International Journal of Education & the Arts

http://www.ijea.org/ ISSN: 1529-8094

Volume 26 Number 23 July 31, 2025

Self-Study of Faculty Perspectives of Music Teacher Education Curricular Reform

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Citation: Weidner, B. (2025). Self-study of faculty perspectives of music teacher education curricular reform. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *26*(23). http://doi.org/10.26209/ijea26n23

Abstract

Recognizing that institutional processes for curricular change require approval from music faculty outside of the music teacher education program, this self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP) investigated the music department faculty perspectives at three contrasting institutions to understand similarities and differences regarding their beliefs and convictions toward music teacher education and their influences upon curricular revision processes. While faculty participants (*N*=26) generally agreed that curricular reforms were desirable, protection of individuals' areas of specialization, adherence to traditional conservatory practices, and a lack of familiarity with current K-12 classrooms caused faculty to view curricular reforms differently. Reflections on this research can help music teacher educators more effectively propose and implement innovations within music teacher education.

Introduction

Since the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium (Choate, 1968), music education scholars have regularly called for reform to undergraduate music teacher education curricula, including the then Music Educators National Conference and now National Association for Music Education (NAfME)'s Vision 2020 (Madsen, 2000/2020), College Music Society (CMS)'s Manifesto for Progressive Change in the Undergraduate Music Education Curriculum (Campbell et al., 2016), and others (Kimpton, 2005; Sarath et al., 2017; Thornton et al., 2004). Most recently, NAfME's Blueprint for Strengthening the Music Teacher Profession (Confredo et al., 2023) suggested "current curricula offerings focus on the needs of past generations, preserving a rich history of the past, yet not reflecting the music of today or the ways in which musicianship may differ from community" (p. 29). Several authors have critiqued the centrality of the Western art canon in the large ensemble tradition (Abril, 2014; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Barrett, 2005; Colwell, 2006; Heuser, 2014; Miksza, 2013) and called for more contemporary and creative music practices (Kratus, 2007; Prendergast & May, 2020; Williams, 2011). Others discussed deconstructing power hierarchies (Dansereau et al., 2022); investigating social justice (Allsup & Shieh, 2012); implementing compassionate teaching (Hendricks, 2018); and exploring methods to bring reforms and innovations to undergraduate curricula (Girdzijauskienė et al., 2023; Weidner, 2024; Wilson et. al., 2021).

Within general education studies, processes of curricular reform have been extensively studied, emphasizing change as an extended process requiring whole system involvement with clear leadership and communication of purpose (Hall & Hord, 2020). Within collegiate curricular change, collaboration within and across faculty groups was critical to effective reform, creating both points of access and barriers to effective processes (Oliver & Hyun, 2011). While reforms within undergraduate music teacher education coursework can occur without departmental approval, systemic change, reform, or innovation of curricula requires support from colleagues across the music department (Cutietta, 2007; Wilson et. al., 2021). In most programs, protocols for approving new courses in music education require a plurality of non-education faculty in departmental and institutional meetings and curriculum committees. Because differing beliefs of the broader music faculty impact the development of department curricula (Cutietta, 2007; Kladder, 2020), music education faculty may only be able to carry out reforms through modifications to content within existing courses. [1]

Researchers have identified numerous barriers to curricular transformation in undergraduate

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[1] Throughout the text, "non-education faculty" will be used to refer to music faculty who do not teach music education coursework as their primary responsibility (e.g. ensemble conductors, music theory and history instructors, and applied music instructors).

music education programs. These include state licensure requirements, institutional traditions, and complex accreditation requirements (Campbell et al., 2016; Confredo et al, 2023; Kimpton, 2005; Sarath et al, 2017; Thornton et al., 2004), rigid definitions of music curricula (e.g., extensive large ensemble expectations, narrow repertoires) (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Barrett, 2005; Miksza, 2013), credit hour limitations (Maas et al, 2023), and limited opportunities for creativity and popular music-making (Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011). Furthermore, the profession lacks a central definition of what music education is as a discipline (Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Barrett, 2005; Kratus, 2007; Miksza, 2013; Webster, 2017; Williams, 2011; Wilson et. al., 2021).

