THE ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE NON-KEYBOARD MUSIC MAJORS TOWARD THE USE OF FUNCTIONAL KEYBOARD HARMONY IN THE GROUP PIANO CURRICULUM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF MUSIC.

BY KATHERINE CHANDLER

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes and perceptions of undergraduate non-keyboard music majors toward functional keyboard harmony in the group piano curriculum at the University of South Carolina School of Music. Sixty-five (65) undergraduate music majors who were enrolled in music degrees in the spring 2018 semester at the University of South Carolina School of Music completed the survey, for an 82% completion rate.

The questionnaire had six primary focuses: (1) demographic data and general information of undergraduate non-keyboard music students, (2) students’ previous music education experiences, (3) students’ previous harmony education experiences and perceived comprehension of specific harmonic concepts, (4) students’ attitudes and perceptions toward their ability to adequately utilize specific harmonic concepts in practical situations, (5) students’ perceptions regarding the way they think about harmony, and (6) students’ attitudes and perceptions toward the emphasis of harmony in the group piano classroom, the textbook used, and the group piano instructor.

The results of the study indicate that students think about harmony, but not in terms of functionality. They also show that students recognize the relevance of functional
harmony as it relates to chord progressions and harmonizations, but that this relevance
does not extend to other core group piano activities to the same degree. Students are
significantly less confident actualizing theoretical concepts at the piano as opposed to
identifying them and utilizing them in analysis and harmonizations.
Students also recognize that they will likely use functional keyboard harmony in other degree - required courses, and in their future careers, but they do not view the textbook or the group piano instructor as facilitators of this understanding.