21: Survey Question #15 Results: Not in Textbook and Cannot Change**

**“Many of these skills aren’t taught in the textbook we currently use. We aren’t at liberty to change the textbook right now.”**

Importance Factor (1=most important, 7=least important)	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
1	1	9%
2	2	18%
3	1	9%
4	0	0
5	2	18%
6	0	0
7	1	9%

**Table 22: Survey Question #15 Results: Which Textbook?**

**“I don’t know which textbook to use that would incorporate all of these skills as well as the standard functional piano skills.”**

Importance Factor (1=most important, 7=least important)	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
1	1	9%
2	1	9%
3	0	0
4	2	18%
5	0	0
6	1	9%
7	2	18%

**Table 23: Survey Question #15 Results: Other (Please Describe)**

Importance Factor (1=most important, 7=least important)	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants	Written Comments
1	2	18%	(see Table 23)
2	0	0	
3	0	0	
4	0	0	
5	0	0	
6	0	0	
7	1	9%	(no comment included)

**Table 24: Survey Question #15 Results: Other—Written Responses**

Participant A	“By the end of the four-semester sequence, I include all of these competencies. They are carefully sequenced throughout the curriculum to ensure positive and successful interaction with these skills. I do not include score reading, vocal/instrumental collaboration, or score reduction in level 1, except through a final project option, just due to the level of the students in this beginning class. However, we launch into these competencies throughout the second semester and beyond. I have found textbooks and sequenced examples from standard literature to ensure students are proficient in these competences by the time they finish the four-semester sequence.”
Participant B	“None of the above responses correspond to what we do. Answers provided really don’t make sense.”

## CHAPTER 4

### INTERVIEWS

#### The Population

The population of the interview portion of this study was nine collegiate class piano instructors in the state of Arizona. As subjects for this part of the study, I chose nine of the twenty-six instructors who were sent surveys in the earlier portion of the study. Four of these instructors were educators at four-year universities and five taught at two-year institutions. Each of these nine teachers was sent an email requesting an interview with them (Appendix C).

#### The Research Instrument

This part of the study used an interview (Appendix E) that I conducted to gather data. The same collaborative piano skills explored in the survey were used to create the interview question categories: sight-reading, vocal and instrumental collaboration, ensemble playing, score reading, score reduction, transposition, and melodic harmonization.

The interview questions were designed to obtain more detailed information about the types of activities used to teach the above collaborative piano skills, the frequency with which each was incorporated in class, as well as textbook and supplement information. The interview included forty-five questions.

#### General Questions

The first seven questions of the interview sought to garner background information about which levels of class piano each school offers and the institution's

semester requirements, dependent on various majors. This section also sought to determine which textbooks and supplemental resources each instructor utilizes.

#### Information Regarding Transposition and Clef Reading

This portion of the interview contains eleven questions that were designed to determine which clefs instructors teach students to read, at which levels they include clef-reading activities, and their thoughts on the skill's importance. This section also sought to discover what types of activities instructors use to teach transposition in general as well as reading music for transposing instruments. Finally, it asked teachers their opinion on the importance of teaching transposition at the piano.

#### Information Regarding Sight-reading

In this segment of the interview instructors were asked to discuss how they incorporate sight-reading into their sequence of class piano curriculum. One question inquired about the types of sight-reading projects students complete and another asked if instructors use supplemental materials or only examples in the textbook to practice the skill.

#### Information Regarding Score Reading

In this section instructors were asked to describe the types of scores they use to teach students the skill of score reading. Teachers were also asked how frequently they require students to practice this skill, if they grade the student's performance of the skill, and when they include various levels of difficulty in score reading over the four-level course sequence.



### Information Regarding Duets and Ensembles

The goal of this section of questions was to discover the frequency of and specific scenarios in which class piano instructors incorporate duet and ensemble playing. It sought to determine the types of pieces and resources instructors use, how instructors organize partnerships, and the preparation and presentation format of these groups.

### Information Regarding Vocal and Instrumental Collaboration

This portion of the interview investigated the extent to which instructors include activities involving vocal and instrumental collaboration among students. It asked educators how they choose pieces, how partnerships are chosen, which levels of class piano participate in these activities, and the performance and grading plans.

### Information Regarding Score Reduction

The final segment of the interview pertained to score reduction and the ways teachers present this skill and offer opportunities for students to practice it. Instructors were asked to identify the resources they use, the levels at which they explore score reduction, and their methods of assessment.

### Collection of Data

The nine instructors identified as the population were sent the recruitment email template (Appendix C), which requested an interview. This request was emailed to five teachers on August 4, 2021, and a second round aimed at garnering more responses was emailed on August 11, 2021. Four instructors completed the consent process, which took place on jotform.com. The consent form can be found in Appendix D. I contacted each of the four participants and conducted interviews with three of them on Zoom. The fourth instructor asked for the questions to be sent to them via email, and then returned written

responses to the questions. As four of the nine instructors were interviewed, this part of the study had a participation rate of 44%.

### Analysis of Data

Once all interviews were conducted, responses were recorded in a Numbers spreadsheet. To preserve the participants' identities, responses will be discussed in the aggregate form.

### Results of the Study

#### General Questions

Each of the four instructors who were interviewed teaches all four levels of class piano at their respective school. One school offers an additional introductory level of class piano for non-music majors, and another school offers three separate courses for non-majors as well as a keyboard harmony course for piano performance majors.<sup>66</sup> This last school also has a keyboard lab class run by the music education department.

The instructors were also in agreement regarding the number of semesters of class piano that performance majors are required to take at their institution: each school requires four semesters. This was true for both vocal and instrumental performance majors at each school.

Three of the professors responded that music education majors are required to take all four levels of class piano at their school, with one exception—students pursuing a

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<sup>66</sup> Regarding the class piano courses offered to non-music majors, the instructor teaching the introductory course uses *Adult Piano Adventures: All-in-One Lesson Book 1* by Nancy and Randall Faber. The professor who teaches three class piano courses for non-music majors utilizes this book as well for their level 1 class. In the second semester course for non-majors, this instructor uses the next book in the same series: *Adult Piano Adventures: All-in-One Lesson Book 2*. For the third semester this professor requires students to purchase only a solo anthology. This professor also uses *Harmonization at the Piano* by Arthur Frackenpohl in their keyboard harmony course for piano performance majors.

Bachelor of Arts degree in music education at one of these institutions are required to take only two levels of class piano, while students pursuing a Bachelor of Music degree in music education must take four levels. At the fourth participant's institution music education majors need to take only two semesters of class piano. Music education students at this school then have the option to take a keyboard lab class.

The next question asked participants which textbooks they use in their class piano courses. Interestingly, all four instructors use *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1* by Lancaster and Renfrow in their level 1 course. Only three of the instructors use this book for level 2 class piano—one instructor utilizes *Keyboard Strategies: Master Text II* by Stecher and Horowitz for level 2. For level 3 courses, one instructor continues their use of *Keyboard Strategies: Master Text II*, while two of the instructors move to *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 2* by Lancaster and Renfrow. One of these two professors also requires students to purchase two additional textbooks: *Suzuki Violin School, Volume 1: Piano Accompaniment* and *Keyboard Skills for Music Educators: Score Reading* by Gregorich and Moritz. The fourth instructor teaching level 3 utilizes various supplementary resources and requires the students to purchase a solo anthology and then their choice of one of the following: *Practical Method of Italian Singing* by Vaccai or one of the Suzuki accompaniment books. All four teachers employ the same textbooks in level 4 that they use in level 3.