Numerous educators have requested opportunities beyond traditional large ensembles and Western art practices to make music education relevant for current K-12 students (Groulx, 2016; Sarath et al., 2017; Veronee, 2017; Wright, 2019), as greater variety in musical offerings and diverse repertoires may motivate a wider array of students (Powell, 2019; Rolandson et al., 2020; Williams, 2017). Other researchers noted that preservice music teachers' extensive preparation for large ensemble instruction leaves them underprepared to teach many musical styles and settings (Colquhoun, 2019; Isbell, 2016; Kruse, 2015; Springer & Gooding, 2013) even though curricular flexibility is critical. Groulx (2016) reported that 83% of music educators taught outside their area of specialty, and Prendergast and May (2020) found that the majority of K-12 music job descriptions contained multiple subspecialties. 49 states grant all-level licenses and 39 states broadly list "music" rather than "instrumental" or "choral" (May et al., 2017). While coursework focuses on specialization, professional positions call for broad experience.

In order to be more responsive to current needs, music education and non-education faculty must agree on what is necessary for undergraduate degrees in music education. As music teacher educators prepare pre-service educators for 21st-century classrooms, it will continue to be necessary to update music education curricula to better reflect future interests, capabilities, and needs (Wilson et. al., 2021).

In this study, we examined the faculty barriers to and affordances for curricular change within undergraduate music education at three institutions. Two research questions drove our inquiry:

1. What differences, if any, exist between the expectations of music education and non-education faculty in terms of processes and end goals of music teacher educator preparation?
2. How do these differences influence the convictions of music education faculty or non-education faculty toward curricular change?

Method

We conducted a self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP) (Kitchen & Berry, 2023; Stanley & Conway, 2015) by comparing three institutions of differing size, research status, and orientation. We chose S-STEP so we could be "open to employing a wide range of methods to examine the research questions asked" by emphasizing the role of educator as researcher in interaction with others through "critical friendships" (Kitchen & Berry, 2023, p. 2). S-STEP provides a flexible methodology that allows for the incorporation of elements of multiple methodological practices, including the voices and experiences of the participant-researchers. This methodology allowed us to maintain a "disposition toward reflection and personal improvement through practice" (Stanley & Conway, 2015, p. 129), emphasizing collaboration and targeting understanding and improvement of our processes of curricular reform through this research. In this S-STEP, three researchers met bi-monthly over the course of an academic year to compare experiences with implementing curricular change. Utilizing elements from constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), case study (Yin, 2014), and ethnographic inquiry (Kreuger, 2020), we engaged in interviews with music faculty at our respective campuses to better understand system-wide experiences with curricular change. As our participants viewed this revisionary activity through different lenses and our concern is on the process, we interchangeably used reform, innovation, and change throughout this study without distinction. We treated each campus as a case study of their processes of reform. During our bi-monthly meetings, we discussed our own experiences and the new perspectives that we gained through the discussions with our colleagues. Our three institutions represented a cross section of undergraduate-serving institutions in their size, status, and orientation to curricular reform in music education as they included Iowa State University, Butler University, and Luther College. As faculty at each of these institutions, our deep familiarity with each institution and established relationships with faculty across the music department/school provided a unique opportunity to scrutinize processes of curricular reform through S-STEP.

Institutional Profiles

Iowa State University (ISU) was a large, public, land grant, research institution. Processes of curricular reform involved many stakeholders both within and outside the institution, including the Department of Music and Theatre and the School of Education, which were housed in separate colleges each with multi-level curricular processes and curricular review boards. The Faculty Senate also played a role with curriculum revision. Additionally, state licensure requirements created multiple obstacles to rapid reform. Due to all of these elements, change processes were slow with multiple hurdles and perspectives inhibiting change and creating resistance to significant reform.

