Texas Music Education Research

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How Are Conference Clinics Designed and Delivered to Facilitate Music Teacher Professional Development?

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The purpose of this study was to examine how conference clinics are designed and delivered to facilitate music teacher professional development (PD). We selected three clinics from the 2023 Texas Music Educators Association Clinic/Convention (TMEA), the largest music teacher PD conference in the United States. Using multiple-case study methods, data were derived from field observations and clinician interviews as well as clinic audio recordings and handouts. We asked: (1) how and to what extent did the content, structure, and presentation of three TMEA clinics reflect principles of relevance, practicability, and impact? and (2) to what extent did clinicians consider their work pedagogical? Findings revealed that clinicians centered the problems facing the teachers in their target audience (relevance), conveyed stories of successful classroom applications and developed handouts and other resources to aid post-conference implementation (practicability), and emphasized the novelty and potential of the interventions they advanced (impact). Clinicians were wary of identifying as teachers and characterizing their clinics as pedagogical. They adopted a posture of "sharing" as opposed to "teaching" and were somewhat anxious about being perceived by colleagues as condescending or out of touch. Notably, clinicians still employed many conventional pedagogical techniques (e.g., segmenting content to prevent cognitive overload) and were attuned to common pedagogical concerns (e.g., pacing, engagement). Considering these findings, we highlight a few potential pathways for future conference-focused PD research in music education.

Annual and semiannual PD conferences, organized by state music education associations and other professional groups, draw tens of thousands of music teachers for substantive sessions, all-

Ninety-eight percent of U.S. music teachers engage in professional development (PD) each year (West, 2021, 2024). PD can differ along many dimensions—from formal activities like attending a conference or viewing a webinar to less formal, ad hoc PD such as consulting a colleague about a difficult classroom situation. Whatever the form, PD, if effectively conceived and executed, can support responsive and resourceful music teaching. The core attributes of effective PD include content specificity, relevance, social interaction, teacher agency, sustained duration, and school/district policy support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone, 2009; Stanley et al., 2014; West, 2021, 2024; West & Bautista, 2022; Yoon & Goddard, 2023). Scholars have repeatedly identified PD with these characteristics as most likely to change teachers' knowledge, skills, or practices and boost student learning. Examples include professional learning (Desimone & Pak, 2017; Kraft et al., 2018), all learning experiences that are situated, collaborative, and sustained. National data show that, however strong their theoretical merits, such experiences do not tend to be the most accessible to music teachers; conferences instead carry this distinction (West, 2021, 2024).

state and honor ensemble performances, exhibitions, and collegial exchange. Music teachers are significantly more likely to rely on conferences for PD than their colleagues teaching other arts and non-arts subjects (West, 2024). On the one hand, as one-to-three-day events occurring outside school and classroom contexts, conferences are arguably at odds with several attributes of effective PD. At a high level, conferences could be encompassed within what some scholars have disapprovingly called the *training model* of PD ("formal workshop designs, prescribed practices, detachment from classroom practice, and disregard for adult learning"; Lieberman & Miller, 2014, p. 8).

On the other hand, as perhaps the only reliably music-specific PD available, conferences fill a critical void (Schneckenburger, 2014). It is thus important to fully understand their structure, content, and effects on professional practice. Though some empirical work on PD conferences has been published over the years—for instance, content analyses of sessions at major national music conferences (Orman & Price, 2007; Palkki et al., 2016) and West's (2020) grounded theory on how music teachers used conference-derived practices in their future work—the literature is generally scant. Strikingly, to date, there is no extant literature on how conferences' main PD feature—the session itself—is designed to facilitate teacher learning. The current inquiry is an initial step in addressing this gap.

Theoretical Framework

As an analytic lens, we applied West's (2020) theory of *proximate change* or the "near-term integration of conference learnings into classroom practice" (p. 67). With data from 32 music educator attendees to three large-scale conferences, including TMEA, he posited a three-phase model of proximate change: (1) consideration, (2) realization, and (3) decision.

During the *consideration* phase, participants assessed their needs, envisioned change in the abstract while attending sessions, and then made concrete commitments to change (i.e., new practices/perspectives). After deciding which practices/perspectives to implement, some participants encountered deterrents such as performance demands, which led them to either postpone implementation or to forgo it indefinitely. Absent a deterrent, in the *realization* phase participants adapted practices/perspectives for their students and attempted implementation through multiple trials. Ultimately, in the *decision* phase, participants evaluated practices/perspectives based on student evidence. They continued practices/perspectives they deemed effective and discontinued or deferred those deemed ineffective. (West, 2020, p. 77, emphasis added).

Guiding teacher action in all three phases was their pursuit of *convergence*. Teachers shaped conference experiences to be as resonant as possible with the joys and challenges of everyday teaching. Teachers' assessments of convergence turned on three factors: *relevance* (germaneness of a practice or perspective to music and music teaching), *practicability* (feasibility of applying a practice or perspective in authentic instructional contexts), and *impact* (perceived probability of a practices thought pressing, implementable in the short term, and workable—proved stickier for teachers.

In the present study, we used West's three convergence factors to understand how clinic content, structure, and presentation might spur changes in teacher practices or perspectives. Though the proximate change model principally explains teacher behavior, clinics and clinicians are still basic inputs. Non-clinic dynamics may come into play—e.g., a teacher may defer implementation of a favored reform for lack of time—but this occurs only after teachers decide,

as a threshold matter, that a clinician's ideas or materials are relevant, practicable, and impactful in the first place. Appreciating the theoretical converse of this phenomenon (i.e., whether clinicians make relevance-practicability-impact judgments in designing or delivering sessions as teachers do in attending them) could be instructive.

Alongside the convergence factors, we further scrutinized clinics as forms of pedagogy, consistent with West's theoretical proposition that "music teachers understand [conference] PD as an enterprise aimed at self-growth, professional growth, and student growth" (p. 88). Conference clinics resemble conventional teaching and learning situations in both style (lecture, discussion, questioning, visual aids) and substance (instructional content, learning goals), but it is not clear if clinicians regard their tasks as such. In using a pedagogical lens, we sought to learn how and why teaching considerations did (or did not) affect clinicians' goals, perceptions, and behavior.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how conference clinics are designed and delivered to facilitate music teacher learning. We asked:

- 1. How and to what extent did the content, structure, and presentation of three TMEA clinics reflect principles of relevance, practicability, and impact?
- 2. To what extent did clinicians consider their work pedagogical?

Method

We employed case study methods, an empirical approach that allowed us to "investigate a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context" (Yin, 2018, p. 15). Applying the "replication logic" (p. 55) of a multiple-case study, we chose three cases—each a PD clinic at the 2023 TMEA Clinic/Convention. Consistent with case study design (Yin, 2018), we were attentive to contextual conditions, relied on multiple sources of evidence (interviews, field observations, documents) and made findings only after assessing agreement within and across cases (triangulation).

Context and Participants

The TMEA Clinic/Convention is the largest music teacher PD conference in the United States, attracting each year more than 29,000 attendees, among whom at least 10,000 are active music teachers.¹ The TMEA program typically includes all-state band, orchestra, and choir concerts; performances of invited honor ensembles from the elementary to the college/university level; an extensive exhibit hall with hundreds of music and music education vendors; and pertinent to this inquiry, nearly 300 PD clinics for P–12 teachers on the improvement of school music programs and instruction.² We selected three clinics as cases for this project. The first author, a paid registrant to TMEA in 2023, attended each selected clinic and then by email invited clinicians to participate in the study. Our sample of three aligns with the one to five clinics teachers attend at TMEA each year, on average, according to post-convention survey data (Floyd, 2023). Clinic A,

¹ https://www.tmea.org/convention/attendance-history/

² https://www.tmea.org/wp-content/uploads/Convention/2024/ConventionFlyer.pdf

presented by Sarah³, was on teaching strategies for (nonensemble) P–12 instrumental music. Clinic B, presented by Charlie and Jordan, was on rebuilding and sustaining secondary performance ensemble programs. Clinic C, presented by Casey, was on secondary choral rehearsal techniques. We interviewed all four clinicians responsible for these sessions (one clinic was copresented). Three of the clinicians were practicing P–12 music teachers. The remaining clinician was not a music educator but worked in a field relevant to the clinic topic. Because of TMEA's public profile and our commitment to participant anonymity, we limit ourselves to these generic descriptions and do not provide a particularized, within-case account of each clinic. Our analyses and findings are instead focused on themes that emerged from across cases.

Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data were derived from field observations and clinician interviews. The first author attended each hourlong clinic in person. Fieldnotes contained chronologies of session activities, summaries of content presented and interactions between attendees (if any), and initial judgments considering the research questions. In semistructured clinician interviews, which occurred via videoconference in the weeks following the conference, participants were asked about their session topics and goals, presentation strategies, to what extent they considered the clinic a pedagogical experience, and how, if at all, their clinic preparation differed from their ordinary classroom teaching. As secondary data, we reviewed clinic audio recordings and handouts as well as information from TMEA's clinic proposal webpage.⁴

For analysis, we followed a mainly deductive approach, using Yin's (2018) strategy of *relying on theoretical propositions*. Yin held that case studies "benefit from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide design, data collection, and analysis" (p. 15) and suggested theory could illuminate "relevant contextual conditions to be described as well as explanations to be examined" (pp. 168–169). Thus, we analyzed our primary data (i.e., interview transcripts, fieldnotes) using deductive codes from the theoretical framework we discussed previously (West, 2020). Specifically, we coded the data using the convergence factors of *relevance, practicability,* and *impact* to understand how they figured into clinic design and delivery, and then to examine the teaching and learning angle, we used the code *pedagogy* to mark clinicians' references or actions that appeared instruction oriented. We triangulated interview, observation, and documentary data to ensure assertions were supported by multiple sources of evidence.

Findings

Research Question 1: How and to what extent did the content, structure, and presentation of three TMEA clinics reflect principles of relevance, practicability, and impact?

Relevance. Clinicians sought to ascertain and then center the problems facing the teachers in their target audience. "As I present," Casey explained, "I try to think about what could be most beneficial...[to] my colleagues, what have they said they're struggling with and how can I craft a session that helps meet some of those needs." To develop relevance, clinicians, all but one a

³ All names are pseudonyms.

⁴ <u>https://www.tmea.org/convention/proposals/</u>

practicing P–12 teacher, drew on challenges they had faced in their professional lives. "We understand what you guys are going through," Charlie said. "These are just some things that have been really effective...that you might consider trying." Clinic topics were all relevant to contemporary teaching, addressing issues with pertinence in the current moment (e.g., restoring music student participation after the pandemic) as well as problems teachers have confronted for generations (e.g., adolescent voice change). Additionally, clinicians acknowledged that relevance was contextual. "My students are not their [attendees'] students," Casey underlined, noting that the strategies he advocated were meant to be adapted, not necessarily replicated. Sarah had a similar view:

"I always try to make sure that I don't say x, y, z is wrong because that's really not true. I always make sure to say, 'This worked for me in my setting with my population of students and that might not work at all for another person in a different population of students."

Practicability. Clinicians conveyed stories of successful classroom applications and developed handouts and other resources to aid post-conference implementation. Sarah gave a lot of examples during her clinic, particularly for what she called the "more vague concepts." She went on: "Especially for the points that I felt like really, really, mattered, it would be important for me to share an anecdote." In Clinic B, attendees applauded when Charlie and Jordan announced a free template they could use in their programs. The clinicians laughed and responded, "You may not be getting a free car, but you're getting a free…template!"