#### Transposition and Clef Reading

In this section of the interview, participants were asked about their incorporation of transposition and clef-reading activities. When asked if they taught students how to read the alto, tenor, or soprano clefs, two of the four professors responded that they teach

all these clefs—one covers them in levels 3 and 4 and the other covers them in levels 2, 3, and 4. One professor responded that they do not teach any of these clefs, and the last instructor indicated that they teach students how to read only the alto clef in levels 3 and 4.

Next, instructors were asked how important they thought clef-reading fluency was for their students. Three of the professors responded that they thought it is a necessary or essential skill for music education majors, specifically students specializing in instrumental education. One of these three participants further qualified their statement: “If they teach a typical school choir I don’t know if they really need to know this...it’s good to know. I mean, I learned them [alto, tenor, and soprano clefs] but I never really used them.”<sup>67</sup> They went on to add: “It would be nice to introduce these [to students] just so they know what the other clefs are, but I don’t know if it’s necessary to really focus on that.” The fourth participant remarked: “This is one of the skills that is of lower importance in my opinion.”

Next participants were asked if they teach students how to transpose in their class piano courses. All four instructors—three of them emphatically—replied yes. Three of the four mentioned that they begin teaching this skill in level 1 and continue working on it through level 4. When asked what types of exercises students transpose in each level, three of the professors expressed that they give students harmonization examples and short solo excerpts to transpose. One participant said that they have students transpose almost all sight-reading and harmonization activities. Another teacher mentioned their incorporation of transposition in ensemble pieces.

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<sup>67</sup> This quote and the following quotes in this chapter are taken from interviews. They are not attributed, to preserve anonymity.

The next question sought to discover the specific intervals to which instructors ask students to transpose exercises and pieces. Three of the four teachers responded that they give students experience transposing to all intervals within the octave. The fourth professor offers transposition exercises at a variety of intervals but qualified their statement with: "I'm guided by what is in the [text]book."

After discussing transposition in general, the interview conversation narrowed to transposing instruments. Instructors were asked if they teach students how to read transposing instruments, and if so which instruments and during which semesters of the class piano sequence. All four teachers acknowledged that they include segments on transposing instruments; however, two of them did not specify in which semesters or which instruments other than "standard" ones. One of the professors indicated their incorporation of instruments "like the trumpet and French horn" in semester 4 and occasionally in semester 3. Another professor described a clearer plan: they teach students how to read B-flat instruments in level 2, E-flat instruments in level 3, and F instruments in level 4.

Despite providing some vague responses regarding transposing instrument curricula, the instructors were unequivocal in their sentiments on the importance of transposition skills for pianists. When asked how important they thought the skill of transposition at the piano was, two instructors remarked that it was "essential," one said it was "very important," and the last called it "very, very important." One participant mentioned that transposing displays one's "understanding of the key, harmony, and function" of a piece of music. Another responded that transposition helps one "understand the harmonic progression" and "how the piece moves." Yet another

participant recognized transposition's functionality, remarking that it is a "real world skill," and one educators will use regularly.

Overall, the interview participants felt strongly about the importance of transposition in a pianist's education. The majority of respondents begin teaching this skill in the first semester of class piano and continue incorporating it into the curriculum throughout the four-course sequence. Most of the instructors use short pieces and harmonization exercises to practice this skill in their courses, and they offer students experience transposing to all intervals within the octave. The consensus of these four teachers was that clef reading is important for future educators, specifically instrumental educators. The alto clef is the most commonly taught clef among interview participants, and most participants incorporate clef reading into the last two semesters of class piano. Deeming transposition a valuable pianistic skill, these professors also teach students how to play music written for transposing instruments in the four-semester class piano sequence. Although they did not agree on when to introduce each instrument, they agreed that students should have experience transposing some of the most common instruments, including the trumpet and French horn.

### Sight-reading

The next section of the interview pertained to sight-reading and began with instructors identifying in which levels of class piano they teach sight-reading skills. The four participants responded unanimously that they teach sight-reading in all four levels of the course. Likewise, the professors disclosed that they use the course textbooks as well as supplementary resources to give students practice with this skill. One teacher remarked on how extensively they use supplements:

I supplement like crazy. I'm working on building my sight-reading curriculum out through all four semesters. I don't think the sequencing is quite level in the [text]book. I use the *Four Star Sight Reading and Ear Tests* books.<sup>68</sup> Then when they get past those, we just use standard piano literature.

Another teacher uses the *Practical Sight Reading Exercises* books by Berlin and Champagne for extra sight-reading exercises in levels 3 and 4.<sup>69</sup> This teacher also creates assignments from Arnoldo Sartorio's *Sight Reading Exercises*.<sup>70</sup> One of the teachers prefers to use repertoire pieces rather than exercises for sight-reading practice: "I don't give them [my students] sight-reading exercises per se. I'm more a fan of playing pieces—playing something that is exciting to learn...I don't like sight-reading just for the sake of sight-reading." The teacher further explained why they avoid exercises created specifically for sight-reading:

I don't think that they [my students] are proficient enough to just give them an exercise and have them play through it. I feel like they need to get the basic skills first. A lot of them come [to class piano] and they don't even know what's going on.

It seems this reasoning would extend to all functional piano exercises, not just sight-reading.

Although interview participants agreed about the importance of including sight-reading in all four semesters of class piano, their philosophies about how to incorporate it into the curriculum differed. One professor noted that they have students participate in sight-reading exercises on a weekly basis. Other teachers expressed that they have their

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<sup>68</sup> Boris Berlin and Andrew Markow, *Four Star Sight Reading and Ear Tests* (Toronto: Frederick Harris Music Co., 2002).

<sup>69</sup> Boris Berlin and Claude Champagne, *Practical Sight Reading Exercises for Piano Students* (Van Nuys: Alfred Publishing Co., 1997).

<sup>70</sup> Arnoldo Sartorio, *Sight Reading Exercises* (Indianapolis: Performer's Edition, 2008).

students engage in this activity more sporadically—in various assignments spread out over the semester. Regarding their pedagogical approach, three of the instructors mentioned that they teach students to visualize playing a piece before they actually play it. One instructor called this “air piano” and another called it “shadowing” through a piece. Another practice tactic mentioned by one participant was to have students verbally analyze each chord of the piece before playing it. One teacher commented that they discuss reduction in levels 3 and 4 as a tool for sight-reading more difficult pieces.

All four instructors affirmed that they assess students’ sight-reading skills by graded assignments. While one teacher specifically mentioned that sight-reading is a component on each exam—of which there are three or four each semester—other professors indicated that they evaluate student competence via less weighty means like short drills during class time.

Thus, the results of the interview show that these four class piano instructors place great importance on developing their students’ sight-reading skills. They integrate sight-reading assignments into each of the four semesters of the course sequence and utilize both textbooks and supplementary resources to provide students with a richer experience. The three areas in which participant opinions varied were the difficulty level of sight-reading assignments, the frequency of classroom sight-reading activities, and the percentage sight-reading assessment bears in a student’s semester grade.