Butler University (BU) was an urban, midsized, private institution with a strong regional reputation and an institutional emphasis on innovation. A fast-track option has been developed for curricular change that emphasized quick implementation of new curricula with minimal hurdles or oversight. In particular, mid-level and upper administrators embraced proposals that were responsive to perceived community needs and changes. Within the School of Music, recent reforms over the past five years have included a significant redesign of the entire music education curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate levels, the development of a post-baccalaureate non-degree-based licensure program, a shift to thematic (from chronological) music history courses, and flexible options within the music theory curriculum. The ease with which curriculum change is possible has created some unintended impacts such as diminished enrollment in other courses, staffing misalignments, and scheduling conflicts.

Luther College (LC) was a rural, small, private college with a religious affiliation and a history of excellence in music. Curricular decisions were very localized at this institution with relatively few stakeholders controlling curricular reform, but the college also possessed a strong sense of tradition and stability across the program. The music education program faculty straddled two of the three college divisions: the music department is part of the Humanities division and the education department is in the Social Sciences division. The recent revision to the music education curriculum needed approval of each department, a campus-wide curriculum committee, and a full faculty vote. Despite the "flat" governance structure, the process from proposal to approval took 18 months. In the meantime, a large revision to the general education requirements was passed. Changes to the music history and music theory sequences are still forthcoming.

Participant Sampling

To gain a better understanding of the impacts of all music faculty on music education reform beyond our own perspectives, we interviewed a purposeful sample of music faculty (N = 26). At each institution, we interviewed two ensemble directors (one choral, one instrumental), two applied studio teachers (one choral, one instrumental), one theory instructor, one history instructor, and all full-time music education faculty, totaling ten faculty from ISU, nine faculty from BU, and seven faculty at LC. These participant numbers included self-reports by the researchers using the interview protocol as music education faculty at their institutions. The difference in numbers is accounted for by differing numbers of music education faculty at each institution. This sample represented the primary music specialties serving the undergraduate music education major. Following IRB approval at ISU, we sent invitations to all potential participants on our respective faculties. Those who expressed willingness to participate were then scheduled for an in-person interview with the researcher from their own institution at a time that was mutually convenient.

Procedure

The researcher-designed interview protocol focused on questions addressing participants' priorities for the overall music curricula, expectations for education and non-education students, and descriptions of successful early career music educators regarding dispositions, knowledge, and skills. We asked participants to identify critically important musical knowledge for music education majors regarding theory, history, repertoire, styles, and genres and then to rate different types of ensemble participation, non-band and orchestra instrument proficiencies, and technology, advocacy, and entrepreneurship coursework. Next, open-ended questions addressed core curricula and needs for differentiated experiences between education and non-education majors. Finally, we asked participants about key skills, dispositions, and experiences for music education majors. A pilot study with two non-education faculty members who were not part of the study warranted the inclusion in recruitment materials of quotations from historical and contemporary music education scholarship to contextualize the discussed reforms.

Analysis

Each researcher conducted one-on-one interviews at their own institution. We audio recorded and transcribed the interviews, and then anonymized participant identities before sharing with other researchers to analyze using inductive coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). First, we independently coded our own interviews to identify individual theoretical codes. In our regular meetings, we compared, aligned, and organized our individual theoretical codes into themes through an iterative process of discussion, cross-coding, and reanalysis. Throughout this process, we acknowledged that our collegiality with the participants, familiarity with the institution, and identity as music teacher educators posed issues with subjectivity or bias which we sought to minimize through corroboration across study sites (Miles et al., 2014). With this said, as a S-STEP, our experiences were deemed as valuable as participants within this educational community. Individually, we engaged in reflective processes that sought confirming and disconfirming evidence regarding our own perspectives. Importantly, as major parts of the decision-making processes at our respective campuses, consideration of our experiences in relation with those of our colleagues was critical to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the reform process. No findings were based solely on researcher perspective but were triangulated with evidence from other interviews.

