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Navigating Curricular Revision in Music Teacher Education Programs

The purpose of our mixed-methods study was to examine the motivations and obstacles associated with curricular revisions in music education degree programs. During Phase I, we surveyed a nationwide sample ($N = 533$) of music education program coordinators. Participants who had engaged in the curriculum revision process within the previous decade were asked to report the extent of the curricular change implemented, the relative importance of several factors driving the decision to revise curricula, and the primary goals, impact, and barriers/challenges faced during the curricular change process. In Phase II, we interviewed volunteers ($n = 8$) from Phase I to provide further insight regarding the revision process. Primary factors affecting the process of curricular change included the influence of accrediting bodies and the relationship between the music education area and the education program. Motivations for pursuing curricular revisions included changing content requirements for the degree program and priorities and desires of music education faculty. Music education faculty members who view these revisions as positive and important steps toward providing students with better and more relevant degree programs may be provided a deeper understanding of how to better navigate the revision process and develop more effective curricula overall.

Keywords: music teacher education, curriculum revision, music education programs, 21st century music education

Introduction

American society has undergone dramatic transformations in recent decades, including changes in the economy and workforce and a rise in access to information through rapidly expanding technology. College and university music education programs in this country, however, have changed very little over the past six decades despite substantial cultural shifts in our increasingly globalized society and numerous calls for transformation. Authors of a 1953 issue of *Music Educators Journal* (“Evaluating the Music Education Curriculum,” 1953) outlined required elements of music teacher education curricula. Traditional areas of study included sight-singing, ear training, form and analysis, keyboard harmony, arranging, and counterpoint as well as study on a primary instrument, conducting, ensemble participation, and functional piano skills. These academic and performance requirements are remarkably similar to those still in place at most institutions today.

The relatively static nature of music teacher education curricula, however, has not been due to a lack of interest by those active in the profession. Since the 1953 analysis of the music teacher education curriculum referenced above, many scholars and organizations have made recommendations for changes in the contents of undergraduate music education programs. Following groundbreaking reform efforts like the Tanglewood Symposium (Choate, 1968), Goals and Objectives (GO) Project (Andrews, 1970), and the Yale Seminar (Werner, 1979), the National Association for Music Education (NAfME; then known as the Music Educators National Conference) made recommendations for changes to the undergraduate music curriculum in 1970 (Andrews, 1970). Suggestions included replacing siloed courses in history, theory, literature, and ear training with more integrated curricula; eliminating continuous ensemble participation requirements; and replacing the senior recital requirement with a research project (Thomas, 1970). Three decades later, Leonard (2003) recommended that institutions establish unique programs based on the resources available in individual situations rather than making efforts to conform to a standard curricular model. These recommendations stemmed from a perceived need to address a greater variety of musical traditions, but also the recognition that most music educators needed traditional musical training to fulfill their job responsibilities.

More recently, the College Music Society (CMS) Manifesto (Campbell et al., 2014) included the assertion that, “The world into which our students will graduate is vastly different from the one around which the field has typically been conceived” (p.10). In the Manifesto, members of the CMS Task Force on the Undergraduate Music Major (TFUMM) called attention to the long-standing focus on interpretation of historic works, ethnocentrism, and fragmentation found in

the traditional music teacher education curriculum. The Manifesto authors recognized that a progressively more interconnected global society, along with an increase of electronic performance and production and increase in dissemination of music through digital media, has provided an impetus for the reexamination of practice (Campbell et al., 2014). Those educated in traditional curricula and practice often face particular challenges in preparing practitioners for the future. Similar ideas can be found in the work of Mantie et al. (2017), who provided a panel presentation based on the findings of the TFUMM. The goal was to provide ideas which could be incorporated in undergraduate music education programs to allow preservice teachers to engage more students in an unknown future. The presenters suggested that the following possible inclusions required additional discussion: digital musicianship, underserved students, entrepreneurship, global music studies, and service learning.