### Score Reading

After sight-reading, we discussed score reading in the interviews. All four instructors said that they include this skill in their class piano courses. Three professors incorporate score reading into levels 2, 3, and 4, and the other professor always



incorporates it into levels 3 and 4, while adding it to level 2 some semesters. When asked about the frequency with which they assign activities in score reading, two of the educators indicated that students get practice with this skill on a weekly basis from the time it is introduced to the end of the semester. Another teacher said that they focus on this skill during the second half of the semester. The last professor acknowledged that their students do not practice score reading often—at best they see two pieces per semester: one choral score and one orchestral score. Instructors likewise employ varying assessment methods: while two teachers mentioned including score reading on tests and exams, another teacher includes it on a single assignment.

Three of the instructors articulated similar methods and pedagogical approaches to teaching score reading. In these classes, students play two parts when reading open scores in level 2, three parts in level 3, and four parts in level 4. In one of the professor's classes students are required to sing one part and play the other while reading two-part scores. Another professor gives students the option of singing one part and playing the others for two-, three-, and four-part score reading. Two teachers also mentioned that they discuss score-reduction methods when teaching four-part score reading. Finally, one professor offered a collaborative exam scenario: when students play three- or four-part scores during their final exam, the whole class sings the parts along with them.

In summary, the four interviewees cover score reading in their class piano courses with varying degrees of consistency—half of them on a weekly basis and the other two less often. Most of the professors interviewed give students exercises in score reading in all levels of the course except the first semester. Instructors are split in how they assess student competency—half of them use exams and the other half use assignments. In

general, participants agreed on matching the student's course level with the number of lines they read simultaneously on a choral or symphonic score. Half of the participants encourage their students to sing one line while playing others as a score-reading learning tool. Half of the participants also teach and promote reduction techniques for complicated pieces of music.

### Duets and Ensembles

Next interview participants were asked questions about including piano duets and ensemble music in their curriculum. All four instructors affirmed that they give students piano duets and/or ensemble pieces to practice, and each commented that they do this in all four levels of the class. When asked how they organize duet and ensemble groups, half of the professors responded that they group students based on where they are sitting in the classroom. One of these educators also added: "If they choose a duet for their final project then they choose the partner." Another teacher follows suit and allows students to choose their duet teammate. The fourth teacher offered insight into student-led partner choosing:

Sometimes I let them choose, but I think it's more effective if I choose because they often choose by friendship, even though their levels [of piano technique] aren't the same. Once I figure out who is where in terms of level, then I group them together.

Despite their disagreement on who chooses duet partnerships, the four interviewees followed similar methods in splitting duet and ensemble practice time. All four mentioned that they give students time in class to practice—some more than others—and require students to practice their ensemble pieces outside of class. These professors also all require live duet and ensemble performances, although one of them

communicated that they recently allowed students to create video recordings of duet performances in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

When asked what resources they use for duet and ensemble music all participants responded that they use the textbook. Three of the four also indicated using supplementary books as well. Two teachers conveyed that they employ creative assignments in this area: one of them takes shorter pieces in the text that are intended for sight-reading and has students write two-handed accompaniments from them that they then play as duets with classmates. Also a proponent of harmonization activities, the other instructor gives students a project in pairs for which they determine the melody of a popular tune by ear and then create a two-handed accompaniment for it, playing the final project as a duet. Another educator prefers to bring in their personal collection of duet books from various genres. They remarked that popular music and movie music were two of the students' favorite genres for the duet.

The next interview question sought to determine who chooses duet and ensemble repertoire: students or instructors . Responses focused on duet music, as typically the professors have the entire class participate in the same ensemble piece. One professor remarked that they do not allow students to choose duet or ensemble repertoire, but they do allow students to choose solo repertoire from a pre-determined selection of pieces. Two professors expressed that they choose some of the duet pieces students practice and students are able to choose the others. Offering valuable advice from experience, one of the teachers said: "If we do individual duets then we have one piece for everyone. That way when someone's partner doesn't show up we aren't stuck." This prudent solution saves class time and ensures that student responsibility is equitably distributed. The last

interviewee asserted that they give students duet repertoire options, and the students choose from this selection.

In retrospect, the four educators interviewed integrate duet and ensemble work into all four levels of class piano. Half of the participants delegate student partnerships and the other half usually allow students the freedom to choose duet partners. The teachers are of one accord in letting students practice ensemble repertoire both in and out of class. All of the educators utilize ensemble repertoire from the textbook and the majority of the educators also provide repertoire supplements from their personal library. Incorporating multiple skills and activities at one time, half of the teachers offer harmonization practice opportunities in ensemble and duet settings. Finally, the instructors revealed assorted perspectives on student-chosen duet and ensemble repertoire.

#### Vocal and Instrumental Collaboration

In this section of the interview participants answered questions pertaining to the inclusion of vocal and instrumental collaboration in their courses. All participants indicated that they include projects for which students play accompaniments to vocal or instrumental music. One of the professors requires this activity in the second half of the third semester while two professors require it the third and fourth semesters. The other teacher requires students to play an accompaniment in the second, third, and fourth semesters. One of the participants who requires collaboration in levels 3 and 4 offers students in levels 1 and 2 the option of choosing an accompaniment project as well.

Although the instructors all include at least one collaborative activity in the class piano course sequence, only two educators verbalized that they provide activities

addressing both vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Performance situations also vary greatly among instructors. While all of the teachers require their students to perform accompaniments live, only three of them require that it be with the instrumentalist or singer listed on the score for the main collaborative project of the semester. One of the instructors plays the instrumental or vocal part on the piano if their students are unable to find a colleague to play the indicated part. This teacher also plays vocal and instrumental recordings with which piano students play along. All four educators permit students to choose the collaborative piece they play—with instructor consultation and approval—from various resources outside of the textbook. Most of the instructors recommend that students prepare a piece written for their own instrument as a starting point in repertoire exploration.

In addition to the larger semester projects that each teacher assigns, three of the educators mentioned smaller assignments for which students practice playing accompaniments for vocal and/or instrumental music. One of the professors requires students to purchase a Suzuki accompaniment book, which they use for practice in class, while another professor gives students the choice of purchasing either a Suzuki accompaniment book or a Vaccai vocalise book. In these cases, students play the piano accompaniment while either another student or the teacher plays the violin or vocal part on the piano.

The instructor who requires students to acquire the Suzuki accompaniment resource also discussed myriad vocal assignments that they implement in all four levels of class: “We are constantly doing vocal warmups. We start with five-finger patterns and then go into vocal warmups. They [the students] pick keys out of a hat. On certain days

they play it in front of the class and the class sings along.” This educator also has students collaborate with singers during choral score-reading sessions—students take turns playing the open score while the class sings the parts. Another vocal accompaniment exercise this instructor utilizes is having students play accompaniment excerpts from the *Spotlight on Music* series, published by McGraw-Hill. The teacher pointed out that they play the vocal part on the piano while students play the accompaniments: “they don’t accompany an actual singer, although sometimes I sing too.”

Thus, opinions among the four interviewees were widespread regarding the amount and sequence-placement of vocal and/or instrumental collaboration practiced in their class piano courses. Only one professor expressed practicing vocal accompaniments on a regular basis throughout all four levels. In another professor’s class students play with vocal and instrumental recordings and have the option to play their chosen accompaniment with a live musician. Some students in this class then never get the full experience of playing an accompaniment with a live singer or instrumentalist.

