A GROUNDED THEORY OF MUSIC TEACHER LARGE SCALE CONFERENCE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION:

PROCESSES OF CONVERGENCE

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The purpose of this study was to understand the process of music teacher large-scale conference professional development (PD) implementation (i.e., the integration of conference-derived learnings into classroom practice). The context of this investigation was two national music conferences, the Midwest Clinic and the National Association for Music Education National In-Service Conference, and one state music conference, the Texas Music Educators Association Clinic/Convention. Using purposive maximum variation sampling, active music teachers ($n = 32$) who each attended one of these conferences were recruited. Data collection occurred in a series of three participant interview phases, staggered according to which conference participants attended and when each conference was held. Twenty-eight participants were interviewed twice, and four participants were interviewed once, yielding a total of 60 interview transcripts, which were then openly, axially, and selectively coded in accordance to grounded theory method.

The principal finding, the cycle of music teacher large scale conference professional development implementation (C-MTPDI), revealed an implementation process in three phases. First, the consideration phase (before/during conference) entailed needs assessment, direct engagement, change articulation, and, for some participants, deterrent factors/contingencies. Second, the realization phase (immediate post-conference) included translation, integration, and recalibration. Third, and finally, the decision phase (3-5 weeks post-conference) included evaluation. The core category, or main theme of the research, was seeking convergence: relevance, practicability, and impact. Contextual conditions included PD worldview and PD policy environment.
Avenues for future scholarship include clarifying differences in design and effectiveness among and within music-specific PD models, more fully understanding the status of large-scale conference PD in music education and its effect on practice, and theorizing PD implementation in non-conference contexts. Practical implications include developing new theory-aligned PD policies, putting into place more robust infrastructures of implementation support for large-scale conference attendees, addressing PD funding inequities between teachers in music and non-music disciplines, and helping practitioners to newly conceive “one-off” PD events (e.g., large-scale conferences) as sustainable investments in long-range professional growth.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The realities of educational life—and the cultural, economic, political, and social forces that shape it—make change both inherent and imperative. Indeed, change’s inevitability may represent its only constant quality. For teachers, the most concrete manifestation of change, at a professional and individual level, may be their encounters with professional development (PD). Music teacher educators—even those thought to competently execute their charge—cannot fully equip their teacher candidates with the knowledge and skills necessary to sustain teaching careers in perpetuity. Hence, the necessity for ongoing, inservice teacher PD remains clear and the urgency to fully grasp the its nature even clearer.

Explanations of how PD wisdom becomes translated, contextualized, and subsequently integrated into classroom instruction by music teachers remain scarce. Although these issues have been the subject of rampant allusion in many research reports on what constitutes effective PD for music teachers (e.g., Barrett, 2006; Bauer, 2007; Bauer, Forsythe, & Kinney, 2009; Conway, Hibbard, Albert, & Hourigan, 2005), they have not thus far been systematically and theoretically unpacked. Furthermore, the large-scale conference, despite its popularity among teachers as a prime PD mode, has seldom been examined in empirical settings. With this dissertation—a grounded theory (GT) study of the processes of PD classroom implementation—I sought to fill these chasms. My aim was to posit a theoretically rich and practically meaningful processual explication of music teacher PD implementation and, in so doing, stand up possible frameworks for future empirical inquiry, theory-building, policy development, and PD practice.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of how PD has been conceptualized by scholars in the field. Second, I clarify my epistemological and philosophical positions as the principal
researcher. Third, and finally, I outline the research problem and purpose that guided my conduct in the study, as well as possible limitations and delimitations that should frame the interpretation of my findings.

What is Professional Development?

Prior to any engagement with what teachers might do after a PD experience (i.e., PD implementation), it is important that PD itself be conceptually demarcated. What is PD? Does it represent a discrete vehicle for teacher change (e.g., professional conferences, workshops)? Is it synonymous with “staff development” and teacher “inservice” training? Does it have a defined beginning and end, a proper start and a deliberate finish? This conceptualization situates PD as an event—a perspective often adopted by early PD scholars. Little (1987), for instance, characterized PD as “any activity that is intended partly or primarily to prepare paid staff members for improved performance in present or future roles in the school districts” (p. 491). Guskey (1986, 2002), a prolific PD researcher who posited the concepts of teacher change that are discussed in Chapter 2, also emphasized PD’s programmatic dimensions. He described PD experiences as “deliberate activit[ies] generally undertaken with specific purposes…to alter the beliefs and attitudes of teachers prior to the implementation of a new program or innovation” (Guskey, 1986, p. 6). These notions delineate PD as something to which teachers go, primarily in response to practical and institutional demands.