Ongoing examination of curricula may be a healthy, if not necessary, practice. In order to increase the effectiveness of music teacher education curriculum, Durksen (1991) advised teacher educators to begin by setting goals and objectives for the program, identifying the fundamental competencies necessary for students to reach those goals, determining program characteristics needed to develop those competencies in students, and, finally, determining what is possible in terms of time, structure, and resources. Even when music teacher educators are motivated to make changes to their curricula, however, they may encounter significant challenges. Researchers have identified a number of barriers to curricular transformation, including state licensure requirements, long-standing institutional traditions, and the difficulty of balancing the requirements of multiple accrediting bodies (Campbell et al., 2014; Kimpton, 2005; Thornton et al., 2004). The number of stakeholders involved in the process of curricular revision can also prove challenging, especially for music education programs, which may have ties to various units within the organizational structure of their institution. For instance, Edgar (2014) highlighted the importance of collaboration between an institution's schools of music and education in the creation of a new teacher education program. Flexibility and communication were necessary for team members to effectively share their diverse perspectives and reach a successful outcome. These factors may become barriers to music teacher educators who wish to implement revisions to their curricula, regardless of the extent of those revisions.

Some scholars have cautioned that calls for extensive changes may be inappropriate and have argued for a more incremental approach to curricular revisions in music education. Notably, Miksza (2013) suggested that many of the common arguments against the current large-ensemble model of music education are based

on faulty assumptions, and that music educators would be better served by focusing on revitalization and reimagining of current practices. Allsup (2003) and Barrett (2005) have presented illustrations of possible reinterpretations of the existing large-ensemble paradigm to better serve students and create a more democratic music classroom. While none of these authors directly addressed music teacher education curricula, their arguments may also be applicable to examinations of undergraduate coursework; rather than changing our approach to music teacher preparation on a large scale, it may be better to make incremental changes from within the current system.

Although scholars disagree about the extent of curricular revision that is necessary in the current music education landscape, there seems to be a consensus that some changes are needed to maintain the relevance and quality of music teaching and learning in the postmodern age. As music teacher educators work to help prepare preservice teachers for the challenges of 21st-century classrooms, continually revising and updating teacher education curricula to better reflect the capabilities and needs of future students and teachers is crucial. As we have indicated in this review, however, this process is often fraught with challenges. There is little recent research to outline the process, outcomes, and context of curricular revisions in music teacher education. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to examine recent curricular revisions in music teacher education programs across the country. Five research questions guided this study:

1. What motivates curricular revision?
2. What are the barriers to curricular revision?
3. What are the primary goals for the revision?
4. What was the process for the revision?
5. What were the outcomes of the revision?

Method

Research Design

A desire to collect comprehensive data but also ensure that participants were given a voice led us to follow an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell, 2014) in two phases, using a phenomenological approach to our inquiry. A participant selection model allowed us to select subjects for more in-depth inquiry. During Phase 1, we collected and analyzed primarily quantitative

data gathered from a researcher-designed survey which we distributed to music education/music program coordinators at NASM-accredited institutions nationwide. During Phase 2, we conducted and analyzed qualitative interviews with a randomly selected sample of volunteers who completed the survey in Phase 1. The interviews were conducted via live video and recorded for scripting. Four researchers conducted one to three interviews each, using the same protocol and questions. The five research questions listed above were initially explored through primarily quantitative data gathered from our Phase 1 survey, and further explored through the gathering of qualitative data in our Phase 2 interviews.

Phase 1

Our team of five researchers developed the research questions and survey tool based on our previous research and collective experiences. The survey was piloted to a small convenience sample and adjustments were made for clarity and response type. One researcher compiled a list of all the available email addresses of music education faculty by visiting the contact information websites of the all institutions accredited by NASM for a degree in music education. A different researcher's student worker updated and revised the list for this study to include only the department heads at these institutions. The online survey was then distributed via electronic mail to 565 individuals who had been identified as music education program coordinators at NASM-accredited institutions.

Of the 107 responses we received, 85 respondents indicated that they were the program coordinator of an undergraduate degree program that had undergone a curricular revision in the past 10 years and consented to participate in the study. Of those, 65 respondents (12% of the mailing list) completed the survey and were included in the data analysis. Since it is impossible to know the number of accredited music education programs that have undergone curricular revisions in the past 10 years, however, it is impossible to calculate the true response rate based on the population of interest. Our sample of usable responses comprised institutions representing 30 states and a wide range of demographic and institutional characteristics. Demographic data for each participating institution can be found in Table 1. Since the characteristics of the true target population are unknown, it is impossible to determine whether this sample is representative of all music education programs that have undergone recent curricular revisions.