### Score Reduction

The final section of the interview pertained to reducing difficult scores. When asked if they include this skill in class, one of the instructors responded no. They added: “Only in specific cases when they [the students] want to play a piece that’s more difficult than they can handle. Then I will just give them personal advice.” Two of the participants remarked that they incorporate score-reduction lessons into levels 3 and 4, and both teachers remarked that they include sessions on how to reduce during score-reading practice as well as with pieces written for the piano. One of these participants mentioned that they also incorporate reduction suggestions when students are playing

accompaniments, specifically acknowledging a piece in the Suzuki accompaniment book that involves perpetual motion. The fourth professor expressed that they introduce score reduction in level 4, using selections from Schirmer's *24 Italian Songs and Arias* publication. This professor also disclosed that in their keyboard harmony class for piano majors they discuss score reduction, and students practice this skill with Ingolf Dahl's *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Orchestra*.

The three instructors who teach score reduction in their courses all expressed that they include this skill on a graded assignment or test, although one of the professors who includes reduction in levels 3 and 4 courses only assesses this skill independently from score reading in the level 4 final exam. When asked if they use examples in the textbook or supplementary resources to practice score reduction, two teachers responded that they mostly use supplements. One of these teachers cited the reason for this decision: “[We use supplements] mainly because I think most of the pieces in the Alfred books are at a level that they [students] can play if they practice.”

Overall, the consensus among interview participants was that score reduction is included in level 4, except for one instructor who does not include it at all. Half of the instructors offer score-reduction suggestions during score-reading practice sessions, and these teachers also discuss reduction suggestions with music written specifically for the piano. Two of the participants also described giving students score-reduction assignments with instrumental and vocal accompaniments.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which collaborative piano skills are found in Arizona collegiate class piano curricula and the extent to which these skills are found in contemporary collegiate class piano textbooks. The study consisted of three parts: 1) a review of textbooks used in collegiate group piano courses to discover the breadth of collaborative piano skills, 2) a survey of Arizona collegiate group piano instructors to identify which collaborative piano skills they include as competencies and when they teach these skills, and 3) interviews of Arizona collegiate class piano educators to ascertain their pedagogical practices related to collaborative piano skills.

This study investigated the following questions:

1. How are collaborative piano skills similar to and/or different from the existing functional keyboard skills taught in collegiate class piano courses?
2. Should collaborative piano skills be incorporated into the collegiate class piano curricula? If so, which skills and when in the course sequence?
3. Which collaborative skills do the mainstream collegiate class piano textbooks incorporate and when in the course sequence?
4. Which of these textbooks provide the most comprehensive selection of activities in collaborative piano skills?



5. Which collaborative piano skills do Arizona collegiate class piano instructors incorporate in their curricula? To what extent are these techniques practiced and when in the course sequence?
6. How can Arizona collegiate class piano curricula be improved to include more collaborative piano skills useful to a broad range of musicians?

Class Piano Textbook Review

**Table 25: Class Piano Textbook Review: Collaborative Piano Skills**

<b>Collaborative Piano Skill/ Textbook</b>	<i>Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1</i>	<i>Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 2</i>	<i>Alfred's Piano 101, Book 1 and Book 2</i>
<b>Transposition</b>	Activities in 25 of the 26 units. To various major and minor keys.	Activities in all 26 units. To various major and minor keys.	Activities in 6 of the 30 units. Only of technical patterns.
<b>Transposing Instruments</b>	None	Activities in 11 of the 26 units. Instruments in E-flat, B-flat, and F.	None
<b>Clef Reading</b>	None	Activities in 9 of the 26 units. Alto clef.	None
<b>Sight-reading</b>	Activities in 24 of the 26 units.	Activities in all 26 units.	Activities in all 30 units.
<b>Score Reading</b>	None	Activities in 20 of the 26 units. 2-part choral—SATB. Various instrumental combinations.	None
<b>Piano Duet and Ensemble Playing</b>	3 duets. 8 4-part ensemble pieces.	7 duets. 5 3-part ensemble pieces. 2 4-part ensemble pieces. 2 band scores as piano ensembles.	4 duets. 4 4-part ensemble pieces. <i>Book 1</i> : most pieces thru unit 7 have teacher accompaniment.
<b>Vocal and Instrumental Collaboration</b>	None	8 vocal/piano duets. 6 instrumental/piano duets.	None
<b>Score Reduction</b>	None	None	None

<b>Collaborative Piano Skill/ Textbook</b>	<b><i>Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults, Book One</i></b>	<b><i>Keyboard Musicianship: Piano for Adults, Book Two</i></b>	<b><i>Piano for the Developing Musician</i></b>
<b>Transposition</b>	Activities in 7 of the 8 chapters. To various major and minor keys.	Activities in 7 of the 8 chapters. To various major and minor keys.	Activities in all 14 chapters. To all intervals within the octave.
<b>Transposing Instruments</b>	None	Activities in 3 of the 8 chapters. Instruments in E-flat, B-flat, and F.	Activities in 5 of the 14 chapters. Instruments in A, B-flat, and F.
<b>Clef Reading</b>	None	Activities in 3 of the 8 chapters. Alto and tenor clefs.	Activities in 6 of the 14 chapters. Alto and octave soprano clefs.
<b>Sight-reading</b>	Activities in all 8 chapters.	Activities in all 8 chapters.	Activities in 10 of the 14 chapters.
<b>Score Reading</b>	None	Activities in all 8 chapters. 2-part choral—SATB. Various instrumental combinations.	Activities in 6 of the 14 chapters. 2-part choral—SATB. Various instrumental combinations.
<b>Piano Duet and Ensemble Playing</b>	37 duets.	17 duets. 1 3-part ensemble piece.	16 duets. 2 3-part ensemble excerpts. 3 4-part ensemble excerpts. 7 5-part (or more) ensemble excerpts.
<b>Vocal and Instrumental Collaboration</b>	None	3 vocal/piano duets.	2 vocal/piano duets excerpts. 8 instrumental/piano duet excerpts.
<b>Score Reduction</b>	None	None	None

<b>Collaborative Piano Skill/ Textbook</b>	<b><i>Group Piano: Proficiency in Theory and Performance</i></b>	<b><i>Contemporary Class Piano</i></b>
<b>Transposition</b>	Activities in 25 of the 26 units. To various major and minor keys.	Activities in all 26 units. To various major and minor keys.
<b>Transposing Instruments</b>	None	Activities in 11 of the 26 units. Instruments in E-flat, B-flat, and F.
<b>Clef Reading</b>	None	Activities in 9 of the 26 units. Alto clef.
<b>Sight-reading</b>	Activities in 24 of the 26 units.	Activities in all 26 units.
<b>Score Reading</b>	None	Activities in 20 of the 26 units. 2-part choral—SATB. Various instrumental combinations.
<b>Piano Duet and Ensemble Playing</b>	3 duets. 8 4-part ensemble pieces.	7 duets. 5 3-part ensemble pieces. 2 4-part ensemble pieces. 2 band scores as piano ensembles.
<b>Vocal and Instrumental Collaboration</b>	None	8 vocal/piano duets. 6 instrumental/piano duets.
<b>Score Reduction</b>	None	None