Conversely, might PD embody teacher change itself? Is it something that teachers experience every day as they mature into and work within the profession, gleaning learnings from the constellation of persons and entities with whom they formally and informally interact (e.g., students, colleagues, administrators, parents, community members, schools, and school
systems)? In this formulation, PD represents a virtually interminable process. PD may be something to which teachers go (i.e., an event), but it is also the growth to which they commit over longer, undefined frames of time. More recent PD literature reflects these attributes insofar as scholars posit theories of collaborative, relational PD (e.g., Little, 2003; Louis & Marks, 1998;) and recommend policies advocating longer PD (e.g., Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association, a national education advocacy group formerly known as the National Staff Development Council, put forward a definition of PD that illustrates this shift:

The term ‘professional development’ means activities that—(A) are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards; and (B) are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short term workshops) [emphasis added], intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused. (Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association, n.d.)

Even as the organization defined PD as an “activit[y]” designed to meet specific, near term purposes (e.g., “State academic standards”), it also stipulates PD’s longer-range ends (e.g., “sustained…intensive”). In this sense, lasting growth is the preferred end, and the PD activity and/or event merely the mechanism.

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) put forward its definitional perspective on PD as it pertains to music teachers, holding that “effective” PD, among other attributes, “provides opportunity for reflection in a cycle of innovation, feedback, and reconsideration,” is “sustained,” and is “musical” (National Association for Music Education, 2015). As stand-alone subject specialists on many campuses, music teachers’ work is often colored by important disciplinary and contextual factors that distinguish their professional
experiences from those of their non-music colleagues. Thus, music teachers’ PD, if it is to effect substantive change, must thoughtfully reflect these differences—an achievement eluding many school-district-provided PD experiences (Conway, Hibbard, Albert, & Hourigan, 2005). Nevertheless, like their general education counterparts, music education scholars and professionals have envisioned more comprehensive, if more diffuse, concepts of PD.

Irrespective of its exact conceptualization(s) as reflected in the literature, PD remains integral to teachers’ work. And for many, it yields not to strict dichotomies and definitions, constituting instead an untidy amalgam of both personal predilections and institutional prerogatives (Desimone, Smith, & Phillips, 2007; Smith & Rowley, 2005). Hard policies often stipulate minimum teacher PD requirements (e.g., 150 contact hours for certification renewal) and establish levels of PD support (e.g., subsidies for conference travel), but final determinations as to the PD one chooses and, crucially, the extent to which it reforms one’s practice, are often self-made. For that reason, with this investigation—an examination of how music teachers interpret large-scale conference PD and implement it—I purposefully enable the precise conceptualization(s) of PD to be participant-driven, recognizing that, in many respects, teacher PD is as complex as the teaching profession itself.

Personal and Philosophical Orientation

Practical Understandings of PD

My interest in PD phenomena has origins in my early experiences as a high school choir director. I worked on a campus which had, in my terms, illusory PD robustness—that is, the presence of professional learning communities (PLC), the generous subsidization of my travel to professional conferences, and a broad appreciation and defense of arts programs obscured real
deficiencies in the effectiveness of the PD program. As I perceived it, the PD initiatives, while well-meaning, did little to drive change in my practice.

For example, while PLC were structured into the weekly schedule, administrative and programmatic supports did not necessarily enhance the teachers’ experiences within them. Like many comprehensive high schools, mine was comprised of several discipline-specific instructional departments. The calculus and algebra instructors convened within a PLC with other mathematics teachers, English teachers with English teachers, and so forth. The department of which I was part, Fine Arts, also organized regularly as a PLC. However, notwithstanding the moniker—itself very loosely defined as our team included not only the music, art, dance, and drama faculty but also teachers in speech and debate, journalism, physical education, and the Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, or JROTC—little else in terms of how the interactions were structured reflected the scholarly consensus around PLC or teacher community best practices (e.g., Gray, Kruse, & Tarter, 2016; Little, 2003). To the extent we gathered at all as a PLC, we almost never considered matters of pedagogy and curricula; we did not develop norms of collegial exchange; and our high-minded and ostensible purpose (i.e., professional growth) and de facto function (i.e., scheduling, logistics) were never well aligned.