The online survey included forced-choice and open-ended questions regarding factors driving music education curricular change, the primary goals of curricular change, its impact, barriers and challenges faced, and credit hour details. We asked participants to describe the extent of the curricular change they implement-

ed, with choices including Major (“transformative changes to structure and/or content”), Moderate (“substantial changes but maintaining the same framework and/or philosophy”), and Minor (“small ‘tweaks’ to structure and/or content”). We also examined the relative importance of several factors driving faculty decisions to revise their curricula by using nine items scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale with anchors of “Not at all important” and “Extremely important.” These factors included state mandates (credit hours and content), institutional mandates, accrediting bodies, changes in faculty, changes in the music education program structure, changes in Department, Colleges, or Schools of Education (which will be referred to as education programs henceforth) priorities or content, changes in music program priorities or content, a desire for curricular change among music education faculty, and an open-ended response for “other.”

Table 1
Demographic Data for the Participating Institutions (N = 65)

Criteria	Number	%
Type of Institution		
Public institution	43	66
Private institution	22	34
Carnegie Classification		
R1, 2, and 3	27	41
M1, 2, and 3	15	23
Baccalaureate	14	22
Other	9	14
Degree Types		
Bachelor of Music	26	40
Bachelor of Music Education	25	38
Bachelor of Arts	10	16
Bachelor of Science	4	6
Planned Length of Degree		
Four-year Bachelor’s degree	48	73
Five-year Bachelor’s degree	4	6
Post-baccalaureate license	5	8
Other	8	13

Note. Some four-year Bachelor’s degree plans indicated their program was not a “true” four-year degree.

We utilized open-ended questions regarding the primary goals, impact, and barriers/challenges faced during the curricular change process. We also gathered data on the number of credit hours in each participants’ degree program, whether degree programs were subject to a mandated credit hour limit, and whether participants had achieved a credit reduction through their curricular revision. Finally, participants were given the option to provide their email address if they were interested in participating in a follow-up interview for Phase 2 of the study.

Phase 2

The team developed Phase 2 interview questions informed by the Phase 1 survey data in order to provide more insight into the quantitative results (Creswell, 2014). After analyzing the Phase I data, we developed questions for the interview phase of the project that were intended to allow further context and elaboration on factors that survey respondents had identified as most influential during their curricular revisions. We also crafted questions that would address areas where survey respondents' open-ended comments suggested that the survey did not fully capture their experiences. The interview questions fell into two broad categories: those pertaining to the process of changing the music education curriculum and those pertaining to the outcomes after some or all the changes had taken place. Phase 2 of the study included interviews with volunteers ($n = 8$) randomly selected from 30 Phase 1 participants who had indicated their willingness to be contacted for continued participation in this research. Information about each interviewee's institution and curricular revision process can be found in Table 2. The broad range of demographic and program characteristics in our interview pool helped to increase trustworthiness and provide a diverse set of perspectives (Creswell, 2014).

Table 2
Interviewee and Institution Demographics

Participant	State	Carnegie Classification	Average # of Graduates	Type of Revision	Revision Begun	Revision Implemented
1	FL	M1	10	Major	Fall 2014	Fall 2016
2	WA	R2	20	Major	Fall 2013	Fall 2014
3	PA	Bacc.	4	Minor	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
4	MN	R1	8	Moderate	Fall 2014	Fall 2018
5	VA	Other	8	Major	Fall 2016	Fall 2017
6	OK	R2	5	Moderate	Fall 2018	Fall 2019
7	MN	M1	12	Moderate	Fall 2015	Fall 2019
8	MO	R2	8	Moderate	Fall 2017	Fall 2019

Though the interviews were conducted by the research team members individually, each followed the same protocol, using a common script during the interviews, which were conducted through an online communication tool such as Zoom, Skype, or Google Hangout. We asked participants to discuss the motivations behind the curricular changes at their institution, including the influence of

state or accrediting bodies, and the ways faculty were involved in the process. We also asked participants to describe whether all goals of their revisions had been achieved and how faculty, students, and credit loads were impacted. We analyzed the data in two waves, first through individual analysis by each researcher and then through paired peer analysis to identify overall categories and themes in the data from differing perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2014). We separated the interview questions into two themes: curricular revision process and outcomes. Two research team members focused on the process questions of all interviews coding separately, then combining their findings. Two other researchers did the same with the outcome questions. A point of saturation was reached with the coding commonalities found between the researchers within each one's independent analysis. One researcher analyzed the demographic data.

Results

Phase 1 Results

Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered during Phase 1 of the study. The survey included forced-choice and open-ended questions regarding factors driving music education curricular change, the primary goals of curricular change, its impact, barriers and challenges faced, and credit hour details. The quantitative and qualitative results from Phase 1 are presented separately below.