<b>Collaborative Piano Skill/ Textbook</b>	<b><i>Keyboard Strategies: Master Text I</i></b>	<b><i>Keyboard Strategies: Master Text II</i></b>	<b><i>Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators</i></b>
<b>Transposition</b>	Activities in 10 of the 11 chapters. To various major and minor keys.	Activities in 4 of the 7 chapters. To various major and minor keys.	Activities in 5 of the 12 chapters. To various major and minor keys.
<b>Transposing Instruments</b>	None	Activities in 1 of the 7 chapters. Instruments in E, A, E-flat, B-flat, and F.	None
<b>Clef Reading</b>	None	2 string quartets and one orchestral excerpt include a viola part in the alto clef.	None
<b>Sight-reading</b>	Activities in all 11 chapters.	Activities in 4 of the 7 chapters.	None
<b>Score Reading</b>	None	Activities in 1 of the 7 chapters. SATB. Orchestral excerpts. String quartets.	None
<b>Piano Duet and Ensemble Playing</b>	36 duet activities. 3 3-part ensemble activities. 8 4-part (or more) ensemble activities.	26 duet activities. 7 3-part ensemble activities. 12 4-part (or more) ensemble activities.	None
<b>Vocal and Instrumental Collaboration</b>	None	4 vocal/piano duet excerpts. 5 instrumental/piano duet excerpts.	Vocal/piano duets in all 12 chapters.
<b>Score Reduction</b>	None	None	1 of the 12 chapters is called Score Reduction

## Survey

On June 9 and 10, 2021, twenty-six collegiate class piano instructors in Arizona were emailed a survey created on jotform.com. These twenty-six instructors represented five four-year institutions and thirteen two-year institutions. A second round of emails was sent to the same twenty-six instructors on August 10, 2021, to garner more responses. The last survey response was submitted on August 11, 2021. Eleven instructors submitted the survey, a 43% return rate.

Survey results indicated the following:

1. The majority of instructors taught all four levels over the past year.
2. Instructors taught more collaborative skills than were listed as course competencies across all levels.
3. In level 1 courses, transposition and melodic harmonization were the two collaborative piano skills that instructors felt strongly about and included in their courses, although they were not specifically required to do so by their school.
4. In level 2 courses, transposition and score reading were the two collaborative piano skills that instructors felt strongly about and included in their courses, although they were not specifically required to do so by their school.
5. In level 3 courses, score reading and transposition were the two collaborative piano skills that instructors felt strongly about and included in their courses, although they were not specifically required to do so by their school.

6. In level 4 courses, transposition was the collaborative piano skill that instructors felt strongly about and included in their courses, although they were not specifically required to do so by their school.
7. The higher the course level, the more instructors there were who incorporated collaborative piano skills.
8. The higher the course level, the more instructors there were who taught a collaborative piano skill that was not specifically required by their school.
9. 36% of instructors wanted to see transposition added as a competency to level 2.
10. 36% of instructors wanted to see vocal/instrumental collaboration and score reduction added as competencies to level 4.
11. 45% of instructors responded that they do not include the missing competencies because they do not feel there is enough time to cover current competencies.
12. 36% of instructors indicated that the least important reason for their lack of collaborative skill competencies was that they did not think students would use these skills in their careers.
13. 27% of instructors listed the most important reason for this competency disparity as being that they are not the ones creating competencies at their institution.

## Interview

On August 4 and 11, 2021, requests for an interview were sent by email to nine collegiate class piano instructors in Arizona. These nine instructors represented four four-year institutions and five two-year institutions. Four instructors (44%) responded to the request. Three of these interviews were conducted via Zoom and one interviewee received written questions and emailed back their responses.

Interview results indicated the following:

1. Music majors at all four schools are required to take four levels of class piano, with one exception: at one school music education majors are required to take only two semesters.
2. Three of the four instructors use *Alfred's Group Piano, Book 1* for levels 1 and 2. Two of those three also use *Alfred's Group Piano, Book 2* for levels 3 and 4.
3. Two instructors require level 4 students to purchase a supplemental accompaniment resource such as a Vaccai vocalise book or a Suzuki accompanying book.
4. One instructor does not teach clef reading. The others teach clef reading in levels 3 and 4, with one instructor also teaching it in level 2.
5. Instructors agreed that clef reading is important for music education majors, but not very important for other students.
6. All four instructors teach transposition in all four levels of class piano. Three of them use harmonization exercises to practice transposition.



7. Three of the four instructors give students activities transposing pieces to all intervals within an octave by the time students are in level 4.
8. All four educators teach students by level 4 how to play music written for transposing instruments at concert pitch.
9. The four educators all think transposition is a very important skill to develop for music majors whose primary instrument is not the piano.
10. All four instructors incorporate sight-reading exercises into all four levels of class piano.
11. All four instructors incorporate score-reading exercises into levels 3 and 4. Three instructors teach this skill in level 2, and the other teacher occasionally teaches it in level 2.
12. Two instructors give students regular score-reading activities over the course of the semester, one instructor focuses on it the second half of the semester, and the other instructor gives students two exercises per semester.
13. All four instructors require students to work on assignments involving vocal or instrumental collaboration. One teacher requires this in level 2, all four teachers require it in level 3, and two teachers require it in level 4.
14. Three of the instructors require students to play with singers or instrumentalists for the project(s), and one instructor gives students the option of playing the piano part while the teacher plays the vocal or instrumental part on the piano.

15. Two instructors incorporate score-reduction lessons and exercises in levels 3 and 4, one instructor incorporates it only in level 4, and the other instructor does not teach the skill.

### Conclusions

Based on this study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. None of the textbooks reviewed contains activities in all seven of the collaborative piano skills identified. Class piano educators will need to supplement with other materials if they wish to provide a thorough education in collaborative piano skills.
2. Only one of the textbooks studied mentions score reduction, and this text is not intended to be a comprehensive resource for functional piano skills. Textbook authors should consider incorporating sections on how to reduce difficult scores, particularly when discussing score reading and vocal and instrumental accompaniment.
3. Although class piano instructors have an exorbitant amount of material to teach each semester, it is possible to include more collaborative piano skills practice by layering skills within the same activity. For example, a harmonization exercise can be used as a duet between two students: one student plays the melody and the other plays a two-handed accompaniment. Both students could even sing the lyrics as they are playing. As another means of incorporating multiple skills in one activity, vocal and instrumental accompaniment assignments can be used to practice score-reduction skills.

4. Professional collaborative pianists utilize many of the skills taught in class piano courses and thus would make prime candidates for class piano instructors. Many of the current collegiate keyboard jobs are hybrid scenarios that require candidates to have collaborative piano skills as well as class piano teaching skills.
5. Vocal/instrumental collaboration, score reduction, and score reading are the collaborative piano skills most frequently absent from class piano course competency lists in Arizona. As these are the skills many music students will use in their future careers, they should be added as course objectives to syllabi for at least levels 2, 3, and 4.
6. Because one school requires music majors whose primary instrument is not piano to take only two semesters of class piano, it is even more important for these students that collaborative piano skills are introduced in level 1. Activities of corresponding difficulty can and should be incorporated into each level of class piano so that students have adequate time to absorb and develop these skills.
7. While reading music in the alto clef is an important skill, the viola is the only instrument that uses this clef. The cello, bassoon, and trombone all use the tenor clef. Students who are instrumental education majors would greatly benefit from practice reading the tenor clef.
8. To truly become well-rounded pianists, students need practice transposing to all intervals within the octave. But collaborative pianists today rarely practice this type of transposition. With the convenience of the internet one can find

both songs and musical theater pieces transposed to virtually any key. Class piano students pursuing careers in general music education, vocal music education, and music therapy will still benefit from practicing this skill.