We met on a bi-monthly basis to both discuss our analyses of interviews and scrutinize our observations about processes of curricular reform. These discussions also aided in exposing our own biases and encouraged scrutiny of findings if they relied solely on our own experiences. These discussions shaped the nature of our ongoing interviews and our approaches to analysis. For example, in one discussion, sudden progress at BU regarding

music history curricular changes brought attention to the important role that was played by department- and college-level administration in advancing or delaying innovative change, informing the analysis that can be found in the *willingness to change* theme.

Findings

We identified four themes through our data analysis. *Willingness to change* addressed the broad range of differences found between the three institutions and individual faculty regarding acceptance of, and efforts toward, systemic change. At the same time, *protection of one's territory* and c*ontinued emphasis on conservatory traditions* served as barriers to reform. Finally, there seemed to be a difference between music education and non-education faculty in *understanding current practices in K-12 music education*.

Throughout all of these discussions, music education and non-education faculty used different language when discussing music education students. Music education faculty used both *music education student* and *preservice teacher/educator* to describe their students, depending on whether the focus was upon their education or their career respectively. With non-education faculty, students were consistently discussed as *music education students* or *musicians*. Our discussion has been intentional in the use of these terms to reflect faculty intentions.

Authentic Willingness for Change in Academic Music Study

Both education and non-education faculty acknowledged that past and current practices did not necessarily meet future demands. Additionally, most participants felt that music education students probably could be successful with less theory and history study. As stated by one ensemble director,

> You know, how much is that [theory and history courses] really going to benefit the student when they're out there in the classroom, you know? Now, that said, the difficult thing, especially for those of us who've been doing this for a long time, is we were trained in that music and that's the basis of our knowledge. (Ensemble Director A, personal communication, June 6, 2022)

Most faculty emphasized application and practice over acquisition of knowledge and facts, including the study of traditions outside the Western art practices for theory (e.g., "They need to be able to somehow kind of blend and show connections between these [different traditions].") Likewise, several participants called for more emphasis on critical thinking and a thematic, rather than chronological, cross-cultural study of music history. They emphasized that the depth of Western art music could be deemphasized to allow for time to broaden cultural perspectives and include vernacular traditions. However, some emphasis was placed on the need for functional theory study at all costs, especially from studio faculty stating that "the requirements of being a conductor and really understanding the music that they're

teaching does require a substantial understanding of theory." Several also stated a need to de-silo the music core curriculum "to meld those ideas [theory, history, aural skills, keyboarding] together to create some space."

Most participants of all faculty groups recognized that the needs of music education and non-education students are different. Typically, non-education faculty suggested an additive approach to music education requirements. One conductor suggested, "students should be equally well prepared as performers, whether a music ed major or a music performance person. Music ed just needs more specialized coursework beyond that." These suggested additions consistently included studies of non-Western vernacular and popular music traditions and experiences with improvisation and creative activities.

Importantly, most faculty in all areas emphasized the importance and need for expansion of in-school practicum experiences. As stated by one theory faculty member, "I think the biggest part of [music education degrees] is probably the in-real-classrooms part, more than studios and rehearsal spaces, especially with a range of teachers, so they can see how musical personas are really different and how you learn from them in different places and settings." Some non-education faculty did suggest that music education students focused on K-5 students need different experiences than their secondary counterparts, with greater attention to global music practices, classroom instruments, and potentially reduced attention to ensemble and studio study.

When considering curricular changes, faculty of all groups expressed a need for, but also concern with, change through addition rather than substitution. For example, most participants favored adding to what is already done while acknowledging credit hour limits. Most non-education faculty saw performing ensembles as the entirety of the K-12 teacher's job, equating music teacher with ensemble director (e.g., "A lot of people are going on becoming band directors, orchestra directors, choir directors. [Large ensembles] are the nature of the job."). By contrast, education faculty emphasized a need for balance with other musical experiences, such as studies in vernacular music and creative activities. Still, faculty from all areas suggested expanding performing expectations so students had broader ensemble experiences, notably in chamber ensembles and world music settings, in addition to bands, choirs, and orchestras.