Phase 1: Quantitative Results

Participants ($N = 65$) rated 10 possible reasons for implementing curricular changes on a Likert-type scale ranging from 5 (*Extremely important*) to 1 (*Not at all important*). The responses were quite dispersed (see Table 3). The item that received the most “extremely important” ratings ($n = 32$) was “desire for curricular change among music faculty.” This was also the option that received the most overall positive responses; 48 out of 65 participants indicated that it was “extremely important” or “very important.” While some responses received higher numbers on both “extremely important” and “not important at all,” others, such as “changes in college/school of education priorities or content” received a similar number of responses on all five options. Several participants ($n = 32$, 49%) indicated the extent of their curricular revision was moderate, while others indicated major revisions ($n = 21$, 32%), or minor revisions ($n = 12$, 19%). Fifty-four percent ($n = 35$) indicated there was a cap on the number of degree credit hours, 32% ($n = 21$) indicated there was not a cap, and 14% ($n = 9$) indicated that they did not know.

Reasons for credit hour caps included institutional policies ($n = 14, 26\%$) and state-level mandates ($n = 9, 14\%$).

Table 3
Response Rates on Motivating Factors

	Extremely Important		Very Important		Moderately Important		Slightly Important		Not at all Important	
	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total
Desire for curricular change among music education faculty	49.2	32	24.6	16	6.2	4	14.9	9	6.2	4
State mandate for course or curricular content	32.3	21	20.0	13	10.8	7	7.7	5	29.2	19
Requirements from accrediting bodies	27.7	18	23.1	15	21.5	14	15.4	10	12.3	8
Changes in music education faculty	24.6	16	13.9	9	21.5	14	10.8	7	29.2	19
State mandate for number of credit hours	24.6	16	6.2	4	15.4	10	15.4	10	38.5	25
Changes in College/School of Education priorities or content	23.1	15	18.5	12	21.5	14	16.9	11	20.0	13
Institutional mandate for number of credit hours	20.0	13	16.9	11	21.5	14	16.9	11	20.0	13
Changes in music education program structure	18.5	12	29.2	19	16.9	19	9.2	6	26.2	17
Changes in College/School /Department of Music priorities or content	16.9	11	25.2	17	20.0	13	10.8	7	26.2	17
Institutional mandate for course or curricular content	12.3	8	23.1	15	16.7	11	13.9	9	33.9	22

When asked whether the student course load was reduced as a result of the changes, 45% of survey participants ($n = 29$) reported their revisions resulted in the reduction of credit hours and 55% ($n = 36$) answered that there were no reductions. Those who reported a reduction indicated they did so by removing courses ($n = 17$), decreasing credit hours of existing courses without other changes ($n = 12$), and lessening class time or assignments for existing courses ($n = 7$). Participants ($n = 18$) also reported using other methods, including combining classes for fewer credit hours, offering courses/ensembles for zero credit hours, and taking fewer hours through the education program. While we did not directly ask participants whether their curricular revisions resulted in a credit hour increase, they had the opportunity to provide open-ended comments regarding any aspect of their revisions. No participants provided comments indicating that a credit hour increase had been implemented.

Phase 1: Qualitative Results

In addition to the quantitative data collected for Phase 1 of the study, we gave participants an opportunity to provide open-ended responses while completing the survey. We coded and analyzed these responses to more fully contextualize the quantitative data. Participants indicated that they had encountered the following barriers during the curricular revision process: resistance from music faculty, credit hour restrictions, and difficulties associated with the education program. In particular, participants noted difficulties in obtaining consensus among a broad group of faculty members and other stakeholders with regard to curricular changes, with one participant describing the challenge as “too many cooks in the kitchen.”

Interviewee #4 shared, “One of the frustrations I have as a music educator is that I can’t really adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of my students because of the entrenched Western art music focus of so much of our curriculum.” Another expressed frustration at not being able to bring music colleagues on board with what they believed were changes necessary to best serve music education students:

I am very interested in creativity and creative music education that honors tradition but is also more relevant and reaches more students on the public schools. So, with that in mind, I would love to see our ensemble choices broadened, contemporary music experiences broadened. (Interviewee #3)

Additionally, participants stated that interactions and conflicts between curricular and credit requirements from their institutions, state education departments, and accrediting bodies often created substantial restrictions on their ability to implement desired revisions to the curriculum. In their open-ended responses,

participants reported that even with a cap, some institutions allowed individual programs to exceed the cap if they had a strong rationale, while other institutions were still trying to determine an appropriate number of credit hours to place as a cap.