### Recommendations for Teaching Collaborative Piano Skills

The results of this study showed that the most important missing collaborative piano skills in Arizona class piano courses are vocal and instrumental collaboration with live singers and instrumentalists and score reduction. In this section I will offer some suggestions on what to incorporate in a class piano unit on these subjects, as well as ideas for collaborative activities and exercises.

Before class piano students are ready to play with instrumentalists or singers, they will need some introductory lessons on the aural and visual elements that go along with each instrument group. For example, wind instrumentalists and singers use their breath to create sound. Collaborative pianists must first learn how to breathe along with their partners to play together. Wind players and singers cue entrances using their breath, and then need to take periodic breaths as they are playing. Piano students must work with their instrumental and vocal colleagues to discuss when breaths are needed, and then modify tempi to give their partner time to breathe. Students can practice this breathing with their partners using pentascale patterns. As they get comfortable with these patterns, they could move to simple tunes such as children's songs, in which breath needs are more easily recognizable. Then students can experiment with accommodating breathing in easier pieces written for the specific instruments or voice types with which they are playing. By level 4, students should be capable of playing easier songs with various voice

types and understand how to assist a singer through a phrase. Likewise, students in level 4 should be comfortable playing easier repertoire written for one instrument and piano with their instrumental colleagues.

Instructors will need to discuss the other important visual and aural cues collaborative pianists use regularly, such as watching the bow with string players and aligning the note they play with a singer's vowel rather than a consonant. These techniques can also be practiced sequentially beginning in level 1 with pentascale patterns and continuing through level 4 with instrument-specific repertoire.

To provide more practice, instructors could invite instrumental and vocal teaching assistants to visit the class and offer a brief introduction to their instrument. One important topic to discuss would be the inherent volume/timbre characteristics of their ranges. Each instrument and voice type has certain ranges that are louder, and others that are softer. When playing with their instrumental and vocal colleagues, pianists must learn to adjust their own dynamics accordingly. Piano students could take turns playing eight-measure excerpts of duo works that feature these problematic registration considerations.

Another way educators can incorporate multiple skills in one activity would be through pairing vocal and instrumental collaboration and harmonization practice. In level 1 of class piano, students learn how to play dominant and tonic chord accompaniments in the left hand while playing a simple melody in the right hand. This would be a great time to introduce simple vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Students in the class can take turns playing a simple, recognizable tune on their primary instrument or can sing the tune, while classmates aurally create a V/I two-handed accompaniment on the piano. The

same exercise can be used as students progress to higher levels by adding more chord options and more complex accompaniment styles.

Teachers can also use these in-class vocal and instrumental duos to practice score reduction, another skill that piano students need to be successful in their future musical careers. Before students are sent off to try reducing scores, they will need some coaching in how to do this. Instructors can tell them about the primary importance of the bass line as a foundation for all other voices, and that even a scant bass line in the left hand can keep a piece going. Josh Massicot's *Functional Piano for Music Therapists and Music Educators* is a resource rich in tips and tricks for reducing various types of scores from many different genres. Students can practice reducing first on their own with solo supplements that are level-appropriate, and then can practice the skill in a collaborative scenario.

Class piano students can pair up with their classmates, who would bring their primary instrument to class. The instructor could then pass out single-page excerpts featuring duo works from that instrument's repertoire. Students could have five minutes to review the piece at the piano on their own, and then would take turns performing the excerpts in front of the class with the appropriate instrumentalist or singer. Because these piano parts are not always simple, students will need to simplify what they play to match their technical abilities. Here they can practice implementing the previously discussed tenets of score reduction, and observers can offer commentary to further reinforce the ideas.

Ultimately, students will be more comfortable with both vocal and instrumental collaboration and score reduction the more opportunities they have to practice them. I

recommend adding segments on both topics beginning in level 1 and continuing through level 4. To work within time constraints, instructors can overlap these activities with other skills and assignments such as exercises involving harmonization, playing-by-ear, and transposition.

I think it is also important to note that some of the functional piano skills that were valued forty years ago are no longer as necessary. The internet offers easy access to databases and programs in which one can quickly find both art songs and popular songs in any key they desire. Today's collaborative pianists thus have less need for the skill of transposition. In my opinion, class piano students' time would be better spent practicing vocal and instrumental duos with their classmates.

Another skill that class piano students are not likely to use or need after they leave college is the ability to play string quartets on the piano. As a professional collaborative pianist, I have never been asked to play a string quartet on the piano. Occasionally orchestra directors and string teachers might do this. But typically, if someone was coaching a group of students playing a string quartet and wanted to demonstrate a specific group sound or effect, they would just find a YouTube video of another group playing that piece and play the video for the students. Voice students taking class piano would be much better served spending less time playing string quartets and more time learning how to accompany their vocal colleagues.

Clef reading at the piano is yet another skill that I would argue students use infrequently in their post-collegiate careers. Certainly, ensemble directors whose group includes cellists, bassoonists, violists, and/or trombonists should be able to read the alto and tenor clefs. But they would have little reason to play these parts on the piano when

they could simply sing the line or play a recording on their phone just as quickly. As a collaborative pianist, even when I am working with clef-reading instrumentalists I do not need to play their part on the piano. In a rehearsal setting I do frequently identify the concert pitch for specific notes in the instrumentalist's score, but this is just to clarify which phrase we are about to rehearse. If I want to demonstrate a phrasing or expressive gesture, I simply sing the instrumentalist's line. Instead of including string quartets and extensive clef-reading activities in class piano, I believe this time would be better spent on collaborative playing exercises in which students can get more practice playing the piano in vocal and instrumental duos with their peers.

Furthermore, the musical examples used in many of the textbooks examined in this study are steeped in the classical tradition. While there is great value in building one's knowledge of classical repertoire, today's students are immersed in popular styles. For example, contemporary musical theatre is largely based on popular genres like pop rock, hip-hop, rhythm and blues, and bluegrass. Piano students will need to be able to play simple accompaniment and improvisational patterns in these styles whether they go on to become music educators or music therapists. I recommend that class piano instructors supplement the lead sheets and harmonization exercises found in the textbook with contemporary musical theatre and popular music examples. By maintaining a balance of classical and popular musical styles in class piano activities, instructors will better prepare their students to engage with society. After all, one goal of education is to prepare students to succeed and effectively problem solve in their community interactions.



Another holdover from the classical tradition is the fact that many of the songs used in these textbooks to teach students how to play song accompaniments include lyrics in languages other than English. Using songs in a language that many students do not read or speak creates another layer of difficulty in the learning process. In my opinion, songs that teach piano students how to accompany should be in English so that students can focus on the music and the collaborative process. As students gain experience and become more comfortable collaborating with their vocal peers on English songs, then they can begin to explore songs in other languages.

The above recommendations are offered as a direct result of this study's survey and interview findings. The study found that the amount of collaborative piano skills incorporated in Arizona's collegiate class piano courses varies greatly. The goal of this study is to illuminate this inconsistency and encourage educators to reflect on their own pedagogical practices. As instructors modify and strengthen their curricula to include more collaborative piano skills, students will gain a stronger foundation of practical skills that will assist them in their future musical careers.