When considering changes to music education curricula, participants enthusiastically embraced revisions that resonated with their own backgrounds and experiences, including ensembles and experiences outside of the traditional conservatory. For example, a studio instructor who played in a rock band advocated for popular music education. Other participants discussed important experiences their family members had in school music that

should be included, such as experiences with electronic composition and guitar. The desire to expand curricular offerings to move outside Western traditions was rooted in these sorts of personal experiences, as opposed to music education philosophy, pedagogy, and practices.

Protection of One's Territory

Performance-focused participants seldom encouraged significant reductive or substantive changes to their own areas. Ensemble directors and studio faculty tended to see their courses as the primary classrooms for future music educators and as places where musicianship and music pedagogy were learned. As stated by one ensemble director, "I tell my students all the time to not only participate today as a member of an ensemble but you should go watch other ensembles." Participants emphasized incidental learning in these settings as "*the* way" to learn effective pedagogy, classroom management, and content.

Most studio teachers emphasized that the strongest musicians made the strongest teachers and that applied study was where students developed their musicianship as music educators. "The thing I don't think should change is their applied lesson, and I tell my students that the best teachers should be refreshed by that [taking private lessons as part of professional growth] over time." Specifically, several studio faculty discussed how the studio was where universal fundamentals were taught, and that if music education students did not emphasize their development as solo musicians during undergraduate studies, "they're probably not going to be able to carve out hours to devote to learning how to use their primary instrument" and develop into full musicians.

Similarly, music education faculty felt that they were treated as a secondary discipline within the curriculum and could not offer their preferred breadth of experiences due to the high number of credits allotted to "core" music courses. While both education and non-education faculty emphasized the need for in-school observations and clinical experiences early and frequently in the degree, time taken from other music courses and performance activities created the strongest resistance. The difference between education and performance-focused faculty regarding curriculum change was not about the need for reform but about what could be reduced to allow for schedule and credit space.

Notably, a common sentiment across all groups included, "It can't just be Western art music" and "We have an obligation to at least expose students to other ways of musical knowing in musicology and theory." By contrast to performance and education participants, theory and history faculty were willing to greatly alter the content and format of their current curricula, with several actively supporting efforts to modify and even eliminate courses to reflect the needs of music education students. They suggested several changes to their curricula, including dramatically revising courses to be more inclusive of popular and vernacular music

practices, less chronological, and more thematic. Music theory faculty actually saw more need for changes in theory than anyone else, especially with a willingness to minimize advanced theory (e.g. form and analysis, post-tonality) in favor of applied theory topics.

Emphasis on Conservatory-based Traditions

Across non-education faculty, participants expressed a strong preference for siloed curricula focusing on the Western art canon in music theory, history and traditional large ensembles. In many conversations with non-education faculty, "conductor" or "director" were used interchangeably with "music educator" or "music teacher," demonstrating an emphasis upon music educators' roles as band, choir, and orchestra directors. Most non-education faculty saw pre-collegiate music education as preparation for future professional music engagement as performers and conductors with intense training in comprehensive, traditional music. As stated by one studio faculty member,

> I'm a big fan from my time in the UK of the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music…In the RSM system, they pass through levels in various topics: theory, keyboard, ear training. They play scales and arpeggios on their instrument. It does real training that prepares for something significant. (Applied Teacher F, personal communication, June 6, 2022)

There was also a perception of elementary school general music classes as preparation of students for future ensemble participation, as shown in a discussion with a studio teacher:

> In other words, do we need to produce quality band, choir, and orchestra directors, or should we focus on a more kind of broad-based, be able to address everything, maybe have less depth, but more breadth? I would say we still have to prepare band, choir, and orchestra with that [all levels of music education]….I am concerned sometimes we don't go deep enough. (Applied Teacher I, Personal communication, May 4, 2022)

While faculty universally recognized a desire to expand music education beyond Western art traditions, they also noted that there was simply not enough time given their prioritization of Western art, professional-based standards.