Despite these challenges, most participants indicated that their curricular revisions had made a substantial positive impact on their programs. Participants used words such as “highly impactful,” “significant,” and “excellent” to describe the reactions from faculty and students in their programs. Although some participants indicated that they were not fully able to assess the impact of the changes because they were too new or still in progress, many of these participants still reported positive early results. Participants frequently mentioned a strengthened focus on music education coursework as a result of their revision, including additional credit hours allocated to pedagogy courses as well as earlier entry to and improved sequencing for music education coursework. Several participants also self-reported increased student interest and enrollment due to the revisions, although we did not collect data to directly verify these reports. Relatively few participants provided negative comments about the impact of their curricular revisions, but those comments that were provided focused on lack of support from other faculty and restrictions in curricular design and implementation. In general, participants seemed enthusiastic about the results of their curricular revisions.

Phase 2 Results

Phase 2 interview questions were separated into two parts. Part 1 included three specific questions regarding the process of implementing curricular change. Part 2 included four specific questions regarding the outcomes resulting from the curricular revisions. Participants were also encouraged to provide further insight beyond these specific questions asked.

Phase 2: Process of Implementing Curricular Change

First, we asked what motivated curricular changes in each interviewee’s program. The most frequently cited motivation was participants’ perceived need to make the curriculum more relevant to the 21st century. They noted an increase in the use and application of technology as well as a general motivation for modernization of content within the courses offered, to better meet the needs of 21st-century schools and learners. As Interviewee #6 explained:

I think it’s really important for all of us to at least, at the very least review our curriculum and ensure that we really are producing 21st Century teachers...

So I think we should take a look back at our own curriculum and what we do throughout and how we can improve what we do to help them understand that, so they are better prepared when they go out into the schools with the needs of the students that we have today.

The second most frequently mentioned motivator was the influence of the education program, whose curricular requirements needed to be revisited often to comply with state certification or licensure guidelines. In order to minimize the number of credit hours in the degree program, stakeholders often worked to avoid or eliminate coursework that was redundant between the two departments.

We next asked participants how state or accrediting bodies influenced the curricular change process. Participants reported state departments of education were the most influential accrediting bodies in the process of changing music education curricula. State influence led to restrictions on course content and course substitutions. Course and credit hour requirements for the degree were also mandated by the state, as were required assessments for certification and recertification. Interviewees recognized state departments generally have the authority to change their requirements and impose implementation of these requirements, further complicating the process. In addition, NASM and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) often imposed changes or revisions, but these bodies implemented changes less frequently and participants generally viewed them as less problematic than state departments of education. In fact, these national organizations, at times, supported the changes individual programs wished to implement by providing justifications and rationales for specific revisions.

Our third specific interview question regarding the revision process explored how faculty were involved. We found that most of the planning and decision-making for the revision process was done by a small group of faculty and sometimes only one faculty member in consultation with others. Collaboration and communication with other stakeholders involved answering questions and soliciting input from education colleagues and music faculty not directly involved in music education classes. Individual interviewees cited both positive support from others as well as great difficulties in gaining the support needed.

When asked if they had additional points to share about the process of revising the curriculum, the interviewees explained that the process was extensive, time consuming, and difficult. A primary theme that emerged was that faculty in the education program exerted a major influence on the revision, whether positive or negative. Participants emphasized the need for productive collaboration with the education program. Interviewee #2 noted that their interaction with the education program “was a very pragmatic, straight-ahead conversation - why duplicate

things and keep our students here forever?" Another response from Interviewee #8 further illustrated the value of a positive relationship with the education program and its potential impact on students:

I foresee this [curricular change] to be highly impactful in a positive way, and I also say it would have been impossible or very, very difficult without our School of Education people being surprisingly on board with us taking away students from them.

In other cases, however, participants suggested that the education program had a negative influence on their revision process. Interviewee #1 noted:

[W]orking with our College of Education, oh, gosh, they did not want anything to move fast or at all... We experienced a great deal of challenges that had to be worked through over a long period of time with many stakeholders [there].

Whether these interactions were positive or negative, participants suggested that they were one of the primary elements that shaped the direction of the revisions.