As a music specialist within the district, I was also a beneficiary of generous professional conference funding. I would soon learn that, relative to many of my colleagues in other policy environments, ours was an exception. However, that robustness in monetary support was hardly replicated in other areas of the PD program, which did not feature components designed to galvanize integration of learnings derived from the conferences the district supported. The magnitude of lost opportunity within the district’s approach to PD was always palpable.
What if the PLC were oriented around a proactive agenda? What if it became guided by and infused with the proximate instructional concerns of its members? How might the PLC facilitate growth if, rather than meeting as seldom as possible in response to disciplinary divergences, it coalesced around an intradepartmental, interdisciplinary project? What do teachers do with knowledge derived from conference experiences? How might school and district leaders support teachers after the conference has ended? Does their charge extend beyond basic travel subsidization, or is enacting change after that point ultimately the province of teachers? These issues that permeated how I thought about my early PD experiences are still with me today. If PD did not, in fact, induce development, what was its true function? Its final purpose?

Pragmatist Positioning

As a pragmatist, I believe that truth is provisional, knowledge cumulative, reality context-dependent and multiple, but nevertheless not purely relativistic (Schwandt, 2015). I believe that most meaningful change happens incrementally. I believe the appraisal of new knowledge ought to be a direct function of its usefulness in discrete social and cultural contexts and for specific persons, peoples, and institutions. As a reflection of these holdings, I do not weigh PD exclusively on the basis of the personal change it may manifest within teachers. PD’s value is also embedded in the ways it furthers teachers’ practice and student, school, and school system outcomes. To be worthwhile, change should not reside in thought alone; it must be present in action, too. In these respects, the pragmatism and instrumentalism of Dewey (1929, 1938) and GT method’s emphasis on action and interaction (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) both provide a helpful lens through which to view this study’s conduct epistemologically. I sought to understand not
only how teachers interface with their personal impulses toward change via PD but also how those dispositions might respond to and flow from the policy contexts (e.g., schools, districts) in which they practice.

PD is an ongoing, ever-present phenomenon. The ways in which PD informs teachers’ pedagogical judgments—accelerating change in some areas and slowing it in others—are often nonlinear. As I theorized the PD implementation process in this investigation, I sought to reflect this complexity. And indeed, even as this study centered on the implementations generated from three discrete PD events, I nevertheless endeavored to uncover the ways in which teachers acted and interacted with PD beyond the immediate confines of the conferences they attended. As a reflection of my pragmatist leanings and my use of Anselm Strauss’s GT method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2015), I aimed to develop a theory that was closely aligned with the data and by extension, the substantive area. Ultimately, my success will be a function of the degree to which the product I have generated becomes one of use and of consequence to practicing teachers and to those who craft PD policies and administer PD programs.

Research Problem and Purpose

Researchers have repeatedly called for more scholarship on the PD of music teachers (e.g., Barrett, 2006; Bauer, 2007). Qualitative and quantitative output on music teacher PD is limited, and indeed, forays by scholars attempting to theorize the processes of PD implementation are scantier still. To fully understand music teachers’ inclinations and actions toward growth via formal PD, researchers must construct more granular conceptualizations of how and why music teachers engage PD. With this investigation, my purpose was to develop a grounded theory to explain the processes music teachers undergo as they integrate PD learnings
into everyday instructional practice following participation in a large-scale professional conference—processes collectively defined for this study as PD implementation. The following overarching questions guided my conduct:

1. Why and how do music teachers engage large-scale music conferences?
2. How do music teachers identify and operationalize conference-derived practices and/or perspectives for classroom-level implementation?
3. How do music teachers evaluate the efficacy of implementation(s)?
4. How do contextual and intervening conditions influence progress toward implementation?
5. In what way(s) does school policy figure into how and why music teachers pursue, interact with, and ultimately arrive at certain judgments with respect to PD implementation?

I expect these findings to begin addressing longstanding questions concerning how PD—a ubiquitous experience for teachers practicing in the United States (Kennedy, 2016)—actually lives within music teachers’ work. Through interviews following designated PD events, the application of rigorous GT analytic procedures, and the generation of a new theoretical account, I gleaned insights into how music teachers make sense of PD and how they activate PD learnings within their classrooms in furtherance of student learning objectives.