Though all clinicians relied on handouts and resources to support practicability, there was variation in the volume and complexity of the materials provided. Charlie and Jordan streamlined their approach, trying not to be too "wordy" or "cluttered." In addition to the template, they offered attendees a worksheet, a one-page list of guiding principles for classroom applications, and a list of three relevant website links. In contrast, Sarah provided a detailed session handout alongside a list of 42 links to books, pedagogical materials, and websites. Casey, in a similar vein, encouraged attendees to visit a clinic-specific website with about 25 links to videos, checklists, and other materials related to the topic of the session. After Casey's clinic, as attendees were gathering their belongings to leave, the first author overheard two younger teachers: "It's a lot of information. Good for him. He's got it down after [all these] years," one attendee said. The other attendee underscored in response, "This would be a summertime implementation." Notwithstanding their aims of offering ample, concrete, and practicable resources, the specter of overwhelm was never far off, something Sarah seemed to anticipate:

[You] hear all of these ideas from [what feels like] thousands of sessions... You get all the handouts, and you get all the things, and then you're done with the convention and it's just like, 'Aargh, now what do I do?' I would feel happy if a person took away at least one idea that they could implement that would make their life easier in their classroom.

Impact. Clinicians emphasized the novelty and potential of the interventions they advanced. They perceived that attendees sought not only to learn of strategies that might be feasible or germane but also of things they had not yet tried. Sarah stressed the significance of "new perspective[s]" from younger teachers like herself:

If we don't acknowledge that our students are changing and systems are changing, then we're never going to be open to trying anything different...I think that especially for teachers

that have been teaching for a long time that's the first step really... accepting change is just to recognize that something that you learned 15 years ago might not work anymore because our students are very different—especially after COVID...I always try to include those points in my session.

"I have something that I could offer that many people don't have," Casey said. "They may do some of the same things, but they're not seeing it through a lens that I get to see it through." Clinicians studied typical TMEA offerings and developed clinics they thought would fill a gap or address subjects that were underrepresented. Jordan said that he and Charlie would "bring a lot of value to people" because they presented on topics and experiences about which attendees "couldn't really learn elsewhere." Charlie echoed this, noting that they could "bring an outsider's perspective to just help push the needle a little bit."

Research Question 2: To what extent did clinicians consider their work pedagogical?

Clinicians were wary of identifying as teachers and characterizing their clinics as pedagogical. Charlie, Jordan, and Sarah all drew distinctions between "sharing" and "teaching," perceiving the former as more appropriate for conferences. "I don't know if it is teaching per se rather than just sharing with others," Sarah noted. Jordan cited potential disparities in age, experience, or credentials between him and attendees: "Teaching adults and people older than me and my peers, or people who have higher degrees and stuff than me, it feels weird to say I'm teaching them." He explained, "Some adults...if they feel like you're trying to teach them a lesson or something, they don't take it as well." Sarah and Charlie both mentioned "impostor syndrome," with former describing it as "major" and the latter saying it was "debilitating." Asked to elaborate, Sarah mentioned her age and perceived inexperience:

I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that I'm really technically still a new teacher in public school. I think that is part of it. Then part of it is also like I know I'm very young. I look like I'm like 12.

Clinicians were somewhat anxious about being perceived by colleagues as condescending or out of touch. When asked if his clinic preparation for adults was different from how he customarily prepares for his students, Casey, arguably the clinician most comfortable viewing his session as a pedagogical experience, replied, "If I say no, does it sound like I'm talking down to them [clinic attendees]?" Charlie put a finer point on it:

I didn't want to be that person because I hear them complain, they have a PD where they're like, "Oh, they brought [someone] who hasn't been in a classroom in 50 years and doesn't know what they're talking about." and I just really wanted to avoid being that person. I think that's what shaped my mindset is it was very much this humble, 'I come in peace, [and] I'm just here to help' approach.

Despite their reluctance, clinicians nevertheless performed many pedagogical functions: sectioning and portraying content to increase comprehension and prevent cognitive overload; using storytelling and humor for moments of levity; and allowing attendees to ask questions, complete writing prompts, or otherwise interact with the material, clinicians, or their colleagues.

To Casey, maximizing engagement was just as essential to clinic efficacy as it was in his P–12 teaching: "You see adults on their phones, walking in and out early, talking. The behaviors are just as bad as the students!" he said with a chuckle. Given these concerns, Casey reframed his goal from "how do I keep my students engaged?" to "how do I keep my colleagues engaged?"

Discussion

We examined three TMEA clinics for their resonance with West's (2020) theory of music teacher change following PD conferences. Data showed that clinicians considered relevance, practicability, and impact in session design and delivery (Research Question No. 1) but were much less inclined toward assuming a pedagogical stance (Research Question No. 2). That clinicians were sensitive to the convergence factors was unsurprising. Since conference clinicians are often practicing teachers themselves, the focus on germaneness and utility is to be expected. Prior PD literature demonstrates that these considerations, especially relevance, are top of mind for many music teachers who participate in PD (Schneckenburger, 2014). Against this backdrop, the finding around pedagogy appears more vexing. Three in four of the clinicians we interviewed were active music teachers. Yet they were loath to identify as teachers in the conference setting—even while applying conventional pedagogical techniques (e.g., segmenting material and using "brain breaks" to regulate cognitive load). Given the scope of our data collection, we cannot fully unpack this seeming contradiction, but we offer a few conjectures aligned with extant literature.

In contrast to many other forms of PD, individual agency is intrinsic to conferences. Teachers decide virtually all aspects of their experiences, including whether to attend a given conference; the sessions, concerts, and other events in which to participate; and how much to integrate conference-derived interventions into future practice (West, 2020). Clinicians in this study seemed to acknowledge the importance of what Rimmer and Floyd (2020) called "autonomy of practice" at conferences, noting that "part of the attraction of conferences is the ability to select what and how to learn" (p. 7). Especially in the highly regulated field of education, teachers rarely exercise more control over their time and priorities than they do at conferences. Opting for language like "sharing" rather than "teaching," clinicians made judgments about session content, goals, and presentation in recognition of this heightened agency. Clinicians categorized teaching as fundamentally hierarchical, a disposition they thought ill-suited to their work with colleagues and peers, and they seemed to be searching for an alternate frame. To this end, one perspective worth exploring might be Knowles' (1978) theory of and ragogy (teaching and learning for adults) as distinct from pedagogy (teaching and learning for children). An assumption of self-direction figures prominently in andragogy. In adulthood, as people accrue life and professional experiences, they evolve from dependent to independent learners (Rohlwing & Spelman, 2014). It is conceivable that clinicians' discomfort with a pedagogical posture is better explained by their (possibly tacit) internalization of andragogical principles. Additional study is warranted to fully understand possible connections between andragogy, professional agency, and PD conferences.

Impostor phenomenon (IP), as raised by two of our interviewees, may also partly explain pedagogical ambivalence among clinicians. IP is a "psychological construct used to describe potentially debilitating feelings of fraud and fear of being exposed as a phony in individuals who are actually high achieving and successful" (Sims & Cassidy, 2020, p. 249). IP appears to be widespread among preservice music educators, music education graduate students, and earlycareer music education faculty (Nápoles et. al, 2023; Sims & Cassidy, 2019, 2020). It stands to reason that IP may also be elevated among inservice teachers (i.e., many would-be conference clinicians). Serving as a clinician is commonplace in music education: Between 1999 and 2012, almost 25 percent of U.S. music teachers reported presenting at a conference (West, 2021). Inservice teachers are often rightly perceived as especially credible communicators of current and effective classroom practices. Encouraging their robust participation on both sides of the conference experience—as attendees and as clinicians—is vital. That two clinicians in this study cited IP concerns but nevertheless gave well-attended and seemingly well-received presentations is a hopeful indication that IP is not wholly inhibiting qualified clinicians from sharing their expertise, but much more data are needed.

Future Directions

Conferences resemble most group learning situations: dynamic, contingent, and socially rich. Yet music education scholars have largely disregarded conferences as units of analysis in PD research. Our inquiry is an initial step, but three clinics at one conference cannot provide a comprehensive, generally applicable account. Evidence from multiple conferences in diverse contexts is necessary to affirm or nuance the conditions we find here and to explore other aspects of teachers' conference experiences. What kinds of interventions are conference clinics best positioned to convey: tips and tricks or paradigm shifts? Why do teachers, at least at TMEA, attend so few clinics, and thus how do non-clinic conference activities (e.g., concerts, exhibits, networking) contribute to teacher change? These and other queries are starting points toward a more robust knowledge base on the conceptualization, implementation, and effects of PD conferences. Given music teachers' heavy reliance on them for PD, this is a fundamental task.

Keywords: Professional development, music teachers, conferences, Texas Music Educators Association Convention

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Self-Assessment of Rest among Texas PreK-12 Music Educators

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This study aimed to discover Texas PreK-12 music educators' self-assessed need for rest and deficits in seven rest categories. The Texas Music Education Association's Band, Choral, Elementary, and Orchestral Divisions members were invited to participate in an online survey in the Fall of 2023. Participants (N = 253) answered questions replicated from Dalton-Smith (2017) and measured an overall feeling of rest and deficits in seven areas of rest: physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, sensory, and creative. Over two-thirds of respondents reported not feeling rested. Further investigation into the types of rest reveals that participants' rest deficits ranked from the greatest need to the area of most rest, which were mental, physical, emotional, creative, sensory, social, and spiritual. Implications of findings and areas for further research are discussed.

Physical burnout symptoms are associated with sustained activation of the autonomic nervous system, dysfunction of the sympathetic adrenal medullary axis, and alterations in cortisol levels (Bayes et al., 2021). These create a toll on the body and, over time, can contribute to the development of further dysfunctions, such as depression and anxiety (Madigan, 2023). Maslach et al. (2001) suggest emotional exhaustion, defined by the Mayo Clinic as feeling emotionally worn out and drained due to adverse or challenging events, is the most evident sign of burnout. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) report that educators experience emotional burnout more than any other professional group. Rumschlag (2017) reports that female educators may be more prone to emotional burnout than males, yet emotional burnout affects all educators. Addressing classroom misbehaviors can be intellectually and emotionally draining (Chang & Davis, 2009).

Depersonalization is defined as an altered state of self-awareness and identity that results in a feeling of dissociation. It is often experienced as a sense of unreality or detachment from one's body, which is another major factor in professional burnout experiences (Ghanizadeh et al., 2015). In this context, depersonalization is equated with cynicism involving the loss of an emotional or cognitive investment in work. This can disrupt enthusiasm for teaching and tolerance for student

Burnout among educators is a major topic of discussion today, with professional burnout now officially recognized by the World Health Organization as a worldwide occupational phenomenon. The resulting economic effects include an annual healthcare spending of \$125 billion to \$190 billion on workplace health issues attributed to stress and burnout (Moss, 2019). Burnout appears common among teachers (Brouwers & Tomić, 2000; Evers et al., 2002), and teachers experiencing burnout exhibit lower job performance. This can negatively affect the students, schools, and districts where these educators work. Many contributing factors lead to burnout among educators, as identified through the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) tool (Maslach et al., 2001). Physical and emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, diminished personal accomplishments, and a lack of administrative support are all cited as significant issues for educators and the education system (Ford et al., 2019; Ghanizadeh et al., 2015; Mazur & Lynch, 1989; Perrone et al., 2019).

behaviors (Guglielmi et al., 2010). Depersonalization is a dimension of burnout that has been found significantly in other professions; however, the symptom of negative reactions to social interactions with others was predominant in the human services sector, including teaching (Garden, 1987).