Phase 2: Resulting Outcomes

The second half of the interview protocol included four specific questions regarding the outcomes of curricular revisions. Participants provided insight on the topics of goal achievement, impact on students, impact on faculty, and credit hour reductions. When asked if all the goals of the revision were achieved, four participants reported that their goals were fully met and three participants reported the goals were partially met or that it was difficult to assess outcomes because the revisions were still in progress. Only one of the eight participants reported that the goals were not met.

All participants reported they perceived that the curricular changes (or if not yet implemented, the curricular change goals) had a positive impact on music education students. Specifically, participants mentioned that they perceived a better connection across the curriculum (from the first year through senior year). In addition, they were pleased by their perceptions that the curricular revisions resulted in more relevant coursework, fewer wasted credits, and better prepared student teachers.

Nearly all participants reported an increased teaching load for music education faculty as a result of curricular change. In some cases, this was the result by increasing the load of current faculty, while other institutions implemented additional adjunct loads in the music education program. The increased teaching

load was partly due to a shift in the number of credits music education students were taking in other (non-music education) areas. In effect, many participants reported that the music education department was “claiming” some of the coursework to their area and adding it to their load (or overload) in order to have more control over their students’ coursework. There was a general feeling among those we interviewed that the faculty involved across departments were understanding and willing to adjust to these changes because it was clear that it was best for the students.

A reduction in credit hours was generally reported by interviewees as a goal of curricular change, and sometimes a requirement implemented by the state, institution, or administration. Some participants reported that trying to reduce credit hours created additional stress during the revision process, but many recognized the benefits of streamlining the degree program. One response from Interviewee #8, in particular, highlighted how these reductions might be helpful for students:

That’s a big help to them (students) because their schedules are absurdly overloaded with required hours and then even overloaded with classes that meet for a certain number of hours but they don’t even get credit...it freed up their schedules a little bit, gave them fewer credit hours from something that was overloaded, and then the redundancy. I think we will see them be less frustrated.

There were three common ways that our interviewees accomplished a reduction in credit hours: reducing and/or redistributing education credits (many times incorporating the material into music education method courses); reducing redundancy in course content; and connecting practica to method courses (sometimes removing the credit associated with separate practicum courses but not necessarily reducing the student workload).

The sequence was all over the place. There were students taking classes out of order. There was a lot of redundancy with our college of ed... why duplicate things and keep our students here forever? And the degree was huge. It was absolutely enormous! There was no way to complete it in under five years. We had to come up with a list and a set of pre-requisites that made sense, and content. (Interviewee #5)

When asked if they had additional points to share about the outcomes of revising the curriculum, we noticed an emergent theme. While modernizing the curriculum was a common goal of participants’ curricular revisions, they expressed frustration in trying to implement the relevant changes within the boundaries of the “traditional” elements of their music education program. Some participants did feel they were able to successfully include more modern band, vernacular mu-

sic, social justice, and contemporary skills/issues experiences in their new curriculum. Still, there was mention of a desire to include more focus on culturally responsive teaching and pursuing music education for all. For example, Interviewee #2 had plans to “continue investigating this particular work by exploring culturally responsive teaching and contacting culture bearers. I am planning to write a letter describing my commitment to opportunities for the other 80%.”

Discussion

The quantitative results of this study suggested that curricular revisions were often motivated by desire for change among the music education faculty. Survey data further suggested that the majority of respondents viewed their curricular revisions as moderate in scope, and that just under half of these revisions included a reduction in credit hours. Finally, open-ended comments on the survey suggested that the education program played an important role in the curricular revision process. The depth of these responses, however, was limited. We sought further depth and richness in the data pool through the open-ended interviews conducted in Phase 2. While these interviews generally reinforced the data collected during Phase 1, they also provided important additional context for the quantitative data. For example, while Phase 1 data indicated that curricular revisions were driven by a desire for change, Phase 2 data revealed that this desire for change was related to a desire to increase the relevance of the music education program. By using an explanatory mixed-methods design, we were able to ensure that our results reflected both the diverse responses of a relatively broad sample and the depth and richness of in-depth discussion with respondents. In this section, we present a discussion of the overall themes revealed during this study, as arrived at through combined analysis of both data waves.