Discussions were dominated by change through addition rather than subtraction. For example, one ensemble director stated, "identifying the dearth of music from non-White composers—non-White male composers in particular—and not just educating our students on those issues, but helping them to understand how they can be agents of change in terms of really kind of opening up the band world." When explicitly asked about what concepts are overemphasized to allow for this expansion, many faculty made statements such as "None that occur to me" or "Nothing specific, but there are probably a few things." Change itself is not resisted but the mechanism for doing so is hindered by "all of it is important" and "we just need 150 credits."

Understanding of K-12 Music Education

Music faculty in each area focused on their traditional academic roles and believed that the responsibility for change in music education lies with someone else. In general, non-education faculty were clear about their limited familiarity with music teacher preparation curricula. Nearly every non-education faculty participant explicitly stated that they were unfamiliar with what happens in K-12 settings (e.g., "What happens before they get here? I don't really know" and "With high school stuff, I am just going to be guessing at answers and things"). Most perspectives about K-12 music education were anecdotal and relied on their own experiences with K-12 music education, stating "When I was in high school" or "When my children were in school." Importantly, many viewed their own high school ensemble directors as the model for K-12 music educators today. For international faculty, they broadly lacked perspectives on how K-12 music education in American schools functioned as compared to different models abroad.

Non-education faculty emphasized K-12 music education as preparation for collegiate study and professional musicianship. In some cases, they specifically dismissed inclusive models of K-12 music education that supported all musicians at all levels, in favor of those experiences as pre-conservatory preparation. The need for single-instrument proficiency over a broad range of performance skills was also emphasized, especially for students intending to teach at secondary levels. As stated by one applied teacher, "Learning extra instruments? It's just icing on the cake or a bonus or something."

Several of the non-education faculty had undergraduate degrees in music education, and some ensemble directors had started their professional careers as K-12 teachers. The individuals with music education degrees demonstrated more robust understandings of current music education discussions and practices but presumed that the content of their own undergraduate degrees was representative of current music teacher education (including erroneous presumptions of their current institutions), and presumed that programs remained the same since they were undergraduates. Several of these faculty members spoke about how music education degrees should be focused on a foundational approach to music study to allow for easier shifting to non-education graduate programs in areas such as conducting, performance, music theory, or musicology. One history faculty member reflected on his personal need for strong shared curricula between disciplines: "I bailed from music ed…and then saw the light when I was a junior, and having already had the same classes as those students [already in the history program], I was not behind." While he described the music education degree as a generalist degree, music education faculty emphasized it as a professional degree.

Regardless of background, all participants largely agreed on common dispositions that were most important for future music educators, including a desire to teach, positive attitude, sense

of curiosity, and openness to constructive criticism. All faculty saw the need for future teachers to be collegial, engaging, empathetic, flexible, and effective in communication. Finally, many participants emphasized the need to be collaborative rather than competitive. Some non-education faculty at each institution considered their music education program to be "cutting edge," "a source of innovation," and "at the forefront of music teacher preparation and support." As stated by one ensemble director, "Especially now, more than ever, I think a broad music education curriculum like ours is setting students up for any type of job." In these discussions, non-education faculty suggested that music education courses were the place for addressing new topics that need to be considered, albeit without adding courses or credits.

Similarly, all faculty shared "red flags" regarding traits that were not desirable in future music educators, including a "desire to be only a musician rather than a teacher;" difficulties in getting along with others; failure to "show up," participate, or prepare; and ego-driven personalities. Most faculty described music teaching as a calling for music education students and emphasized that pursuing music education should not be viewed as a fallback from a performance career. Faculty in all areas demonstrated enthusiasm for encouraging students in their pursuits as future music educators (though often simultaneously emphasizing performance development), and most agreed that music education was not a "dumping ground" for students who could not be performers.

Discussion

While not directly connected to faculty attitudes, systemic factors posed major obstacles to meaningful curricular change. While all music faculty generally agreed on the need for revisions to the music program and the music education curriculum to allow for responsiveness to current trends, institutional barriers inhibited reforms in ways that were neither desirable nor easily overcome, including faculty availability and expertise, program size, available credit hours, conflicting curricular offerings, physical space limitations, and scholarship requirements. As observed by one ensemble director, "the ability to customize that experience for our music education majors versus our performance majors or [arts] admin majors just isn't there. You have to balance that with the need [sic] the ensembles have to be fully staffed."