Reduced personal accomplishment, a feeling of decreased competence or achievement in one's work, is the final factor of burnout suggested by findings in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach et al., 2001). This factor is closely related to existential fulfillment, with a strong positive correlation between burnout and decreased existential fulfillment. Existential fulfillment results from living a life full of meaning and purpose and is closely linked to personal well-being and life satisfaction (Karazman, 1994; Langle, 2003; Tomić et al., 2004). Self-efficacy reflects an individual's beliefs in his or her capabilities to pursue a course of action to meet given situational demands (Bandura, 1997); educators who believe themselves to be ineffective teachers are prone to lower self-efficacy beliefs in their instructional abilities. Maslach et al. (2001) suggest that this low self-efficacy "[arises] more clearly from a lack of relevant resources" (p. 403), while the other two burnout factors of exhaustion and depersonalization tend to arise due to an overload of work and social conflict.

Teachers are leaving the profession at increasing rates in recent years. According to the Texas Educators Association, the teacher turnover rate from the 2022-2023 school year was 21.40% in Texas. Bryant et al. (2023) found that nearly a third of K-12 educators plan to leave their roles by the end of the academic year. While these rates have risen in recent years, the number of teaching positions continues to increase. There has been an increase of nearly 50,000 positions in Texas schools between 2011-2012 and 2022-2023 (TEA, 2023).

Some research has pointed to rest practices that may relieve burnout, and some researchers address these factors in specific professions. Koutedakis (1995) claims that burnout results from an imbalance of physical activity and recovery. Regarding burnout in specific professions, Stutting (2023) suggests that rest breaks may protect against professional burnout in the medical field. Rest practices, such as physical rest and mental relaxation, are effective in the professional dance world, specifically helping artists cope with the physical and psychological demands of the job (Lewis, 2012). Dalton-Smith (2017) proposes there are seven different types of rest – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, creative, social, and sensory – that may impact burnout.

Dalton-Smith (2017) has defined each type of rest and provided suggestions for gaining rest in each category (Table 1). Her research suggests that being deficient in one or more rest areas may lead to burnout; therefore, it is important to identify which of the seven rest categories people may not feel rested. Despite the beginning of research into rest practices in some professions, there is currently no research on the identification and impacts of Dalton-Smith's (2017) proposed seven types of rest for professionals, including educators. Additionally, acknowledging different types of rest presents a new lens through which we can view burnout.

Since the education field is prone to burnout, this study aimed to analyze self-assessed rest deficits among Texas PreK-12 music educators. Research questions include (1) How do educators self-assess their need for rest? (2) Are there deficiencies among the different types of rest among these educators? (3) If so, how do the rest deficits rank?

Table 1

Type of Rest	Definition	Restful Practices
Physical	The type that most people are familiar with. This includes allowing your body to recharge physically. The primary way that most people get physical rest is through sleep.	Stretching, Yoga, Massage, Sleep
Mental	Characterized by breaks from mental stimulation. A major part of mental rest is unplugging from technology. Mental rest involves an unclouding of the mind.	Meditation, Screen Breaks, Prayer, Work Breaks
Emotional	Emotional rest is an authentic expression of emotion. Throughout the day, people are prone to caretake, people-please, or bottle up their emotions.	Self-Care, Journaling, Vulnerability
Social	Social rest includes balancing social energy, evaluating when you need social breaks and social interaction. This should include an appraisal of relationships that are energy-giving or energy-draining.	Self-care, Family Time, Time Alone, Social Breaks
Spiritual	This is the ability to feel a deep sense of belonging, deeper purpose, and acceptance, which comes from rooting yourself beyond the physical and mental and into something spiritual.	Meditation, Prayer, Yoga, Time Outside
Sensory	Sensory rest is a break from sensory stimulation. This can include noise, light, and other stimuli. This is deeply important in the age of technology, where sensory information comes at us through screens.	Deep Breaths, Screen Breaks, Quiet Time
Creative	An engagement and presence with the beautiful things in the world characterize creative rest. This can be music, art, or nature, but it also can include other types of creative beauty.	Hobbies, Work Breaks, Art Projects

Dalton-Smith's (2017) Types of Rest and Restful Activities

Note. Due to the nature of some types of rest, some practices may appear in multiple categories.

Method

After the IRB protocol was approved, 2,604 Texas Music Education Association (TMEA) members in the Elementary, Band, Choir, and Orchestra divisions were emailed and invited to participate in a Qualtrics survey that took about six minutes to complete. The first email invitation was sent in late September 2023. The second invitation was emailed in late October. Responses were no longer accepted in November. While 320 completed the survey, only 253 respondents met the requirements of being an active Texas PreK-12 music educator. Female respondents accounted for 56.7% of the participants, while 42.1% were male and 1.2% preferred not to answer. Nearly a quarter of respondents (26.1%) were in their first five years of teaching. About half of respondents (53.8%) hold only an undergraduate degree, and elementary music educators had the highest participation with 40.6% of respondents. See Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Data

Factor	n	%
Gender		
Male	107	42.1
Female	144	56.7
Prefer not to respond	3	1.2
Years of Experience		
1-5	66	26.1
6-10	42	16.6
11-15	31	12.3
16-20	22	8.7
21-25	26	10.3
26-30	30	11.9
31-35	19	7.5
36-40	10	4
41+	7	2.8
Highest Degree Earned		
Bachelors	136	53.8
Masters	104	41.1
Factor	n	%
Doctorate	8	3.2
Specialist	1	.4
Certification	4	1.6
Teaching Focus Area		
General Music	110	40.6
Band	84	31
Vocal	36	13.3
Elementary	23	8.5
Orchestra	10	3.7
Other	8	3

Note. N = 253

After the demographic data questions, educators responded yes or no to the question, "Do you feel rested?" Then, the survey asked six to seven questions for each of the seven rest categories. These questions were replicated from Dalton-Smith's (2017) book *Sacred Rest*. Respondents could choose between *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree*, and *strongly disagree* for each question.

Results

The first research question, "How do Texas PreK-12 music educators self-assess their need for rest?" was measured by one survey question. "Do you feel rested?" Using descriptive analysis, 78.3% of participants (n = 198) answered no, which left 21.7% of participants (n = 55) answering yes. This suggests that most participants identified a need for rest.

The second research question was, "Are there deficiencies in the different types of rest among these educators?" The remaining survey items, replicated from Dalton-Smith (2017), were analyzed to answer this question. Responses were coded for *strongly agree* (4), *somewhat agree* (3), *somewhat disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1) in SPSS for descriptive analysis for each rest category (Table 3). Participants report feeling more rested in the Spiritual, Social, and Sensory categories and less rested in the Mental, Physical, and Emotional categories.

Table 3

Type of Rest and Question Asked	Stro Aş	ongly gree	Some Ag	ewhat ree	Some Disa	ewhat Igree	Stro Disa	ngly gree
	п	%	п	%	п	%	п	%
Physical Rest								
I lack the energy needed to do the physical tasks on my to-do list.	56	22.1	117	46.3	50	19.8	30	11.9
I feel tired yet have difficulty falling asleep.	66	26.1	63	24.9	61	24.1	63	24.9
I have a weak immune system, leading to frequent illnesses.	25	9.88	46	18.2	75	29.6	107	42.3
I experience frequent muscle pain and soreness.	53	21	84	33.2	61	24.1	55	21.7
I depend on substances to give me more energy.	83	31.8	74	29.3	30	11.9	66	26.1
I depend on substances to give me more rest.	32	12.7	51	20.2	50	19.8	120	47.4
Mental Rest								
I feel as if I can't keep up mentally with my to-do list.	58	22.9	110	43.5	59	23.3	26	10.3
I experience irritation or frustration when thinking about my day.	46	18.2	104	41.1	65	25.7	38	15
I avoid some activities because I fear I will "mess it up."	24	9.49	64	25.3	70	27.7	95	37.6
I feel drowsy or as if I am in a mental fog during the day.	53	21	97	38.3	49	19.4	54	21.3

Survey results for all rest categories

Type of Rest and Question Asked	St	rongly Agree	Som	ewhat ree	Some	ewhat agree	Stro Disa	ongly
	п	%	n	%	п	%	п	%
I snap at my family and coworkers about insignificant things.	22	8.7	67	26.5	76	30	88	34.8
I spend most of my day on tasks I find overwhelming.	21	8.3	60	23.7	103	40.7	69	27.3
I feel exhausted by the amount of mental noise I experience.	82	32.4	65	25.7	52	20.6	54	21.3
Emotional Rest								
I tend to focus on my failures and flaws.	56	22.1	77	30.4	73	28.9	47	18.6
I experience anxieties that lead me to be inauthentic.	37	14.6	90	35.6	53	21	73	28.9
I experience self-doubt, which prevents me from trying new things.	34	13.4	62	24.5	68	26.9	89	35.2
I constantly compensate for myself with apologies or clarifications.	37	14.6	60	23.7	68	26.9	88	34.8
I beat myself up when I make even the slightest mistake.	52	20.6	80	31.6	54	21.3	67	26.5
I feel depressed or angry when I think about my life.	26	10.3	36	14.2	70	27.7	121	47.8
I display feelings of anxiety about various situations.	48	19	75	29.6	60	23.7	70	27.7
Spiritual Rest								
I feel decreased satisfaction and little sense of accomplishment.	32	12.7	60	23.7	71	28.1	90	35.6
I feel helpless, hopeless, trapped, or defeated in life.	18	7.11	33	13	59	23.3	143	56.5
I feel distant from a meaningful, deep purpose in life.	17	6.72	40	15.8	55	21.7	141	55.7
I do not feel spiritually grounded.	15	5.93	35	13.8	57	22.5	146	57.7
I feel as though life is a waste of energy; I have no motivation.	6	2.37	12	4.74	38	15	197	77.9
I experience suicidal thoughts and depression.	7	2.77	25	9.88	30	11.9	191	75.5
I feel numb and apathetic.	12	4.74	24	9.49	41	16.2	176	69.6
Social Rest								
I feel alone in the world.	15	5.93	28	11.1	42	16.6	168	66.4
I feel detached from family and friends.	18	7.11	58	22.9	53	21	124	49
I am generally attracted to people who mistreat or abuse me.	4	1.58	14	5.53	26	10.3	209	82.6

Type of Rest and Question Asked	St	rongly Agree	Some	ewhat ree	Some Disa	ewhat agree	Stro Disa	ngly gree
	п	%	n	%	п	%	n	%
I find it difficult to maintain close relationships or make friends.	17	6.72	54	21.3	50	19.8	132	52.2
I isolate myself from others.	29	11.5	59	23.3	61	24.1	104	41.1
I prefer online relationships over face-to-face relationships.	6	2.37	14	5.53	33	13	200	79.1
Sensory Rest								
I have a sensitivity and/or adverse reaction to loud sounds.	32	12.7	53	21	49	19.4	119	47
I experience blurry vision and/or eye pressure, fatigue, or strain.	26	10.3	84	33.2	42	16.6	101	39.9
I believe natural foods don't have flavor, craving processed foods.	12	4.74	35	13.8	72	28.5	134	53
I dislike being hugged or touched by others.	9	3.56	27	10.7	46	18.2	171	67.6
I am desensitized to aromas others seem to smell easily.	8	3.16	24	9.49	46	18.2	175	69.2
I cannot enjoy sensory-rich experiences like concerts or fireworks.	13	5.14	28	11.1	47	18.6	165	65.2
Creative rest								
I always focus on the needs of others, not prioritizing my own.	61	24.1	102	40.3	66	26.1	24	9.49
I talk myself out of self-care as if I don't deserve being cared for.	23	9.09	74	29.3	64	25.3	92	36.4
I feel I am being selfish when I consider doing things for myself.	51	20.2	86	34	55	21.7	61	24.1
I make choices that sabotage my happiness.	12	4.74	46	18.2	53	21	142	56.1
I feel my work is not of value or unappreciated for my contributions.	43	17	65	25.7	53	21	92	36.4
I find it difficult to enjoy things in nature or in their natural state.	9	3.56	21	8.3	58	22.9	165	65.2

Note. These questions are replicated from Dalton-Smith (2017).