Curricular revision in music education is a complicated process, generally involving many interrelated stakeholders and components. In addition, it may often be an ongoing process with no concrete conclusion. Many of the participants in both phases of our study indicated that they had been a part of numerous rounds of curricular revision, sometimes moving directly from the implementation of one revision to the planning of the next. Despite the challenges and stress associated with the process of curricular revisions, however, many music education faculty members may be strongly motivated to implement these revisions, and may view them as positive and important steps toward providing students with better and more relevant degree programs. Although the participants in our study identified numerous challenges and barriers to designing and implementing their curricular revisions, the vast majority of these participants viewed the revisions as very

important and were pleased with the structure and outcomes of the changes that they made.

One of the most prominent themes that emerged through both phases of this study was the importance of the education program in the process of curricular revisions. Participants frequently identified the education program as one of the most important factors at all stages of the curriculum revision process, including motivation for curricular change, planning and design of the revision, and approval and implementation of the new curriculum. In some cases, the education program had a positive influence on the revision process, providing additional support and flexibility for the music education area. In other cases, the education program served as a negative influence, preventing or complicating proposed changes or creating additional hurdles for the music education faculty to navigate. These results echo those of Edgar (2014), who emphasized the importance of collaboration between music and education units to more fully support music education degree programs. It may be beneficial for music teacher educators to foster good relationships with the education program at their institutions, in order to facilitate future curricular changes as well as other collaborative efforts.

Another prominent theme in our findings was music teacher educators' motivation to create more relevant curricula to emphasize 21st century skills and other current trends in music education. Respondents in both phases of our study recognized that the needs of students and schools are changing, and expressed a desire to ensure that preservice teachers are prepared for the classrooms in which they will teach. Many scholars have called for increased curricular integration and an increased focus on the needs of contemporary music teachers (Barrett, 2009; Campbell et al., 2014; Heuser, 2015; Hickey & Rees, 2002; Kratus, 2014; Palmer & deQuadros, 2012; Webster, 2017). The results of the present study suggest that although these changes may not be readily apparent on a profession-wide basis, many music teacher educators' efforts to revise and improve their curricula reflect the same priorities and motivations found in the research literature. These efforts, however, are often complicated by other factors, notably credit hour or content restrictions imposed by institutions, state departments of education, or accrediting bodies. Based on our findings, it seems possible that the slow pace and incremental nature of curricular change in music teacher education may largely be due to external factors rather than the views or motivations of music education faculty.

As with any research, it is important to consider the limitations of this study when interpreting or applying the results. One important limitation of this research is related to the sample of respondents in both phases. Since the characteristics and size of the true population of interest (music education programs who

have undergone curricular revisions in the past 10 years) are unknown, it is not possible to calculate a true response rate for our survey or to determine whether our sample is truly representative of the population of interest. As with any survey research, our Phase 1 findings are also subject to self-selection bias, and it is likely that those with strong feelings on this topic were more likely to respond. Similarly, it is possible that the respondents who agreed to be interviewed in Phase 2 of our study were those who had particularly positive or negative experiences with curricular revisions. The overall sample size of this research was small, and generalizations should be made with care. Given the diverse characteristics of our respondents and the level of data saturation that we were able to achieve, however, we feel that this study provides useful information regarding the process and outcomes of curricular revision in music education programs.

Additional future research may help to address the limitations of this study and further illuminate the issues that we have raised here. The findings from this study contribute to our understanding of the process of curricular revision in music teacher education curricula, yet our research focused largely on the curriculum revision process itself. Additional information about the impact of these revisions and what types of revisions are most successful would also be beneficial. Future researchers may wish to further investigate the process of implementing curricular changes, including the viewpoints of students, administrators, and other stakeholders. In particular, it may be helpful to consider whether the needs of K-12 school systems have an impact on the curricular revision process, a topic that was insufficiently explored in the present study. Additionally, given the prominence of the education program in the curricular revision process, researchers may wish to investigate strategies for developing positive relationships between the education program and music education faculty, as well as strategies for improving communication during the process of curricular revision. Finally, researchers may wish to further investigate the impact of state and institutional mandates on music teacher education curricula, especially with regard to credit hour caps and specific curricular requirements. These factors seem to have a strong impact on curricular revisions, and a deeper understanding of how these processes interact may allow music teacher educators to better navigate the revision process and develop more effective curricula overall.