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APPENDIX A  
ASU IRB APPROVAL FORM



APPROVAL: MODIFICATION

Andrew Campbell

MDT: Music

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Dear Andrew Campbell:

On 7/26/2021 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review: Modification / Update	
Title:	Collaborative Piano Skills Used in Class Piano Courses at Arizona Two-Year and Four-Year Collegiate Institutions
Investigator: Andrew Campbell	
IRB ID: STUDY00013898	
Funding: None	
Grant Title: None	
Grant ID: None	
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interview Consent 07-27-2021.pdf, Category: Consent Form;</li><li>• Interview Questions 07-09-2021.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions);</li><li>• Interview Recruitment email 07-09-2021.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li><li>• Sherrill Protocol 07-27-2021.pdf, Category: IRB Protocol;</li><li>• Survey Consent, Category: Consent Form;</li><li>• Survey Recruitment email, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li></ul>

The IRB approved the modification.

When consent is appropriate, you must use final, watermarked versions available under the “Documents” tab in ERA-IRB.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Amanda Sherrill

Amanda Sherrill

APPENDIX B  
SURVEY RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello,

I am Amanda Sherrill, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Andrew Campbell in the School of Music, Dance and Theatre at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate the incorporation of collaborative piano skills in class piano curriculum. This study will involve answering a questionnaire. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to click on the link below to access the online survey. Your participation should take about 20 minutes. Participation is voluntary and your responses are anonymous. You will not receive any compensation for your participation. This study received IRB approval: Study # 00013898.

If this sounds like an interesting opportunity, please click here to answer the survey <https://form.jotform.com/211595410486154>. Please feel free to also email Dr. Campbell at [acampbell@asu.edu](mailto:acampbell@asu.edu) or Amanda Sherrill at [amanda.sherrill@asu.edu](mailto:amanda.sherrill@asu.edu) if you have questions.

Best wishes,  
Amanda Sherrill  
DMA student at Arizona State University

ASU IRB IRB # STUDY00013898 | Approval Period 7/26/2021



APPENDIX B  
SURVEY CONSENT FORM

## **Informed Consent**

I am Amanda Sherrill, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Andrew Campbell in the School of Music, Dance and Theatre at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate the incorporation of collaborative piano skills in class piano curriculum. I am inviting your participation, which will involve accessing an online survey to answer a questionnaire. The whole procedure will take less than 20 minutes. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study. We cannot guarantee any direct benefit to you. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts due to your participation. The survey link you received is anonymous, which guarantees that we do not collect any personal information from your email. Your responses will be anonymous. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. The results will only be shared in the aggregate form. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Andrew Campbell, [acampbell@asu.edu](mailto:acampbell@asu.edu), (480) 965-9525. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

By clicking on “I accept” below you confirm that you have taught Class Piano (in any of the four levels) in Arizona at a 2-year or 4-year collegiate institution for at least one semester between (and/or including) Fall 2019 and Fall 2021 and that you agree to be part of the study.

(Circle) I accept

(Next Button)

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APPENDIX D  
SURVEY QUESTIONS

- 1.) Which levels (semesters) of Class Piano have you taught previously at your current educational institution? Choose all that apply:
- a. Level 1 (first semester)
  - b. Level 2 (second semester)
  - c. Level 3 (third semester)
  - d. Level 4 (fourth semester)
  - e. Other (Please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 1**

- 2.) What was the most recent semester you taught Level 1 class piano at your current institution?
- a. Summer 2021
  - b. Spring 2021
  - c. Fall 2020
  - d. Summer 2020
  - e. Spring 2020
  - f. Fall 2019
  - g. I have not taught Level 1 class piano at this institution
  - h. Other (Please describe): \_\_\_\_\_
- 3.) Regarding the most recent semester you taught Level 1 class piano (listed in question #2), which of the following skills did you incorporate into the curriculum? Choose all that apply:
- a. Sightreading
  - b. Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration
  - c. Ensemble playing
  - d. Score reading
  - e. Score reduction
  - f. Transposition
  - g. Melodic harmonization
  - h. None of these were included in the curriculum
- 4.) Which of the skills you chose in question #3 were listed as part of the course objectives or competencies in the Level 1 course syllabus?
- a. Sightreading
  - b. Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration
  - c. Ensemble playing
  - d. Score reading
  - e. Score reduction
  - f. Transposition

- g. Melodic harmonization
  - h. None of these were listed in the syllabus
- 

**Level 2**

- 5.) What was the most recent semester you taught Level 2 class piano at your current institution?
- a. Summer 2021
  - b. Spring 2021
  - c. Fall 2020
  - d. Summer 2020
  - e. Spring 2020
  - f. Fall 2019
  - g. I have not taught Level 2 class piano at this institution
  - h. Other (Please describe): \_\_\_\_\_
- 6.) Regarding the most recent semester you taught Level 2 class piano (listed in question #5), which of the following skills did you incorporate into the curriculum? Choose all that apply:
- a. Sightreading
  - b. Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration
  - c. Ensemble playing
  - d. Score reading
  - e. Score reduction
  - f. Transposition
  - g. Melodic harmonization
  - h. None of these were included in the curriculum
- 7.) Which of the skills you chose in question #6 were listed as part of the course objectives or competencies in the Level 2 course syllabus?
- a. Sightreading
  - b. Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration
  - c. Ensemble playing
  - d. Score reading
  - e. Score reduction
  - f. Transposition
  - g. Melodic harmonization
  - h. None of these were listed in the syllabus
-

### **Level 3**

- 8.) What was the most recent semester you taught Level 3 class piano at your current institution?
- a. Summer 2021
  - b. Spring 2021
  - c. Fall 2020
  - d. Summer 2020
  - e. Spring 2020
  - f. Fall 2019
  - g. I have not taught Level 3 class piano at this institution
  - h. Other (Please describe): \_\_\_\_\_
- 9.) Regarding the most recent semester you taught Level 3 class piano (listed in question #8), which of the following skills did you incorporate into the curriculum? Choose all that apply:
- a. Sightreading
  - b. Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration
  - c. Ensemble playing
  - d. Score reading
  - e. Score reduction
  - f. Transposition
  - g. Melodic harmonization
  - h. None of these were included in the curriculum
- 10.) Which of the skills you chose in question #9 were listed as part of the course objectives or competencies in the Level 3 course syllabus?
- a. Sightreading
  - b. Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration
  - c. Ensemble playing
  - d. Score reading
  - e. Score reduction
  - f. Transposition
  - g. Melodic harmonization
  - h. None of these were listed in the syllabus
-

#### **Level 4**

- 11.) What was the most recent semester you taught Level 4 class piano at your current institution?
- a. Summer 2021
  - b. Spring 2021
  - c. Fall 2020
  - d. Summer 2020
  - e. Spring 2020
  - f. Fall 2019
  - g. I have not taught Level 4 class piano at this institution
  - h. Other (Please describe): \_\_\_\_\_
- 12.) Regarding the most recent semester you taught Level 4 class piano (listed in question #11), which of the following skills did you incorporate into the curriculum? Choose all that apply:
- a. Sightreading
  - b. Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration
  - c. Ensemble playing
  - d. Score reading
  - e. Score reduction
  - f. Transposition
  - g. Melodic harmonization
  - h. None of these were included in the curriculum
- 13.) Which of the skills you chose in question #12 were listed as part of the course objectives or competencies in the Level 4 course syllabus?
- a. Sightreading
  - b. Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration
  - c. Ensemble playing
  - d. Score reading
  - e. Score reduction
  - f. Transposition
  - g. Melodic harmonization
  - h. None of these were listed in the syllabus
-

- 14.) If any of the aforementioned specific skills were not listed as course objectives or competencies in one of the four class piano courses mentioned previously, are there any you would like to see added to the courses you teach? Please click on these skills next to the corresponding level you wish they would be added to.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Sightreading				
Vocal and/or Instrumental collaboration				
Ensemble playing				
Score reading				
Score reduction				
Transposition				
Melodic harmonization				



15.) In your opinion, what do you think is the reason these skills were not incorporated in these courses? Number in order of importance, with “1” being the most important factor:

\_\_\_\_\_ There is barely enough time in the semester to teach the listed competencies already.