In some cases, faculty perceived systemic barriers that did not exist. Similar to Cutietta's (2007) observations, several participants had erroneous assumptions about potential barriers such as NASM requirements that were assumed to exist (for example, the exact number of semesters of specific major ensembles or the exact structure of history and instrument techniques courses). Because curricular patterns were broadly observed in many institutions' programs, they were falsely assumed to be NASM requirements. Conversely, some faculty were unaware of requirements for specific experiences for state licensure, including training

in elementary music education, even for students who "know they want to be [ensemble] directors." Discussing actual accreditation and licensure requirements is a critical step, as many viable innovations are stopped before starting due to misunderstanding about what is permitted.

In other cases, we identified very tangible barriers due to institutional decisions and policies, like credit loads and faculty expertise and availability, as previously noted by Abril (2014), Confredo et al. (2023), Kimpton (2005), and Maas et al (2023). While most faculty were enthusiastic about (or at least accepting of) the inclusion of musical practices outside the Western art canon, de-siloing of the core curriculum, and integration of theory skills, participants described faculty skill sets and limited recruitment of new faculty members as barriers to incorporating new concepts. Another common systemic concern was the impact of new course offerings on enrollment in courses that were historically central to the curriculum. This was a particular concern for ensemble requirements, as any reduction in credit hours in this area threatened the viability of large ensembles that rely upon predictable participation numbers. Any significant reforms to music education curricula need to consider the institutional limitations, priorities, and expectations required of faculty and students, as well as the diversity and versatility of new faculty.

Institutional policies for reforming curriculum were also identified as barriers for all curricular change, as briefly reported in Confredo et al. (2023) and Wilson et al. (2021). For most of our participants, the bureaucratic nature of higher education was seen as stymying innovation. While the exact processes of curricular adoption varied between institutions, participants at all institutions noted the layers of individual and committee approvals that were required to implement meaningful reform, where one person could potentially hold up reform at ISU or where processes favored piecemeal change over large-scale reform at BU. Music education faculty must carefully consider the exact processes that any proposed changes require and plan implementation to align to institutional protocols.

On a more individual level, core beliefs of faculty created another barrier. Similar to Kladder (2020), each faculty member believed their own discipline to be of utmost importance. While all faculty generally supported changes to theory and history, conducting and studio faculty emphasized the centrality of studio study and large ensembles and felt curricular change should not impact time for individual or ensemble music-making. The most common solution suggested was that music education faculty should either add new content to existing music education courses or expand the number of hours of the degree, which was limited by institutional credit limits (Maas et al., 2023). As observed in policy papers (Campbell et al., 2016; Confredo et al., 2023), this opposition to changing curricula was not against diversification, experiential learning, or other reforms; rather, it was a prioritization of the

status quo.

A common thread through our conversations with colleagues returned to their own experiences as students themselves or as adults with children in K-12 music programs. Their perceptions of where the field of music education was ignored changes that had occurred in recent years or took place in non-ensemble settings. Specifically, non-education faculty seldom discussed music in elementary settings, emerging ensembles, or non-Western traditions, while music education faculty saw these as critical in current curricula. Some non-education faculty acknowledged their own limited knowledge of modern K-12 music education, and in some cases posed questions and showed authentic curiosity both during and after the interviews of what is happening in current practice. In other words, lack of knowledge of K-12 music education presented both a barrier and an opportunity. While the non-education faculty were collectively not aware of current needs and future trends in K-12 music education, some of them desired to learn and consider what those needs might be for the future in ways that could be addressed through music education curricular reform.