Limitations and Delimitations

Several limitations and delimitations affected this investigation’s conduct and should inform the interpretation of its findings. First, the study was limited to participants’ engagement with only three PD experiences, one national music conference, one national music education conference and one state music education conference. The teachers interviewed necessarily had personal, school- and/or district-provided funding and release time to support their conference attendance. Teachers lacking these resources would have been unable to participate, and thus are
not represented in the sample. While efforts were made to obtain a sample with maximum variation (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015) and to densely develop any resulting theoretical explication (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), the possible exceptionality of this study’s participants’ professional contexts should nevertheless be taken into full account.

The sensitization of participants to a series of post-conference interviews could also be regarded as a limitation of this study insofar as it catalyzed participants towards an atypical degree of PD implementation. In such a case, participants might have moved to implement PD learning(s) more fully simply because of their conscious participation in a PD implementation investigation. However, as scholars have commonly situated teacher reflection as a cornerstone of effective PD (e.g., Barrett, 2006; Hammel, 2007; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007), the parameters of this study may represent an assessment of how PD learnings are implemented (or partially implemented) under these oft-recommended conditions. Put otherwise, generating a theoretical explanation of PD implementation in semi-optimal circumstances (i.e., active post-PD reflection) could still be useful for inferring to settings and contexts in which these conditions may not be fully represented. Furthermore, GT generation necessarily allows for variation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), and such reflection likely contributed to the production of richer theory.

The study was delimited to PD learnings resulting from participation in national and state-level, practitioner-oriented, large-scale music conferences. Other PD experiences (e.g., PLC) were not addressed. I also engaged participants on a relatively brief implementation time horizon (i.e., one to two months following the large-scale conference event). Ongoing and/or new implementations occurring outside that window were not directly examined. Finally, the analyses, explanations, and models contained herein represent my interpretations of participants’
experiences. Extrapolations outside the immediate scope of those studied should be made with due caution.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Empirical researchers typically survey relevant past literature before embarking on a course of study (Creswell, 2014). They uncover gaps in scholarly thought, generate research questions, select theories for testing and verification, and sensitize themselves so that, following data collection and analysis, they are able to properly situate their findings within extant knowledge in the relevant substantive area(s) (Creswell, 2014). The literature review is considered foundational to the success of the research project. Qualitative researchers have relaxed these devotions, with classical case study analysts relying on literature-review-first practices of their quantitative forbears, while phenomenologists and grounded theorists opting, generally, for the bracketing of prior experiential and theoretical knowledge (Creswell, 2013).

At the core of conventional grounded theory (GT) method is a commitment to inductive conceptualization (i.e., explanations culled from empirical observations and untainted by preconception or bias) (Glaser & Strauss, 1965, 1967). Eschewing a conventional literature review was considered a safeguard against logico-deductive instincts—the same inclinations GT was first proffered to redress. Only after the theory had emerged was there to be any sustained engagement with the research literature (Glaser, 1998). From the origins of the approach, grounded theorists have grappled with the proper role existing theories play in the theory generation process—that is, to what extent does consideration of extant explanations undermine the inductive process? For their part, Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized the importance of emergent theory-craft in their seminal text, The Discovery of Grounded Theory:

…[G]enerating theory [puts] a premium on emergent conceptualizations…An effective strategy is, at first, literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by
concepts more suited to different areas. Similarities and convergences with the literature can be established after the analytic core of categories has emerged. (p. 37).

After ceasing regular collaborations with Strauss in the 1970s, Glaser continued to emphasize the avoidance of pre-study literature reviews, lest they contaminate the inductive process with biases, preconceptions, and assumptions (Glaser, 1998; Glaser & Holton, 2007). In fact, one of Glaser’s critiques of what he called the remodeling of classic GT was the relaxation of conventions surrounding the literature review (Glaser, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2007). To him, classic GT research properly began with a guiding notion but without a formal and comprehensive literature synthesis.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Corbin and Strauss (2015), whose joint efforts represented the first substantial updates to classic GT, have lessened somewhat the reliance on emergent theory generation. They advocate the usage of extant technical and nontechnical literature to, among other things, develop researcher sensitivity to subtle gradations in found data and place newly generated explanations within practically and historically meaningful contexts. They wrote in the first edition to Basics of Qualitative Research:

The literature can be used to stimulate theoretical sensitivity by providing concepts and relationships that are checked out against actual data. Though you do not want to enter the field with an entire list of concepts and relationships, some may turn up over and over again in the literature and thus appear to be significant. These you may want to bring to the field where you will look for evidence of whether or not the concepts and relationships apply to the situation that you are studying, and if so what form they take [there]. (pp. 50-51)

Corbin and Strauss (2015) draw a line, however, at imposing an a priori theory wholesale on new interview and observational data. They emphasize that, while surveying previous research sensitizes the researcher to possible concepts and relationships that may emerge later, once fieldwork and interviews begin, found data should become the arbiter of future sampling, analysis, and theorizing.
Extending beyond the narrow consideration of the conventional pre-study literature review, the pursuit of inductive purity in GT has been pointedly questioned by methodologists (e.g., Bryant, 2003; Timmermans & Tavory, 2012; Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). As Tavory and Timmermans (2014) argued, basic concerns regarding the plausibility of pure induction in GT are mitigated by “embedding basic theoretical frameworks in grounded theory [via the literature synthesis] and using heuristic tools to formalize the process[es] of emergence” (p. 15). Otherwise stated: If researchers are to develop conceptually rich and practically useful theory, their sustained engagement with the substantive research area is something to be encouraged, not avoided. Charmaz (2014), in her statement of constructivist GT, echoed this sentiment. She urged the development of “sensitizing concepts” as “tentative tools” and “points of departure for studying the empirical world while retaining the openness for exploring it” (pp. 30-31). Judicious engagement with prior literature, then, allows the researcher to provisionally contextualize their interests in a certain substantive area, which, as long as they remain open to divergence, makes their interactions with data, interviewees, and the theory itself more rich and more relevant. (See Chapter 3 for an extended discussion of the issues related to induction and GT method.)

I engaged the literature on teacher change not to develop preconceptions as to how data from the current study might fit extant theories. Rather, I conducted a literature review for two main reasons. First, my study of and interest in music teacher PD did not begin with the conduct of this study. Eschewing a formal literature synthesis and casting my role as wholly removed or objective and my findings as purely emergent (i.e., inductively derived) would have been misleading. Second, the notion of theoretical sensitivity as it pertains to GT in its updated constructivist (e.g., Charmaz, 2014) and abductive incarnations (e.g., Timmermans & Tavory, 2012; Tavory & Timmermans, 2014) suggests that to be sensitive is not just an act of considering
relationships between codes, categories and concepts in new data (processes explored in depth in Chapter 3); commitments toward sensitivity also compel researchers to continually engage their data until they form “as many links and hypotheses as possible in light of [their] theoretically positioned knowledge” [emphasis added] (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 61). This perspective, while a marked departure from classic GT of Glaser’s (1998) ilk, reflects my pragmatist approach.

I begin this chapter with an exploration of teacher change theory. Next, I examine formal PD implementation within and outside music education. While there is extensive research on music and non-music teacher PD, appreciably fewer scholars highlight the intersection of formal teacher PD, PD classroom implementation, and teacher change. Next, I examine the practicalities and contexts of music teacher PD, particularly as they pertain to how teacher change generally and PD practice specifically is informed, restrained, and/or buttressed by enacted policies that implicitly and explicitly direct PD programs and define teacher quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Loeb, Miller, & Strunk, 2009). Finally, I review recent employments of GT in music education research.

Teacher Change and PD

Modern teacher PD is premised on the notion of a profession in perpetual reform. That is, for teachers to remain effective purveyors of the content and skills they seek to impart, there is an inherent need to continually respond to societal, demographic, and socioeconomic evolutions. Adaptation and change, to many, characterize a core tenet of effective teaching. The notion of change is at the center of this investigation, as I theorize the processes music teachers undergo when conceptualizing, integrating, and possibly forfeiting commitments to change in the context
of a formal PD experience. To understand these processes and to sensitize myself theoretically to explanations existing in the field, I looked to teacher change theory.