\_\_\_\_\_ I don’t think the majority of students in these courses have the piano technique to handle these skills.

\_\_\_\_\_ I don’t think the skills listed above are the most important piano skills that these students will use in their future careers.

\_\_\_\_\_ The course competencies are determined by other faculty members at my institution or district. I don’t have a say in which are officially listed for my course.

\_\_\_\_\_ Many of these skills aren’t taught in the textbook we currently use. We aren’t at liberty to change the textbook right now.

\_\_\_\_\_ I don’t know which textbook to use that would incorporate all of these skills as well as the standard functional piano skills.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe): \_\_\_\_\_

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you so much for your time and feedback. You are instrumental in helping us with our research!

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello,

I am Amanda Sherrill, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Andrew Campbell in the School of Music, Dance and Theatre at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study for my dissertation to investigate the incorporation of collaborative piano skills in class piano curricula. You may remember the email I sent a month ago regarding an online survey. That was the first portion of the study.

For the second portion of the study I would like to invite you to participate in **an interview of up to 60 minutes on Zoom**. If you would like to participate but would prefer a different interview format, please respond to this email and I will send you the list of questions that can be answered in written form. Participation is voluntary and your responses will be anonymous, unless you indicate on the consent form that you approve of your identity being associated with the study results. You will not receive any compensation for your participation. This study received IRB approval: Study # 00013898.

If you would like to participate in the interview, please click here to complete the consent process: <https://form.jotform.com/212156034575149>

Once I receive your consent form I will email you to find a mutually convenient time to hold the Zoom interview.

Please feel free to email Dr. Campbell at [acampbell@asu.edu](mailto:acampbell@asu.edu) or Amanda Sherrill at [amanda.sherrill@asu.edu](mailto:amanda.sherrill@asu.edu) if you have questions.

Thank you for considering this opportunity and best wishes on your upcoming semester,

Amanda Sherrill

DMA student at Arizona State University

ASU IRB IRB # STUDY00013898 | Approval Period 7/26/2021

APPENDIX F  
INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

## **Informed Consent**

I am Amanda Sherrill, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Andrew Campbell in the School of Music, Dance and Theatre at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate the incorporation of collaborative piano skills in class piano curricula.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve an **interview of up to 60 minutes**. I would like to record this interview using Zoom. Zoom records an audio and video track of the interview. [The research team will retain only the audio track for analysis.] The interview will not be recorded without your permission. If you would like to participate in an audio-only interview, please turn off your camera. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts. If you would like to participate but would prefer a different interview format, please email me at [amanda.sherrill@asu.edu](mailto:amanda.sherrill@asu.edu) and I will send you the list of questions that can be answered in written form.

You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study. We cannot guarantee any direct benefit to you. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts due to your participation.

Your responses will be anonymous, unless you indicate below that you approve of your identity being associated with the study results. The results of this study, including your responses, may be used in my dissertation, and in reports, presentations, or publications related to my dissertation. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Andrew Campbell, [acampbell@asu.edu](mailto:acampbell@asu.edu), (480) 965-9525. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788.

By clicking on “I accept” below you confirm that you have taught Class Piano (in any of the four levels) in Arizona at a 2-year or 4-year collegiate institution for at least one semester between (and/or including) Fall 2019 and Fall 2021 and that you agree to be part of the study.

[Circle] I accept

Type your name \_\_\_\_\_

Type your email address \_\_\_\_\_

[Electronic signature]

**(Optional)** [Circle] I give consent to have my name and school affiliation used in this study.

ASU IRB IRB # STUDY00013898 | Approval Period 7/26/2021

APPENDIX F  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## **General Questions**

- How many levels/semesters of class piano does your school offer?
- How many levels/semesters of class piano do music performance majors have to take at your school? Is it different for vocal versus instrumental majors?
- How many levels/semesters of class piano do music education majors have to take at your school? Is it different for vocal versus instrumental majors?
- What textbook(s) do you use for each level of class piano offered at your school? Do you use any supplements (pop books, duet or ensemble books, etc)?

## **Collaborative Piano Skills**

### **Transposition & Clef-Reading**

- Do you teach clef-reading of the alto, tenor or soprano clefs? If yes, which clefs?
- In which levels/semesters do you have students practice playing examples in these clefs?
- How important do you think fluency in reading these clefs is for your students?
- Do you teach transposition?
- What types of things do students transpose in each level?
- To what intervals do they transpose exercises...2nds, 3rd, 4ths, 5ths, etc?
- Do you teach students how to transpose music written for transposing instruments, for example the clarinet or the French horn? If yes, in which levels/semesters and which instruments do you cover?
- How important do you think the skill of transposition is at the piano? Why?

### **Sight-reading**

- In which levels do you teach sight-reading?
- How do you teach sight-reading? How do you incorporate sight-reading into the curriculum?
- Is sight-reading a graded skill in your courses? What type of project or assignment do you use to assess students' internalization of the skill?
- Do you use supplements, or do you use exercises in the textbook?



### **Score Reading**

- Do you incorporate any score reading in your class piano courses? (Choral scores, multiple orchestral instruments like band scores, orchestral scores, string quartet or chamber group scores)
- What types of examples do you have students practice and at what level in the course sequence?
- How frequently do you have students practice this skill (per level)?
- Is this skill graded on any tests or exams during the semester? (If yes, which level, what type of score and which instruments/voice parts?)

### **Duets/Ensemble Playing**

- In which levels do you have students participate in piano duets or piano ensembles?
- How do you organize these groups...do they choose partners, or do you choose?
- Do they practice in class or outside of class?
- What music do you use...pieces from the textbook or supplemental books?
- Do you choose the pieces or do the students?
- What does the performance situation look like? (Do students perform live in class, create videos and play them for the class, etc.)

### **Vocal/Instrumental Collaboration**

- Do you include projects in which students play the piano with singers? ...with instrumentalists?
- Do students bring their partners into class for live performances, or do they submit videos to play for the class?
- How do students choose what piece to play for the project?
- Is this a required project or optional?
- In which level(s) do you incorporate this project?

## Score Reduction

- There are two main types of score reduction at the piano: the first involves music originally written to be played by an orchestra that is reformatted to be played on the piano, for example concerto or aria reductions. Although this skill is rather advanced for a beginning pianist, the other type of score reduction is more accessible for the novice pianist. The second type of score reduction at the piano involves playing a piece or part originally written for piano and simplifying it to suit one's technical ability. This skill is often used, for example, by voice teachers who accompany their student during a lesson. Do you include any sections in your courses on how to "reduce" difficult piano scores?
- In which levels do you teach this skill?
- Is this skill something you assess by a graded assignment or test?
- Do you use examples in the textbook to teach this skill or do you use supplemental resources?