Research question three asked, "If there are differences among the types of rest, how do these differences compare?" Assumptions were tested and met before using an ANOVA to compare group scores. Data were then transformed by averaging each participant's scores per rest category. Using this new data point, all participants' scores were averaged for each rest category to create a final score, which was used in an ANOVA. A one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant effect, F(1, 6) = 62.52, p < .001. The effect size, $\eta^2 = 0.18$, indicates a large effect. Tukey's HSD post hoc test showed the mental and physical categories as the highest, suggesting participants have the greatest rest deficits in these categories. Post hoc results also revealed the spiritual and social categories where educators felt the most rested (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Results of survey, by category

Note. The above figure depicts Tukey's HSD post hoc test results. Each type of rest has been abbreviated.

Discussion

Self-assessment results from the survey question, "Do you feel rested?" suggest that most participants did not feel rested, which was the first research question. Research question two addresses which of the seven rest areas educators report a deficit, which may imply why educators reported not feeling rested. The rest categories ranked from greatest need for rest to most rested were mental, physical, emotional, creative, sensory, social, and spiritual, which answers research question three.

Possible reasons why 78.6% of participants did not feel rested could be in the deficits reported for physical and mental rest, which were the top two categories for needing more rest.

This aligns with existing findings that physical and emotional exhaustion partially contributes to educator burnout (Ford et al., 2019; Ghanizadeh et al., 2015; Mazur & Lynch, 1989; Perrone et al., 2019). Mental rest received the highest score, indicating the greatest deficit for this sample. Teachers have been reporting mental rest deficits for many years (Reichardt, et al., 2008; Lucas, 2017), so the results of this survey are consistent with current literature in this area. Current cultural values are often incompatible with proper mental rest habits, which involve meditation, work breaks, sleep prioritization, decluttering, and more. Due to the societal habits that conflict with these restful practices, the recommended mental rest solutions may be some of the most difficult practices to implement immediately in a school day setting or one's personal life. This may potentially lead to a greater rest deficit in the mental rest category.

Physical rest was the subjects' second greatest deficit, closely behind the mental category. Being an educator is not a desk job. Instead, it is a physically demanding job, often with many hours spent on teachers' feet on a hard surface. There is often significant walking and gesturing involved in being a music educator. In addition, teachers are expected to be at school before students arrive and after dismissal, which often leads to 7 AM to 4 PM contract hours at a minimum. Many teachers have family demands requiring physical energy before and after contract hours. When considering the physical requirements of educators in and out of school, it is not surprising that physical rest is needed among music educators. Adding physical rest practices to teacher development and education may increase awareness of small changes that can be added to educators' routines. These changes may, over time, make a large difference in the quality and quantity of physical rest received by educators.

Emotional rest was the third-highest deficit, followed closely by creative rest. The emotional tax of a career in education is great with little-to-no support as it is simply "part of the job" for so many teachers (Scheuch et al., 2015). This aligns with existing research suggesting depersonalization, diminished personal accomplishments, and a lack of administrative support are significant issues for educators (Ford et al., 2019; Ghanizadeh et al., 2015; Mazur & Lynch, 1989; Perrone et al., 2019). This misconception that lacking support is part of the job could contribute to emotional deficits. Creative rest practices include engaging in hobbies. Music performance may be a creative outlet for many music educators. Since 26% of study participants were in their first five years of teaching, there may be a lack of personal practice time and performance opportunities, contributing to the desire to engage in creative rest.

Spiritual rest was a category in which participants reported little to no deficit. This indicates a sense of deeper meaning and purpose in these careers. Dalton-Smith (2017) shared that this may be one of the more difficult rest areas to prioritize and make healthy for some people. Thus, a quality relationship with spiritual rest is a significant positive sign. Spiritual rest deficits involve severe mental health crises, including depression, anxiety, and even suicidal ideation. While some educators reported these experiences, the vast majority did not, indicating that the purpose they feel in their careers has withstood many issues facing the education system today. This supports the idea that participants have a sense of personal accomplishment, existential fulfillment, and a positive view of their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Karazman, 1994; Langle, 2003; Maslach et al., 2001; Tomić et al., 2004).

Participants did not report significant deficits in social, spiritual, and sensory rest categories, even though these categories represent nearly half of the types of rest. Experiencing physical, mental, and emotional rest deficits may be more demanding than the other four types of rest. This raises the question: Are the types of rest equal? While each type of rest is crucial to human health and wellness, some categories may be more relevant to certain professions than others (Dalton-Smith, 2017). This is an area for future research. In addition, future studies should examine the influence of each type of rest in the classroom and the effectiveness of various rest strategies on common deficits experienced by educators.

Restful practices could be a significant aid in music educator retention. Most retention strategies are improving community support and increasing accessibility to pay-increase pathways (Daniels, 2022); however, these strategies have not been able to catch up with the losses these systems experience each year. A shift into a rest-minded approach could shift these circumstances. Implementing policies and practices focused on repairing specific rest deficits at the individual or departmental level could meet needs more fully and would be an example of the type of administrative support needed to better the careers of today's educators.

The need for each type of rest among educators opens up a new avenue for burnout solutions, including creating policies that address micro-level solutions, like increasing administrative support, burnout prevention sessions, and releasing certain pressures affecting educators. Change

is warranted with so many current teacher retention policies using up resources with little to no results. Future research should examine the relationship between rest deficits and burnout, including the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Additionally, examining the relationships between rest deficits and various demographic data points such as race, gender, economic status, and focus area would be beneficial in locating the educators who need the most support. Research into religious and spiritual affiliations among educators could be beneficial in understanding the positive relationship with spiritual rest indicated by most participants.

Keywords: Teacher burnout, rest, teacher retention

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Start to Finish: Three Choral Conductors' Approaches to Preparation Timeline

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This qualitative multiple case study describes three university conductors' approaches to preparing repertoire with their ensembles outlined through: sequential processes and timelines; the structure and tools inherent to the implementation of their respective processes; and the priorities or non-negotiable' factors that guide their decision-making. Participants included James Rodde of Iowa State University, Z. Randall Stroope formerly of Oklahoma State University, and Betsy Cook Weber formerly of the University of Houston. Participants describe unique approaches to the sequencing of musical elements, and while they have slightly different definitions of high-quality tone production, they all identify healthy vocal production as a foundational and non-negotiable component of their process. The elements of articulation, dynamics, and timbre represented greater variances in the conductors' preparation sequences. They have varied approaches to long-term planning, but all participants indicated that they design their daily rehearsal plans to allow for flexibility. The information described in this study offers insight into a variety of successful preparation methods. Some methods are fit for immediate application, whereas others might simply provide a new perspective for consideration.

The trajectory of performance preparation varies depending on conductors' approaches to long-term planning and their choices regarding the layering of various musical elements. Individual philosophical priorities, objectives, and situational realities influence conductors' processes. Understanding the motives that guide each conductor's decision-making informs a global application of theoretical and practical knowledge. Knowing the why informs the decision of how. Specific areas of research and questioning pertain to conductors' approaches to long- and short-term planning in relation to 1) the hierarchy of priorities and goals, and 2) strategies for learning new music. In this study, the term "musical elements" refers to: articulation, dynamics, pitch, rhythm, and timbre.

A review of literature indicated three prevalent areas of related study: definitions, categorizations, and/or prioritizations of musical elements; short- and long-term planning; and sequenced rehearsal pedagogy. Rehearsal pedagogy refers to the approaches and methods of teaching within a rehearsal setting (Ganschow, 2012). The rehearsal sequence outlines a conductor's order of operations within the preparation timeline. The sequence can apply to a single rehearsal, the entire preparation timeline, or both, and largely depends on the idiosyncratic priorities of each conductor. Each component of a piece of music "must be weighed for its essential characteristics within the given piece of music and appropriately focused upon during rehearsal in order to create a successful rendition of the piece of music" (Moore, 1995, p. 13). This study focused on the most basic musical elements, including pitch, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, and timbre. The order and application of various musical elements in the preparation timeline create the foundation of the teaching/rehearsal sequence and vary greatly with each conductor.

Moore (1995) examined how a select group of university choral conductors prioritize and define the technical and/or expressive function of a list of musical elements and explores each conductor's approach to the subsequent application within their rehearsal process. Of the participants in Moore's study, 64% (n = 14) indicated that they taught technical and expressive elements simultaneously; 21% prioritized technical elements; and 14% prioritized expressive elements. When asked about their short-term rehearsal goals, secondary teachers rank the following musical elements in order of perceived importance: pitches and rhythms, tone quality, intonation, dynamics, phrasing and articulation, and balance.

Ganschow (2012) evaluated respondents' rehearsal pedagogy through the lens of, what he refers to as, Micro-Macro approaches. The Macro-Micro approach is a "somewhat holistic method starting with the piece's contextual significance and overall aesthetic" while the Micro-Macro approach prioritizes the "fundamental choral elements one by one...to build an overall aesthetic by the end of the rehearsal process" (Ganschow, 2012, p. 11). Respondents (N = 239) were asked to self-report their approach to rehearsal pedagogy. Nearly half of the respondents (48%, n = 115) reported using the Micro-Macro approach, and 38% (n = 91) reported using the Macro-Micro approach. Of the remaining 15% (n = 33), 91% reported using both approaches. Teachers with 10+ years of experience were more likely to use a Macro-Micro approach. Ganschow also surveyed conductors using a list of musical elements from the National Association for Music Educators (NAfME) Choral Adjudication Form (Balance/Blend, Diction, Dynamics, Intonation, Interpretation/Musicianship, Rhythm, Technique, and Tone Quality), asking participants to select three elements which represented the highest level of priority within rehearsal. The two most frequently selected elements include intonation (20%, n = 144) and tone quality (19%, n = 136) and conductors chose dynamics the least frequently (2%, n = 14).

In a separate study, Howell (1993) explored the prescription and application of planning required of six grade-school educators, examining content, goals/objectives, activities, materials, lesson "events," and formal/informal evaluation (p. 46). He categorized subjects as "planners" and "preparers" (p. 31). Planners preemptively outline rehearsal events, whereas preparers prioritize score study to allow and facilitate their reactive decisions in rehearsal.

In his review of literature, Ganschow (2012) repeatedly noted very few empirical studies on the application of musical elements in relation to rehearsal pedagogy. Similarly, very few choral methods resources examine long-range approaches rehearsal planning and pedagogy. Jordan (2007) addresses the long-range preparation process and application of musical elements implemented as a nine-step sequential process. Steps one through four pertain to how a conductor prepares and presents a work while steps five through nine represent the rehearsal sequence from introduction through the addition of text. He summarizes his nine-step sequence:

Stated in flat-out technical terms, there are only five fundamentals of good choral singing: the proper pitch (1)—sung at precisely the proper time (2)—on the correctly isolated element of speech (3)—delivered in a vocal color (4)—and at a dynamic level (5)—appropriate to the musical style and structure, and sensitive to textual meaning and emotion (Jordan, 2007, p. 52).

Jordan advocates for a sequential approach to rehearsal but maintains that one must allow for a degree of flexibility within their approach. Further, Jordan acknowledges that one might find it necessary to re-order the steps of the layered rehearsal to "accomplish the goals of a particular piece" (p. 53).