Guskey’s (1986, 1988, 2002) Model of Teacher Change is arguably the most prominent theory of teacher change that intersects with PD. He posited a process of change in four steps. First, teachers participated in a PD event in which they learned about new instructional approaches, curricula, classroom management devices, and other matters related to their work. Second, teachers modified their classroom practices to reflect the learnings derived from the PD event. Third, and directly related to the implementation of those PD learnings, student-learning outcomes become affected—positively, negatively, or not at all. Fourth, and finally, after considering those tangible impacts, teachers altered their beliefs and attitudes regarding their practice.

At the core of the model was Guskey’s contention that changes to teachers’ beliefs and attitudes would be ephemeral if not supported by experiential structures first and, conversely, beliefs/thoughts were inconsequential and purely theoretical if not manifested in actions. Action came first, then outcomes. The outcomes, in turn, would inspire action. Thus, to inspire action, student-learning outcomes gained centrality. To Guskey, teachers were not to be convinced that changes were necessary or practical if they did not experience for themselves the concrete behavioral, environmental, and academic impacts of those changes on their students. Only after effects were made evident would teachers consider adaptations to their belief structures. As Guskey wrote:

The model of change is predicated on the idea that change is primarily an experientially based learning process for teachers. Practices that are found to work—that is, those that teachers find useful in helping students attain desired learning outcomes—are retained and repeated. Those that do not work or yield no tangible evidence of success are generally abandoned. Demonstrable results in terms of student learning outcomes are the key to the endurance of any change in instructional practice. (Guskey, 2002, p. 384)
Guskey (1986) substantiated his original model by presenting evidence from a series of studies that demonstrated teachers’ reluctance to engage long-range instructional reforms without first seeing evidence of positive tangible impacts. In a study conducted by Guskey himself and published in 1984, participants in multi-part inservice workshop on Mastery Learning—an instructional and formative evaluation strategy that pairs student assessments with corrective feedback—were assessed on their self-perceptions of the extent to which they personally influenced their students’ academic outcomes, their appraisal of teaching as a career, and their confidence in their teaching abilities (i.e., self-efficacy). After comparing participant responses from assessments administered both before and after the workshop was held, Guskey found that the teachers who adopted Mastery Learning techniques and saw improvements to their students’ learning outcomes “expressed more positive attitudes toward teaching and greater personal responsibility for their students’ learning” (Guskey, 1986, p. 8). The former (implementation of Mastery Learning) without the latter (increased student performance) constituted “insufficient conditions for affective change in teachers” (Guskey, 1986, p. 256).

Crandall (1983)—in an inquiry into implementation of 61 “innovative practices” (p. 6) across 146 school systems nationwide—found that teachers’ relative commitment to reform solidified only after they saw student-level evidence of its efficacy. Well-meaning attempts to engender shared authorship of a PD program’s precepts and practices (i.e., permitting teachers to self-determine their roles in implementation) reduced fidelity and, ultimately, imperiled reform. As Crandall wrote, “innovations [lost] their punch and their effectiveness because they [were] changed beyond recognition” (p. 7), which presents an interesting contradiction with prevailing wisdom on PD. If teachers’ input and agency at the start of the PD process could actually undermine the full implementation of the PD program—and therefore its odds of efficacy—then
it might follow that mechanisms for robust teacher response ought to be limited. This, coupled with other work by scholars observing teachers’ predisposition to maintaining the status quo (Lortie, 2002), supported Guskey’s (1986) contention that teachers had to fully participate in the PD program before they might begin to alter their value systems.

The temporal order as reflected in Guskey’s model (i.e., action[s] first, outcomes second, beliefs/attitudes last) is somewhat inconsistent with other, more recent, scholarship. For instance, in Desimone’s (2009) “operational theory of how professional development works to influence teacher and student outcomes” (p. 184), she held that teachers changed their beliefs first and their actions second. After an effective PD experience—whose “core features” (p. 185) included a clear content focus, active learning, coherence between PD subject matter and the context of implementation, sufficient duration, and collective participation—teachers’ knowledge and skills, and attitudes and beliefs changed in tandem. They then made reforms to their teaching practices, which ultimately affected their students’ learning outcomes. Notably, changes to teachers’ belief systems were not a direct function of an evaluation of student outcomes, as Guskey (1986, 2002) had previously posited, but instead depended on whether the PD activity in question was deemed effective based on the aforementioned criteria. To the extent PD was effective, it had the capacity to change teachers’ attitudes/beliefs. Desimone also invoked context in a manner more frontal than Guskey, defining it as “teacher and student characteristics, curriculum, school leadership, [and] policy environment” (p. 185) and arguing for its full consideration in research studies on teacher PD. She acknowledges that the tracks in her framework were all mutually reinforcing, explaining that the “nonrecursive, interactive pathways [do] not prevent differential emphases on either the basic components [of PD] or the addition of moderating and mediating elements, such as teacher identity, beliefs, and perceptions” (p. 185).
In other words, Desimone’s theory—and in many respects, Guskey’s—acts primarily as a conceptual starting point for researchers studying PD’s effects, rather than a data-based explanatory scheme.