Conclusion

Although numerous scholars have called for a transformation of the undergraduate music education curriculum, widespread change has been very slow to occur. As is apparent in many examples from our study, music education faculty

members are making efforts to develop more relevant, contemporary, and integrated undergraduate curricula. While external factors and challenging relationships within the institution complicate these efforts, music education faculty members who are willing to navigate these challenges may be able to realize substantial benefits for their students and communities. Through the findings from our study, we provide a deeper understanding of how to navigate the revision process and develop more effective curricula, thus helping facilitate curricular changes that provide positive outcomes for faculty and students alike.

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Supplemental Material

Survey

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are the program coordinator / department head for an undergraduate music teacher education program that has undergone a curricular revision in the past 10 years (or is currently undergoing a curricular revision).

1. Is your institution public or private?
2. In which state is your institution located?
(select from list)
3. What is your institution's Carnegie classification?
R1, R2, R3, M1, M2, M3, Baccalaureate Colleges: Art and Science Focus, Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields, Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Mixed Baccalaureate/Associate's, Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Associates Dominant, Other
4. What type of undergraduate music education degree(s) does your institution offer? (Choose all that apply)
4-year Bachelor's, 5-year Bachelor's, Port-baccalaureate licensure program, Other (please explain)
5. How many music education faculty members teach at your institution?
6. How important were each of the following elements in driving your choice to revise your curriculum? (Consider only their effect on the initial choice to make the revision, not their effect during the course of the revision process.)
 - 1 Not at all important, 2- Slightly important,
 - 3 - Moderately important, 4 - Very important,
 - 5 - Extremely important
 - State mandate for number of credit hours
 - State mandate for courses or curricular content
 - Institutional mandate for number of credit hours
 - Institutional mandate for courses or curricular content
 - Requirements from accrediting bodies (NASM, CAEP, etc.)
 - Changes in music education faculty

- Changes in music education program structure
 - Changes in College/School of Education priorities or content
 - Changes in College/School/Department of Music priorities or content
 - Desire for curricular change among music education faculty
7. What was the extent of your curricular revision? (Choose the best description) Major (Transformative changes to structure and/or content) Moderate (Substantial changes but maintaining the same framework and/or philosophy) Minor (Small “tweaks” to structure and/or content)
 8. Once you had decided to make a curricular revision, what were your primary goals for that revision?
 9. How would you describe the impact of your curricular revisions?
 10. What barriers or challenges did you encounter during the process of revising your curriculum?
 11. Approximately how many credit hours are included in your undergraduate music education degree?
 12. Is there a “cap” on the number of credit hours that can be included in your curriculum?
Yes
No
Don’t know
 13. Where does this cap originate?
State Level
Institutional Level
College/School Level
Department/Area Level
Other (please explain)
Don’t know
 14. Did your curricular revision result in a reduction of credit hours in the degree program? (Yes/No)
 15. Indicate below how the reduction in credit hours was achieved. (Choose all that apply)
Removing courses from the program
Reducing class time or assignments for existing courses
Reducing credit hours on existing courses without other changes
Other (Please explain)

16. Do you have any additional comments about the motivation for your curricular revision?
17. If your program has undergone a curricular revision in the past 10 years, we would like to include your institution in our second phase. If you are willing, please enter an email address for your institution's undergraduate music teacher education program coordinator below.

Interview Protocol

The purpose of our study is to examine the motivations, goals, and obstacles associated with curricular revisions in music teacher educator programs. You completed phase 1 of our study last semester, and volunteered to participate in this second phase of our study. Your participation is valuable, but also voluntary and you may stop at any time. All information you share in this interview will be kept anonymous.

1. Do you have any questions you would like me to answer?
2. After reading the information in the consent form you received via email, can you confirm your consent to participating in this study?
3. Do you consent to having me audio & video record this conversation?

Thank you. Let's begin with three demographic questions.

- How many students do you typically graduate each year?
- When did you begin the curriculum revision process?
- When was the new curriculum implemented? OR When do you expect it to be implemented?

Next I'll ask you several questions about the process of curricular revision at your institution.

- First, what motivated curricular changes in your program?
- Were there other factors that influenced these changes?
- How did state or accrediting bodies influence your revision?
- In what ways were faculty involved in the revision process?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding the revision process?

Next I'll ask several questions about the outcomes of your curricular revision.

- Were all the goals of the revision achieved?
- In what ways did the curricular change impact faculty?
- In what ways did the curricular change impact music education students?
- Did the curricular change impact overall credit load? If so, in what ways?
- If there was a credit hour reduction, how was that reduction achieved?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share regarding the outcomes of your curricular revision?

Thank you for this information. Do you have anything else that you'd like to share about this topic?