Neuen (2002) describes a highly prescriptive method of planning that assesses and assigns categorizations of difficulty to sections of repertoire and then uses that information to design the long-term rehearsal plan through highly specific time estimations for teaching and crafting each section of the concert repertoire. While Neuen is specific regarding the long-range allotment of rehearsal time, he does not address comprehensive rehearsal pedagogy in detail. The lack of source material referencing long-term rehearsal planning presents a problem when establishing the parameters of current practices.

The purpose of this research is to describe the long-range rehearsal processes of three university conductors as well as the philosophical priorities that guide their sequential approach, the ensuing application of musical elements (relating to order and time), and the tools necessary to their approach.

Method

In the following case study, I utilized a semi-structured interview approach to establish the basic structure of the participants' approaches to preparing their flagship ensemble for performance. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: conducts the flagship choral ensemble at their university; has performed at one or more American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) national conferences since 2000; and has been at their current institution for five or more years. With Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, I contacted potential participants: James Rodde at Iowa State University; Z. Randall Stroope formerly at Oklahoma State University; and Betsy Cook Weber, formerly at University of Houston, all who consented to participate in the case study.

The first interview for each subject occurred in-person and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes followed by a rehearsal observation. I designed the questions in a semi-structured format to establish continuity between participant responses while still allowing important elements or ideas to emerge specific to the individual participants (Appendix A). Participants reviewed their respective transcriptions to ensure an accurate representation of their ideas, and were invited to provide clarification, edits, or redactions. I developed follow-up questions based on their responses. All three follow-up interviews occurred over the phone and were between 20-30 minutes in length. Participants once again reviewed their provided transcripts and were invited to contribute.

Data was collected in the fall of 2018, with follow-up interviews in January 2019. As part of the qualitative study, participants completed a questionnaire through Qualtrics software Version 09/2018 to establish general background of the program, ensemble, conductor, and current season's repertoire.

In the initial interview, I sought to identify musical and non-musical priorities that potentially informed the participants' sequential pedagogical approach to preparing an ensemble for performance. Specifically, conductors were asked to identify elements they considered non-negotiable, referring to anything from rehearsal etiquette to musical choices. In the second semi-structured interview, I asked participants to consider their implementation of the five elements of sound: pitch, duration, articulation, dynamics, and timbre. The responses informed the order of sequence and, subsequently, the application of sequence. Variables emerged regarding the applications of sequence, including the decision to apply the sequence/or portions of the sequence to a section of a piece versus the entire piece, and identification of elements that occur in tandem within the preparation process (Appendix B).

The participants' approaches to their respective preparation timelines emerged from the subject-approved transcriptions. Several statements illustrated the structure of, or philosophical approach to the ensemble which directly influenced the success and implementation of each conductor's approach. The findings are the participant-approved self-reported ideas extracted from the interviews used to construct a general sequence of events. The details included in the findings section occasionally vary when the idiosyncratic details are relevant to the participant's approach.

Findings

The following sections outline each conductor's preparation sequence, beginning with an overview of pertinent information regarding missional function of the ensemble; definitions of the priorities and non-negotiable ideas that affect the implementation of teaching sequence; and general information regarding their approaches to long- and short-term planning. The statements in the following section are taken directly from the participants self-reported methods from the interview responses. To maximize the authenticity of each conductor's ideas, I chose to use their terminology when pertinent to the conversation. I included diagrams of each participant's sequential application of musical elements (pitch, duration/rhythm, articulation, dynamics, and timbre). These figures represent generalizations of the participants' descriptions of their approaches and do not account for the expected variances in day-to-day practice.

Dr. James Rodde and the Iowa State Singers

While all three programs have roughly the same number of singers program-wide, the Iowa State Singers have a higher percentage of non-music majors than the other flagship ensembles represented in this study. This fact influences Rodde's approach to rehearsal regarding singers' time commitment to the ensemble, asking very little from his singers outside of the normally scheduled rehearsal. Rodde estimates that roughly 90% of note acquisition occurs within the scheduled rehearsal time while "Intonation, beauty (and health) of tone production, and expressivity" are the concepts he reports as the highest and most consistently addressed priorities throughout his rehearsal process (personal communication, September 17, 2018).

Rodde states that he is not overly concerned with long-term projection of preparation, but prefers to allow his experience, intuition, and ear to determine when it is appropriate to introduce the next step within the learning sequence. Rodde contemplates long-term planning as it pertains to programming and the overall final product; otherwise, he is more concerned with short-term, day-to-day rehearsal plans. Rodde describes his rehearsal plan as not overly prescriptive. In other words, he outlines his objectives but allows for flexibility within the rehearsal. For example, he explains that he might include five pieces in the plan, but only get to four within the 50-minute rehearsal. He feels that when his plan is "over-prepared" the pace and atmosphere of the rehearsal is frantic. Rodde finds that the rehearsal is more effective if he allows his intuition to guide his approach in rehearsal (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Participant's Sequential Application of Musical Elements: Dr. James Rodde



Note: This figure includes a sequence the researcher established using participant's self-reported practices and participant-approved statements.

Preparation Sequence

Following the initial introduction of a piece, Rodde says his goal is to have singers learn pitch and rhythm as quickly as possible. In the earliest phases of acquisition, Rodde groups the ideas of rhythm and pitch, although he identifies rhythm as a slightly higher priority. When appropriate, he might isolate rhythm before the introduction of pitch. Rodde will not ignore wrong pitches early in the learning process and will interrupt the rehearsal to fix errant pitches.

Rodde states that one "can only do so much" as the choir is acquiring a basic familiarity with a piece of music, but "tone production, pitch, and expression are part of every rehearsal" he conducts (personal communication, September 17, 2018). As soon as the singers have a reasonable level of familiarity, his primary focus becomes intonation and beauty of tone. Rodde says that he considers the two concepts, along with breath management, inherently related and addresses those issues consistently in the early process of learning a piece. Once pitches are reasonably solid, Rodde asks singers to be aware of, and accountable for, their relationship within chords, especially at cadences and in relationships of fifths and octaves. Rodde says he isolates chords to emphasize singers' listening in order to develop early awareness of intonation as part of their foundational understanding of a work.

Rodde adds text once rhythm and pitch are secured, and mechanical aspects of intonation and tone production are in place. Rodde believes that, early in the process, the text functions primarily as a mechanical element, and later becomes an artistic element. The concept of expressivity becomes increasingly prominent once the ensemble transitions to text. Rodde gives an overview of the text in the initial introduction of a work, but once the ensemble is singing on the text, more detail emerges regarding meaning/purpose. He believes that the text becomes an artistic element with the exploration of meaning. He asks singers to consider what may have inspired a composer's expressive score markings to enhance the singers' realization of them—to not just sing *forte*, but to think about *why* the composer wrote *forte*. Rodde ranks articulation as a lower priority, even though he achieves a great deal of style through the approach to text.

Throughout the addition of text and exploration of expressive performance, intonation and tone production remain high priorities. As the ensemble begins to demonstrate technical familiarity with a piece, Rodde allows the ensemble to run large sections of a piece to provide a broader understanding. Rodde asks singers to continue expanding their awareness of listening concerning the sound and balance of the ensemble. By his estimation, Rodde spends roughly 80% of the preparation process reinforcing/focusing on acquiring and solidifying mechanical aspects of the repertoire (i.e. tone, intonation, notes, and rhythms, etc.). As mechanical aspects are solidified (on text), Rodde says he will take time to craft small, cellular moments within the music before reinserting them into the context of the whole.

As the ensemble approaches performance, singers have multiple opportunities to run large portions of the repertoire. Rodde continues to craft moments in the music up until the performance. He adds that how the choir looks when they perform becomes a higher priority at this point as well, noting that "the first thing the audience hears is how you look" and "an audience only half listens" (personal communication, September 17, 2018). If a selection is not at the desired level of preparation roughly two weeks before the performance date, Rodde drops it from the program. If a piece is dropped, he does not replaced replace it with something else. When asked to describe his aspirations for a final performance, Rodde explains, "my aspirations are what they always are for each performance that the choir ever does, which is if I can see that they are walking off the risers feeling like they are nine feet tall, then I have done my job" (personal communication, September 17, 2018).

Dr. Betsy Cook Weber and the University of Houston Moores School Concert Chorale

An estimated 80-100% of the students who make up the Moores School Concert Chorale are music majors. Betsy Cook Weber structures their rehearsals like a pre-professional ensemble with the expectation that singers learn and prepare music outside of normally scheduled rehearsal times and enter rehearsal vocalized and ready to work. Weber expects singers to contribute to the learning and artistic processes as equal stakeholders. She believes that the combination of student involvement and individual independence increases each participant's sense of personal ownership and investment within the ensemble (personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Weber considers 1) healthy vocal production (defined by Weber as singing freely and, on the breath,) and 2) a lack of focus her non-negotiables. Weber believes that students must sing freely at first and permits singers to use natural vibrato early in the process of learning music regardless of style or performance practice. When discussing vibrato, Weber states, "The biggest mistake we make is forcing them off the breath. That is how a lot of them initially [produce] no or minimal vibrato" (personal communication, September 18, 2018). If the ensemble is performing repertoire that requires minimal vibrato, Weber will not ask the ensemble to produce a timbre outside of their technical facility. She acknowledges that this may occasionally result in a tone color not necessarily aligned with performance practice.

Weber shares that she uses a formula as the foundation for her approach to long-term planning. She estimates 30 minutes of rehearsal for every minute of performance, but she will not add additional rehearsals if the ensemble falls behind this projection. If necessary, she will recycle previously learned repertoire or assign soloists or small groups to alleviate a pressed timeline. Additionally, Weber tests approximately a quarter of the ensemble each rehearsal on passages of the repertoire outlined in a testing schedule she publishes a month in advance.

Following each rehearsal, Weber immediately outlines her objectives for the next rehearsal. Her rehearsal plan is generic, including only rough time estimates and an order of repertoire, but her rehearsal objectives are specific and outlined in her scores. Repertoire that is furthest from performance-ready or presents the most concern receives prioritization in the following rehearsal. Regarding day-to-day rehearsal plans, Weber says that her loosely structured rehearsal plan allows for flexibility. When building a rehearsal plan, Weber identifies specific pages (or sections) of pieces for rehearsal. She then allots an estimated two minutes of rehearsal per page. She prefers to schedule rehearsal segments of 10-15 minutes and will not allocate more than 20 minutes to any single work on account of the productive limitations of a standard attention span. With in the scope of a single rehearsal on any specific work, Weber says that she works to achieve as much as is possible in the allotted time, arrive at a point of closure, and then move on to the next piece even if the objective was not achieved (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Participant's Sequential Application of Musical Elements: Dr. Betsy Cook Weber



Note: This figure includes a sequence the researcher established using participant's self-reported practices and participant-approved statements.

Preparation Sequence

Weber approaches each section of a work as if it were its own piece; therefore, during the learning process, sections of music might be in different phases of preparation. For example, in a single rehearsal, the ensemble might be in the note-acquisition phase of one piece while they explore concepts of timbre and expression in a section of another piece. Weber advocates a sequential approach to teaching in rehearsal and avoids interruptions unrelated to the instructional priorities of the day's rehearsal. She believes that the impetus for conductors' interruption of rehearsal is often irrelevant to the objective of the teaching sequence, and instead a reactive response to what they hear.