Affordances for Collaboration

Through this S-STEP, we found potential openings for change that were not clearly documented in previous scholarship. First, the general faculty of music programs was open to and, in many cases, desiring innovative changes that aligned to current discussions in music education scholarship (Campbell et al., 2016; Confredo et al., 2023; Kimpton, 2005; Sarath et al., 2017; Thornton et al., 2004). Every interview with colleagues mentioned the need for education to look different than it did for a previous generation to address flexibility, entrepreneurship, and responsiveness, supporting the sorts of innovative and creative support Abril (2014) described as "atypical" (p. 184). In other words, non-education faculty were not opposed to new music education curricula but rather were concerned about the impacts of those changes on areas that they cared about most deeply. Music theory and history faculty, in particular, showed a desire for innovative changes that diversified learning opportunities and de-siloed content and skills to increase relevance across music curricula. Similarly, participants showed a desire to create systems that allowed for preservice teachers to have more choice in their education by limiting required courses and providing more "eclectic," "diverse," "popular," and "relevant" coursework. While nearly no participants were willing to lose student contact time for their area of expertise, they were generally willing to search for ways for curricular diversification and choice to occur, especially through the combination of existing courses.

Finally, music education and non-education faculty largely agreed upon the core dispositions of successful music educators and the sorts of undergraduate experiences that preservice teachers should have. Discussions with all faculty addressed needs for musical competence,

deep pedagogical knowledge, and interpersonal skills and the importance of in-school teaching experiences prior to student teaching. While non-education faculty were reluctant to suggest changes at the expense of traditional performance studies, they nearly universally valued strong teacher dispositions and desired the curriculum that integrated extensive school-based experiences, reflecting the sort of paradox in contrary curriculum decision-making described by Girdzijauskienė et al. (2023). While solutions for addressing contact time limitations varied or were non-existent in these discussions, the disagreement was not about why but rather how to create curricular space.

Implications

Through this S-STEP, we came to better understand considerations to discuss when proposing curricular change within our undergraduate programs. By documenting our insights, we hoped that our experiences might help prepare others considering curricular change at their institutions with possible approaches to difficult conversations. While no two institutions are the same, the findings from our three contrasting programs suggested several consistent elements to consider.

Music teacher educators may benefit from spending less time emphasizing the need for change but, rather, considering and focusing on the impacts that changes will have on broader curricula. Overall, music faculty are in support of innovative curricula that improve student outcomes and meet changing societal demands. With this said, music teacher educators can be explicit about the nature of K-12 education today and how proposed changes may address future needs of classrooms that differ from those of the past. Matching recommendations from Campbell et al. (2016) and Hickey and Rees (2002), it could be advantageous for music teacher educators to look for openings in the overall curriculum that benefit not only preservice music teachers but all music students. Uniquely, we found unexpected allies for curricular change exist within each of our programs. For example, at BU, interest in revising the music theory curriculum overall provided a space for dialogue about how music theory might better serve performance majors as well as preservice teachers. Rather than investigating new stand-alone courses, music teacher educators may find greater traction in revisions that impact issues in multiple areas of music study, especially when considering music practices outside of the Western art tradition.

Prior to proposing changes, we suggest music teacher educators closely examine the requirements of their accrediting and licensing bodies to understand exactly what is required and what has been assumed to be required. Often, requirements may not be as strenuous or specific as commonly thought or may utilize specific language that can be incorporated into proposals. Additionally, music teacher educators may find value in reviewing the exact protocols for curricular change within their institutions and anticipating potential choke points

in that process during the design phase of proposals.

We employed this S-STEP to capture attitudes toward reform as opposed to processes of effective reform. Further investigation of successful and unsuccessful curricular change processes could provide further insight into how non-education faculty impact music education curricular innovation and how curricular reform impacts diversity, access, and responsiveness within the profession. While recognizing that each institution is unique, these programs could serve as models for others to emulate. With decades of calls for innovative change (Campbell et al., 2016; Choate, 1968; Confredo et al., 2023; Madsen, 2000/2020) that are often stymied at the institution level, a deeper study of the processes for reform needs to be considered. As most significant changes to music education curricula require at least tacit support from non-education faculty, consideration of the perspectives and impact of these faculty members must be a part of any serious innovative changes.

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