Weber's introduction of repertoire includes a general overview of the piece or other relevant performance elements (i.e. purpose, style, text, etc.). During the initial read of a new piece, Weber says that she often ignores variant tempo markings, and asks singers to read exactly what is on the page. Though she does not deviate from the composer's markings in the score, she often adds her own markings (both technical and artistic) to clarify less explicit moments within the music to unify the ensemble's realization of the music.

Weber tests new material immediately following its introduction, putting onus on the singers to learn and solidify notes and rhythms independently. A student conductor leads a run-through of the test material prior to the start of rehearsal, and then Weber announces 10-12 members randomly selected for testing. If a student has missed a rehearsal or failed the previous test, they are guaranteed to test at the next rehearsal. During testing, students receive their starting pitch and perform, typically on a neutral syllable or *solfeggio*. Testing is conducted and graded by the doctoral teaching assistant and begins immediately on the second rehearsal of the semester. The first test is usually an easy passage to allow new members to gain confidence, but then Weber schedules more difficult passages to expedite note acquisition. This process allows her to use rehearsal time to focus primarily on assembling sections of tested repertoire, instead of teaching pitches and rhythms.

Weber typically teaches pitches and rhythms in tandem. *Soleffegio* and neutral syllables are the primary tools used for note acquisition (the piano is rarely, if ever, used, at this stage). As pitch and rhythm are somewhat solidified, Weber asks singers to acknowledge articulation. Weber states that articulation markings are "pretty cut and dried," and therefore, provide an immediate sense of style. By adding articulation in this phase, Weber also notes that it provides an opportunity for students to continue to reinforce pitch and rhythm, while simultaneously providing more advanced singers an opportunity to continue layering additional musical elements. As singers gain confidence and comfort, they will naturally begin to explore tone color and vibrato that fits the context of the ensemble and the piece. While Weber expects healthy production throughout all stages of the rehearsal process, she usually initiates conversations regarding tone color and vibrato later in the sequence once the ensemble transitions to text.

Weber will begin introducing text once the ensemble consistently sings correct pitches and rhythms using healthy vocal production. With the addition of text, Weber will review and solidify all previously addressed elements. Her goal for this practice is to reinforce healthy vocal production while the ensemble discovers and aligns diction. Exploration of meaning and interpretation becomes a higher priority once text is introduced. Weber classifies tone color and text as inherently related and usually addresses the two in tandem as they inform one another. She believes that in great music, dynamics are inherent to the composition itself and prefers to make artistic realizations through the use of evocative tone color choices. While the actual volume level might not change, changes in timbre create the impression of dynamic contrast; therefore, Weber ranks dynamics as one of her lowest priorities in the preparation process.

Two weeks before the performance serves as a checkpoint for the ensemble. Weber's expectation is that the ensemble can perform each piece of repertoire from start to finish with technical facility. If a piece is not ready, Weber will consider alternatives for the repertoire in question. Alternatives include assigning the repertoire to a small group for preparation, replacing the repertoire with a soloist, or possibly replacing the piece with something previously performed. If Weber has assigned repertoire to a small group, the small group is responsible for preparing the assigned music, alleviating the load of the full ensemble. Although the musical standard is exceptionally high, Weber acknowledges that an ensemble never fully achieves technical perfections negatively affect an audience's reception of a performance. "No one's life is going to measurably change if those children aren't spot on the money" (personal communication, September 18, 2018).

Dr. Z. Randall Stroope and the Oklahoma State University Concert Chorale

Student leadership is integral to the structure of the OSU Concert Chorale. Stroope says this stems from his philosophy and prioritization of music education. Stroope devotes time to coaching student leadership, including daily meetings to strategize approaches to "pre-rehearsal" objectives and help identifying resources for student leaders to use with their sections. Pre-rehearsal is a fifteen-minute sectional that occurs prior to every rehearsal. Section leaders facilitate the pre-rehearsal objectives which might include un-met objectives from the previous rehearsal or objectives designated in Stroope's long-term rehearsal plan.

Stroope believes in early onset of muscle memory. "Once you learn something wrong, it is difficult to correct. In other words, the brain understands, but the muscles are automatic" (personal communication, September 20, 2018). Therefore, he insists that singers are always accountable for the accuracy of 1) intonation and 2) quality of tone production, especially in relation to registration. Regarding muscle memory, Stroope states that "artistry should not be achieved at any cost, rather through a well-founded pedagogical approach" to the music. Healthy vocal production functions as the foundation of all other technical facilities. Stroope's definition of healthy production focuses on proper breath management—high, forward resonance—and the singers' understandings of tone color and registration.

Stroope is highly intentional regarding long-range planning, calling it his "blueprint" for preparation. Stroope outlines his long-term "daily progress plan" in a collection of documents he refers to as the Learning Curve Sheets (LCS). LCS objectives and instructions are specific and might vary between voice parts. For example, Stroope shares that he might instruct one voice part to spend additional time reviewing a particularly difficult technical section of repertoire while a voice part with a simpler role might be asked to work on memorization or focus on another piece entirely. Stroope attributes the ensemble's ability to learn and perform roughly 20-30 octavos for memory each semester to the long-range planning and use of the LCS. He says that it keeps him organized and accountable for all the repertoire. Additionally, the LCS organizes the efforts of the many student leaders that contribute to the rehearsal process.

The LCS creates a long-range plan spanning months with each sheet representing roughly two weeks of consecutive rehearsal objectives. Stroope designs them to 1) keep the long-term trajectory on track and 2) to communicate priorities to section leaders for pre-rehearsal. Though Stroope creates the LCS at the beginning of a semester, he only shares them one sheet at a time with student leadership so that he can make accommodations or adjustments as necessary. The system allows for a necessary amount of flexibility as "...things do not always go as planned..." (personal communication, September 20, 2018). Stroope says he often organizes his rehearsal plan for the day early in the morning in careful evaluation of the ensemble's status in relation to the LCS. Stroope only uses the LCS to loosely design his rehearsal plan and does not feel obligated to rehearse everything addressed in the students' pre-rehearsal.

Stroope constructs music in pillar-like sequences which he later reassembles as the performance approaches. Stroope describes the application of his sequence with the term "frontloading," defining it as introducing "a lot of concepts about the performance in the first two or three rehearsals and then [reinforcing those concepts] for the next eighteen [rehearsals]" (personal communication, September 20, 2018). Stroope reiterates, "muscle memory and emotion cannot be added at the last minute (or two weeks)." Stroope's priorities for the performance and first rehearsal are the same-he expects an immediate essence of style, vocal registration, and passion to be present throughout the preparation timeline. The ensemble learns new sections only once the current section is well-solidified (i.e. sung with technical and artistic facility), therefore sections within works are at vastly different levels of readiness throughout the early and middle phases of the preparation timeline. With a long-term plan (the LCS) as a guide, Stroope does not fret about the timeline, sharing that he would be more concerned if the ensemble acquired notes over the span of multiple weeks with no attention to style. Stroope expects singers to infuse passion into the performance from the early stages and consider it throughout the preparation process. Inviting the ensemble to be immediately active in the music-making (even in the earliest stages of music) is highly motivating for singers and helps avoid stagnation during the preparation period. Once the ensemble solidifies a section of music (i.e. notes and rhythms are accurate, style and production are accurate) Stroope includes memorization objectives within the LCS beginning as early as the first few weeks of the semester.

When introducing a work to the choir, Stroope shares interesting information about the composer that makes the repertoire more relatable for the singers. He also provides an explanation/ demonstration of the style of the work with the expectation that singers apply style even as they are reading, exercising appropriate style through healthy, resonant vocal production. Stroope chooses to introduce works at what he identifies as the apex of the piece, allowing singers an immediate sense of where the piece is going. Stroope then teaches "the 'pieces' of the work that...most contribute to the overall structure" (personal communication, September 20, 2018). This might include structural sections of the work, or even areas that require a great gestational period because of technical difficulty.

Stroope believes that score markings function as the blueprint of the creative process, "providing the ensemble a... cohesive interpretation of how the conductor feels about the style and meaning of the text and how it relates to the music" (personal communication, September 20, 2018). He shares, "it is [my role] to give them the pedagogical and artistic footprint [of a work]. The more specific a conductor is with the ensemble, the more creative the ensemble [can] be in return." Stroope includes commonly understood metaphors to provide singers with a more immediate understanding of interpretation (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Participant's Sequential Application of Musical Elements: Dr. Z. Randall Stroope



Note: This figure includes a sequence the researcher established using participant's self-reported practices and participant-approved statements.

Preparation Sequence

The application of technical sequence depends on the idiosyncrasies of each piece of music, but Stroope believes that the elements of pitch and timbre are inherently interwoven, and function critically in the early phases of learning music. He often teaches music at tempo, or close to tempo, to reinforce muscle memory and functional application of articulation. Singers acquire pitches primarily using *solfeggio*, and eventually transition to a neutral syllable. Occasionally, he finds it beneficial to read a piece on a neutral syllable, and in some instances, text. An initial read on text will only occur when the text acts as a conduit for more immediate stylistic understanding.

Pitch solidification largely occurs outside of rehearsal and is solidified in the sections' prerehearsal along with any other technical aspect as prescribed on the LCS. Stroope feels that singers can acquire pitches, rhythms, and other technical aspects of the music with the guidance of their student leadership, thus maximizing the use of rehearsal time for the pursuit and guidance of more advanced aspects of style, production, and musicianship. Stroope shares that note accuracy within the rehearsal is not a major concern in the early stages of acquisition since plenty of opportunities exist for addressing pitch issues in pre-rehearsal or part-checks. Stroope is not overly concerned with the element of dynamics—he feels that the ensemble achieves a great deal of style and expressivity through his approach to articulation/style. Stroope encourages the ensemble to recognize and enforce as many musical elements as possible as quickly as possible without sacrificing production, registration, articulation, or style, therefore, musical priorities/expectations change very little throughout the process of preparation.

Since technical and expressive elements are incorporated in the earliest phases of learning music, Stroope's middle phase of preparation focuses primarily on assembly. The concept applies to the assembly of voice parts within the ensemble as well as the combination of multiple sections within a work. He introduces the text as soon as it enhances the stylistic realization. The timing of this varies and is contingent to each piece. He believes that the addition of text enhances communication and artistry, but states that text also has a mechanical function in the music-making process as it relates to vowel shape and ensemble blend.

The early incorporation of memorization goals ensures that the program is memorized at least one week prior to performance, at which point all sections of the repertoire are assembled and the visual and logistical elements of the performance become elevated priorities. Stroope reserves the week prior to performance to solidify all performance variables and allow for run-throughs of the works or the entire concert. Throughout the process, Stroope asks singers to consider their physical expression and engagement. When singers incorporate physicality in their singing, it impacts their musicianship and ability to communicate. Stroope shares, "if they are …internalizing the music from the first rehearsal on, they are going to make a lot of right choices" (personal communication, September 20, 2018).

Stroope condenses the preparation period into truncated episodes during which singers go from initial acquisition to performance ready on sections of the repertoire in a very short span of time. He then reassembles the pieces of the work to complete the whole. Stroope believes that this approach allows singers to quickly establish healthy muscle memory while incentivizing the singers' motivation through the expressive aspects of music-making.

Discussion

Three trends emerged across the participants' approaches: 1) Priorities and goals are clear and consistent. Each conductor prioritizes specific musical elements (e.g., vocal/tone production) and reinforces these concepts consistently throughout the process, supporting singer awareness of conductor expectations and facilitating a strong technical foundation upon which each conductor layers additional elements. Communication is always a consideration, even if peripheral in some phases of the preparation timeline, and singers understand that this priority is the primary aim of every performance. 2) The conductors are meticulous with score study and their knowledge of the repertoire. This knowledge allows for flexibility in the rehearsal, enhancing the conductors' abilities to provide intelligent reactive responses. Furthermore, the time conductors spend with the score provides opportunity for them to develop ideas regarding interpretation and additional diacritical markings, making it easier for singers to understand and contribute to the musical realization. 3) Each conductor acknowledges the situational realities that influence the design of their sequence and

When asked to order their sequential application of select musical elements, the three conductors all placed dynamics low in their musical priorities. Rodde ranked it fourth, grouping it near timbre as an extension of expression. Although he ranked articulation last, he clarified that articulation plays a vital role in the stylistic approach to text. With this consideration, one could surmise that dynamics rank lower in his priorities. Stroope and Weber both ranked dynamics as their last musical priority. Weber was the most overt regarding her ranking, citing two reasons for her rationale:

1) "I think the dynamics are almost always inherent in a well-written composition." And 2) "I am increasingly convinced that what I need to do for these undergraduate singers is to help them consistently sing on the breath. As soon as I start adding dynamics, they go off the voice. I prefer to talk about shifting the color of sound. If someone were measuring with a decibel meter, it might all measure the same level, but I would hope that the quality of sound would be so strikingly different that people would think they are hearing a different volume when, in fact, they are not" (Personal communication, September 17, 2018).

Stroope clearly prioritizes the establishment of muscle memory related to the stylistic aspects of tone and articulation over dynamics and specific note accuracy in the earliest phases of the learning process. He trusts that he can easily address pitch accuracy and dynamics as needed in future rehearsals.

Recommendations

Though the approaches and methodologies described were specific to collegiate-level ensembles, the findings could easily apply to any ability level. Because each conductor's process was highly idiosyncratic and influenced by the situational needs of the program, further study could include research on additional conductors from the same selection criteria. With a wider subject base, researchers could more easily identify similarities and dissimilarities that correlate with situational influences. Additionally, applying a similar line of research to secondary choral music conductors could provide insight into the similarities and differences of sequence application and strategies employed younger singers.

Keywords: Rehearsal planning, rehearsal pedagogy, performance preparation, musical sequence, application of musical elements

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Appendix A

Interview #1 Questions.

Musical expectations

What are your aspirations for this performance?

Are the musical elements or concepts of music-making that you consider non-negotiable? (e.g., "I will always stop to correct and/or address...")

Order of musical expectations and priorities

What musical elements do you consider for concept preparation timeline?

How would you rank or categorize the hierarchy of these elements?

When preparing a performance, is there an order of operations that exists for the implementation of these elements?

How does the prioritization of these elements change in relation to the timeline or checkpoints?

Planning

Do you think more immediately in terms of long-term or short-term planning? Please define your concept of long-term timeline for a project including the scope and measurement of time?

Can you identify what you might consider checkpoints in the long-term process? How rigid or flexible are these checkpoints?

How often, if at all, do you reference the long-term timeline during project preparation? Please define your concept of short-term timeline for a project including the scope and measurement of time.

How detailed or specific are your rehearsal plans? (e.g., order, outcomes/objectives, written/unwritten), time allotment, actives/rehearsal events,

evaluation/feedback/assessment tools and strategies)

How are your rehearsal plans conceived? How far in advance?

Early phases of learning

How do you introduce new music?

What are your priorities in the early phases of learning new music?

What methods do you use for acquiring notes (i.e., solfège, numbers, sectional, part tracks, etc.)

Does your method/approach change based on the musical style of a work?

How much or what part of note acquisition occurs in rehearsal versus outside (i.e., singers' responsibility)?

How does this phase of learning align with your long-term timeline?

Does the order of your musical priorities change when you are in the early phases of learning a piece versus when there is a reasonable level of familiarity

Interview #2 Question: Order of musical elements

Of the following of sounds, can you describe your order of operations? (Pitch, duration, articulation, dynamics, timbre)

Appendix B

- A summary of participant responses regarding their prioritization of various musical elements.
- **Question:** Are there musical elements or concepts of music-making that you consider nonnegotiable? (e.g., "I will always top to correct and/or address...")

Participant	Response
B. Weber	I will stop to address lack of focus [and] inattention[or] if they are singing really healthily. You will notice that I let a lot of stuff go to get to a closure point. There is interesting research that shows players and singers internalizing frequent stops from the conductor as negative feedback. I almost always complete a section and then I go back to address issues.
J. Rodde	I am going to address [intonation, production/breath management, and expressivity] most of the time. If they learn the pitches wrong I know I have to [address] right away.
Z. Stroope	I will always stop for incorrect intonation and registration which are synonymous in any case. I did a study once at the University of Arizona on the relationship between the first rehearsal and the performance and found that there is a marked similarity between the first hour of rehearsal and the preformation. Therefore, in the first rehearsal [on new material], I will not bend on intonation or registration.

Question: Of the following elements of sound, can you describe your order of operations? (Pitch, duration, articulation, dynamics, timbre)

Participant Response

- B. Weber Pitch and duration often occur together. Occasionally a piece benefits from isolating duration first, but usually it is pitch, duration, and then articulation. [Articulation] gives the advanced kids something new to think about while giving the other kids an opportunity to continue to solidify pitch and rhythm. Dynamics and timbre are dead last. I think the dynamics are almost always inherent in a well-written composition. I'm increasingly convinced that what I need to do for my choir is to help them consistently sing on the breath. As soon as I start adding dynamics, they [come] off the breath. What I prefer to talk about is shifting the color of sound. If someone were measuring with a decibel meter, it might all measure the same decibel level, but I would hope that the quality of the sound would be so strikingly different that people would think that they are hearing a different volume when, in fact, they aren't.
- J. Rodde Pitch and rhythm would be first. I have always felt that if rhythm is not right, then the pitch is not right because people are changing pitch at different times. The two go arm-in-arm. If a rhythmic pattern exists, it is important to work from that understanding first. I would lower articulation in my priorities regarding

consonants and style. I just want to make sure they are singing well and singing the right pitches and that they are thinking about the color of their voice. I would almost put timbre above articulation. I don't go after dynamics early [in the process] either. I just want them singing and feeling like they have got it in their voices [before] I add dynamics and coloring.

Z. Stroope As a general statement, respective of a particular piece of work that may be atypical, pitch and timbre would occur in tandem and then articulation. Those are the three principal focuses early on. I do try to learn things close to the correct tempo unless it is excessive in terms of speed, or if it is in a foreign language and needs time to gel. I think that articulation functions in tandem with tempo. Pitch and timbre are critical and so interwoven in terms of vocal pedagogy, as well. If singers don't get pitch, timbre, and style immediately, I don't believe performance will be quite as polished as it would be otherwise.

Texas Music Educators' Perceived Effectiveness of Inclusion

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To make music accessible for all students, some students require accommodation or modification of general music lessons or instrumental classes such as band and orchestra. Students with disabilities are often included in music classrooms in a variety of ways, which may differ based on the student or school system. The purpose of this study is to evaluate Texas music educators' perceived effectiveness of inclusion in music education classrooms. For this study, survey questions included experience teaching students with disabilities, teaching practices used in the classroom, and administrative support received when teaching students with disabilities. This study aims to assess current trends in inclusion in Texas music classrooms, educator knowledge and experience working with students with disabilities, and administrative support for educators when working with students with disabilities.

For students with or without disabilities, the music classroom can be a place of comfort, discovery, and inclusion. Results of previous research indicate that inclusion in the music classroom is beneficial for students but that many educators do not have the opportunity or skillset to engage these students (Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Gfeller et al., 1990; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). With the exception of a study completed by VanWeelden and Whipple in 2014, most research surveying educators regarding this topic took place between 1980-1995 (Atterbury, 1986; Frisque et al., 1994; Gfeller et al., 1990; Gilbert & Asmus, 1981; Hawkins, 1992). Since that time, there have been advances in educator access to resources for teaching students with disabilities, including an increase in pre-service programs and professional development sessions centered on this topic, revised versions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and individualized education plan development (Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Hourigan, 2009; Jones 2014; Salvador, 2010; Whipple & VanWeelden, 2012).

The topic of inclusion has evolved over time with advances in the field of education. A previous study conducted by Gfeller et al. (1990) examined inclusion and mainstreaming in Iowa and Kansas schools, while the following study, replicated by VanWeelden and Whipple (2014), surveyed the entire country. While such a wide scope is beneficial, the current study examines inclusion practices in the state of Texas, one of the leading states for music education. In 2023, Texas had the second-highest number of districts (103) chosen for the NAMM Best Communities for Music Education Districts award (NAMM Foundation, 2023).

The purpose of this study is to evaluate Texas music educators' perceived effectiveness of inclusion in music education classrooms. This project will determine discrepancies and differences in inclusion among differing levels and disciplines of music. This study examined changes in the reported effectiveness of inclusion, curricular changes, student achievement, and instructional support based on research findings from studies 10 years ago and 30 years ago. This study replicates previous research, as there have been scientific and social changes in how disabilities are viewed (Jellison & Taylor, 2007). The specific research questions for the current study were:

- 1. Are there differences among Texas music educators' perceived effectiveness of inclusion, curriculum adaptations/modifications, or student achievement based on years of teaching experience or specialty area?
- 2. How frequently do music educators address music versus non-music objectives as their primary teaching focus when working with students with disabilities?
- 3. What are the similarities and differences between current Texas music educators' perceived effectiveness of inclusion, curriculum adaptations/modifications, instructional support, or student achievement compared to the results reported by VanWeelden & Whipple (2014) and Gfeller et al. (1990)?

Method

Participants

Recruited participants were music educators in the state of Texas teaching band, choir, general music, and orchestra. Participants were members of the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) who elected to have their contact information shared with the organization. The principal investigator obtained contact information from TMEA, and all participants were asked to participate in an IRB-approved study between June and August 2023. Participants were invited to complete the survey. Demographic data, such as the year of teaching and the music specialty taught, were collected on the survey. Of the 4668 music educators who were contacted, 365 completed the survey, resulting in a 7.82% response rate (N = 365). Educators who participated represented a variety of teaching experiences, areas of specialization, and TMEA regions. Of the levels taught, most respondents taught middle school (6th-8th grade) (38.55%), followed by high school (9th-12th) (31.72%), elementary school (29.52%), and other (0.88%), with some respondents answering that they taught multiple levels.

Instrumentation

For this study, survey questions included topics focused on teachers' experience working with students with disabilities, practices/strategies utilized in the classroom, and administrative support received when teaching students with disabilities (see Appendix for survey questions). Jellison and Taylor (2007) suggested that surveys should be replicated when suitable and needed. Survey questions for the current study were based on two surveys constructed by VanWeelden and Whipple (2014) and Gfeller et al. (1990) and was designed to closely match the survey design of these two previous studies. Minor adjustments were made to the terminology and the order of questions, and we included some duplicate questions from VanWheelden and Whipple (2014) and Gfeller et al. (1990).

The study collected demographic data such as age level taught, school setting, specialty taught, highest degree level and area, training to teach students with disabilities, and teaching experience. Educators were also asked what TMEA region they taught in during the previous school year and what kind of classes they taught for students with disabilities. Following the demographic data section, educators were asked if they knew the difference between modifying and adapting instruction for students with disabilities. The question was related to one included later in the questionnaire. Following these questions, 31 four-point Likert-style questions were listed to assess the effectiveness of inclusion, classroom adjustments, student achievement, and administrative support. Likert-style questions listed affirmative statements for participants to

rate agreement from never (1) to always (4). Likert questions were grouped based on subject matter such as classroom experiences, student standards and goals, experiences with specific disabilities, and administrative and accommodation support.

Survey Administration

Before testing and treatment, approval was obtained from the Internal Review Board (IRB). Participants were informed of the descriptive research study's purpose via email, invited to participate, and were given a link to the survey found on Qualtrics, an anonymous survey platform. To obtain the greatest number of responses, surveys were sent out in three waves, each two to four weeks apart. The survey was closed two weeks after the third wave email was sent, followed by moving the online data to a password-protected Box file. Completing the survey served as consent for participation, and data were analyzed by comparing percentages to the results of the two previous studies.

Results

Demographic Data

Of the total number of respondents (365), 322 (88.37%) answered that they taught in a public school. Results were diverse among the specialties taught. The participant specialties reported were general music (28.89%), choir (25.61%), band (25.20%), other (7.99%), orchestra (7.17%), and music appreciation (5.12%). Examples of specialties listed by respondents under "other" included: music theory, mariachi, guitar, class piano, color guard, and private lessons. Most respondents' highest earned educational level was a bachelor's degree (59.39%), followed by a Master's (36.36%). Few respondents answered that their highest degree level was a doctorate (3.03%) or a specialist (1.21%). As for the area of highest degree earned, most respondents answered music education (63.03%). For years of teaching experience, the mean was 16.81 years with a mode of two years. As for the type of training to teach students with disabilities, respondents were asked to select all that applied. See Table 1.

Table 1

Response	Percentage of Respondents
Undergraduate course specifically for teaching students with disabilities taught <i>outside</i> of the music department	11.00%
Undergraduate courses specifically for teaching students with disabilities taught <i>within</i> the music department	4.21%
Lesson(s) or unit(s) in an undergraduate course that is aimed toward teaching the general classroom	17.48%

Graduate course specifically for teaching students with disabilities taught <i>outside</i> of the music department	2.27%
Graduate courses specifically for teaching students with disabilities taught <i>within</i> the music department	0.81%
Lesson(s) or unit(s) in a graduate course that is aimed toward teaching the general classroom	4.69%
Outside of college- professional development	31.07%
Outside of college- certification	4.05%
Outside of college- conference workshop	15.37%
I have not had any training in this area.	6.96%
Other	2.10%

Respondents were also asked if they knew the difference between modifying and adapting instruction for students with disabilities. Most respondents answered 'yes' (89.39%). Lastly, educators were asked what type of classes they taught for students with disabilities. The majority answered mainstream/inclusion classes (88.69%), followed by self-contained classes (6.42%) and other (4.89%).

Differences in Perceived Effectiveness of Inclusion Based on Teaching Experience or Specialty

To answer the first research question, regarding differences between respondent teaching experience or specialty taught, several population groups were analyzed. We categorized teachers into two groups based on years taught: those who had taught 10 or fewer years and those who had taught over 10 years. There were no significant differences between the two groups. For specialty taught, groups were determined by teaching area: general music, band, choir, orchestra, and music appreciation. Respondents who answered "other" were not analyzed due to the wide variety of specialties taught within that group. General music teachers in this study reported being less likely than all other populations to be involved in writing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students. In addition, when answering the Likert-style statement "I have the assistance of aides when required," educators who taught band or music appreciation were less likely to have an aide accompany a student with a disability in their classroom. See Table 2.

Table 2

Specialty Taught	n	Percentage of Respondents
Band	81	71.05%
Choir	60	55.04%
Orchestra	15	60.00%
Music Appreciation	17	70.83%
General Music	63	49.22%

Respondents Answering "Never" or "Occasionally" to the Assistance of Aides

Frequency of Addressing Musical Versus Nonmusical Objectives

To answer the second research question, we examined the frequency that educators reported addressing the development of musical versus nonmusical goals for students with disabilities. Respondents answered the Likert-style statement, "My primary objective for students with disabilities is the development of non-musical goals." Over half of respondents answered "occasionally." 71% of participants answered that they focused more on musical goals, while 29% of participants focused more on non-musical goals. See Table 3.

Table 3

Development of Non-Musical Goals as Primary Objective

Response	Percentage of Respondents
Never	16.21%
Occasionally	54.83%
Usually	24.48%
Always	4.48%

Similarities and Differences Between Current and Previous Studies

The current study showed great improvements in the perceived effectiveness of inclusion and student involvement for students with disabilities in musical classes. The current study was designed to match instruments used by both Gfeller et al. (1990) and VanWeelden and Whipple (2014), with the same key areas being assessed despite minor changes in terminology, population, and

educational expectations over time. A test of multiple proportions was run for the five statements. Proportions of respondents who answered "usually" or "always" to a list of affirmative statements were compared based on the survey sample size in each study. Computations were completed in the software program R based on formulas described in Newcombe (Newcombe, 1998; R Core Team, 2021). The null hypothesis is that the three proportions are equal, with a chi-square test statistic formed by the data resulting in a *p*-value with two degrees of freedom. A *p*-value less than .05 is evidence of statistical significance in the test results. All proportions were significantly significant. See Table 4.

Table 4

Statement Number	Statement	Percentage of Agreeing Respondents			
		Gfeller et al. (1990)	VanWeelden & Whipple (2014)	McGuire (2023)	р
1	"Students with disabilities are effectively integrated into music class."	62%	61%	76%	<.001
2	"Students with disabilities' needs are being met in music education classes."	52%	53%	69%	<.001
3	"Students with special needs in regular music hinders students without special needs."	61%	29%	10%	<.001
4	"Educators are expected to adapt objectives for students with disabilities."	57%	62%	77%	<.001
5	"All students are graded the same."	32%	38%	46%	<.001

Comparison of Selected Statements to Previous Studies

Both this study and the previously conducted studies asked participants about their experiences working with students with specific disabilities. The same disability categories were listed in this study but with a few minor changes to terminology as acceptable terminology has adapted over time. Statements six through 13 asked participants if they saw students with ______ disability as difficult to work with, and every disability category saw a decline in the percentage of educators who agreed. In 1990, 2014, and 2023, the difficulty with the highest percentage of perceived difficulty was emotional disturbances/behavior disorders. While some disability categories saw a rise between 1990 and 2014, there were no increases in percentages between both 1990 versus 2023 and 2014 versus 2023. See Table 5.

Table 5

	"Students with are difficult to work with."	Percentage of Agreeing Respondents			
Statement Number		Gfeller et al. (1990)	VanWeelden & Whipple (2014)	McGuire (2023)	
6	Emotional disturbances/behavior disorders	56%	64%	29%	
7	Hearing impairments	40%	29%	13%	
8	Mental impairments	37%	33%	19%	
9	Specific learning disabilities	35%	23%	19%	
10	Visual impairments	25%	20%	9%	
11	Physical disabilities	21%	16%	11%	
12	Speech or language impairments	21%	22%	9%	
13	Other health impairments	9%	19%	5%	

Difficulty Working with Students with Specific Disabilities

Discussion

While this study had differences between the previously conducted studies and the current ones, it provides data to determine if there are differences in perceived effectiveness of inclusion between 1990, 2014, and 2023. Educators reported positively that students with disabilities are included in their classes and that their needs are being met within those inclusion efforts. Educators reported that they believe students with disabilities are not hindering peers in classes who do not have disabilities, and there is a decrease in seeing students with disabilities as "difficult," as originally phrased in the 1990 study.

Results of the current study indicate that most educators lack pre-service training to teach students with disabilities and receive most of their training in professional development sessions. Reasons for this might include the heavy class load typically associated with music education degrees and the lack of availability to take courses that focus on or feature special education (Allen, 2022; Hammel & Hourigan, 2017; Jones, 2015). Previous research conducted by Gfeller et al. (1990) found that educators reported they did not have any formal training to teach students with disabilities (38%) or learned information in a college course (25%). VanWeelden and Whipple (2014) did not report data on this question. The increase in educators reporting professional development as their primary area of learning may be attributed to the heightened awareness, importance, and frequency of focus on inclusion in 2013 versus 2014 (Allan, 2022; Bartolome, 2013; Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Hammel, 1999; Hammel & Hourigan, 2017; Hourigan 2007, 2009; Jones, 2015; Reynolds et al., 2005; Salvador, 2010; VanWeelden &

Whipple, 2005).

Results align with previously conducted studies that there were not significant differences in responses between specialty areas and teaching experience (Gfeller et al., 1990; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). Regarding the development of non-musical goals and musical goals, results align with VanWeelden and Whipple (2014) that musical goals were more frequently focused on than non-musical goals. In 2023, there was an increased focus on musical goals, rising from 64% in 2014 to 71% in 2023. In the study completed by Gfeller et al. (1990), the majority of educators (67%) answered their primary objective was instead the development of non-musical goals can be simultaneously developed through the development of musical goals (Frisque et al., 1994; Jellison, 1983; Richardson & Sapple, 1983).

Results from this study seem to indicate that educators view inclusion as beneficial for students. Compared to the Gfeller et al. (1990) and VanWeelden and Whipple (2014) surveys, student integration and needs being met continue to grow over time. There is also a decrease in the view of students with disabilities as a hindrance to students without disabilities. Results in these categories were statistically significant when a test of multiple proportions was run, showing that even though the studies were completed over thirty years apart, differences exist between each survey sample group. Reasons for these changes might be due to better training, instructional support, and the increase in inclusion altogether (Colwell & Thompson, 2000; Cooper, 1999; Grimsby, 2020; Heller, 1995; Salvador, 2010).

Conclusions

This study examined the current climate in perceived effectiveness of inclusion compared to the studies conducted 33 and nine years ago. Results indicated more positive responses in inclusion than in the previous two studies; however, there were limitations to this study. While a large pool of educators was contacted, only a slim percentage responded, possibly due to being conducted during a summer when educators are less likely to be in their email or on vacation. This research is ongoing, and educators will continue to be contacted in hopes of increasing the sample size. In addition, there were areas of this survey that revealed areas that educators would like to see improvements in inclusion in their classrooms, schools, and the state of Texas. The survey included a comments box where many educators shared their thoughts. Some participants shared successes they have had while working with students with disabilities while other students shared struggles. One participant shared on their beliefs of inclusion importance:

I enjoy having students with disabilities in my classroom. Every child deserves a quality music education experience and should be in the classroom with their typical peers. Music builds community and is a valuable means of inclusion. Regardless of the academic goals of the instructor, every effort should be made to create a meaningful, high-quality experience of music making for all students. Literacy is important- but experiencing musicality should always be the higher goal.

Conversely, some participants shared how they do not have enough informed support and struggle to support these students while juggling all of the demands of the classroom:

It can be very overwhelming to teach students with disabilities in the general music classroom. We are given very little information prior to a student entering our class[.] They are very rarely sent with aides, and some of them can require lots of extra help that reduces the amount of learning for others in the classroom... I am usually just frantically finding ways to modify lessons in the moment.

Another participant shared:

My current school['s] attitude towards students with disabilities in regard to their fine arts elective is very... lax. I'll quote an educator when speaking to me about a student: "You don't even have to do anything with them." I do not carry this attitude. It is implied that fine arts are not an important aspect of a student's education, especially when involving a student with a disability.

With the findings of this study, both great successes and areas for growth have been revealed. The results of this study have implications for pre-service programs, current educators, parents of students with disabilities, professional development sessions, administrators, and music educators. All of these individuals, entities, and programs have influences on students taught in music classrooms. As stated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), "disability does not diminish the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society," which applies to the music classroom (200 U.S.C, §1400). Every child is entitled to a comprehensive music education that is free, appropriate, and accessible to them. As revealed by participants, inclusion in music education assists in achieving that goal.

Keywords: Inclusion, disabilities, music education, objectives

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