PD as Policy

Existing within the larger policy architecture that administers teacher preparation, credentialing, evaluation, and reaccreditation, PD practices often reflect and react to PD policies (Loeb, Miller, & Strunk, 2009). Since the dawn of the modern standards-and-accountability school reform movement—which was precipitated in part by the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*—teacher PD prerogatives have shifted from individuals to institutions, and issues of teacher preparedness and evaluation have pervaded discourses on school change (Ravitch, 2014). This has led to requirements that virtually all teachers take part in some form of PD each year (Kennedy, 2016), whether it be to safeguard state licensure reaccreditation or to remain in compliance with a school-, district-, or state-based PD policy. In 2013-2014, according to the most current figures available, schools in the U.S. expended about $25 billion on PD and PD-related activities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). PD is often extended as an important driver of effective teaching and as a primary mechanism through which new programs, policies, and pedagogies are implemented.

Researchers within and outside music education have scrutinized the degree to which PD policy supports positive change in teacher practice. Schmidt and Robbins (2011), two music education researchers, held that proponents of *rational choice theory*—which assumes the ideal ends of education are explainable only in economic or utilitarian terms—wielded undue influence over education reform by ill-advisedly promoting prescription and standardization as
antidotes to school failure. As an alternative, Schmidt and Robbins argued for a “strategic architecture framework” (p. 96) for music teacher PD. They intended with their new framework to weaken the notion that effective teaching practice, with its intrinsic complexity, would ever be reducible to any set of uniform criteria. Thus, for PD policy to beget better teaching practice, it had to be crafted in ways that duly considered the contexts in which PD was actually implemented.

Ball, Maguire, and Braun (2012) held in their policy enactments theory that school policies were not merely implemented, which would suppose their uniform integration into practice; they were enacted. Reforms were mutable according to the circumstances of their application and thus, the same policy could “live” differently in different school settings. Extending this frame—to perceive PD learnings as objects that are implemented would be to assume minimal translation between the PD experience and the classroom context, whereas enacted PD learnings are translated, contextualized, adapted, and even contested. Nevertheless, I made no distinctions between PD enactment and PD implementation in this study; the PD phenomenon—particularly pertaining to what happens after music teachers partake in a PD event—had not been unpacked in extant scholarship to an extent that those granular differences were plain. However, with this study as I attempted to orient the scholarly discourse toward that end, I discovered that Ball and colleagues’ theoretical parsing appeared sound. Indeed, as I explain in greater detail in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, participants assumed almost universally translational postures in their implementation endeavors.

Formal PD and PD Implementation in General Education

PD research in general education, while varied, reflects a relative consensus on the
characteristics of PD programs that most likely spur long-range classroom implementation (e.g., Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001; Hill, 2007). In broad terms, effective PD (a) is aligned with tangible notions of teachers’ daily professional duties and contexts, (b) centralizes as both a means and an end the development of strong working relationships between teachers through the use of cooperative and inquiry-driven learning, and (c) features prolonged engagements. PD program implementation is further buttressed by time-based supports (i.e., instructional release for teachers to collaboratively plan for integration of PD learnings) (Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007) and financial supports (i.e., monies to engage in conferences and other costly PD experiences) (Gallo, 2015, 2018). Many PD policymakers have developed PD programs around these general guidelines, and researchers often look to their employment as a means of conceptualizing PD effectiveness (Desimone, 2009; Kennedy, 2016).

Despite this apparent coalescence in scholarly thought and practice on PD effectiveness, gaps remain. For instance, Hill, Beiseigel, and Jacob (2013) noted in their review of common PD researcher practices that many PD theories are possibly misinformed or misplaced because they are based on studies with poor empirical designs. They also cited several studies whose findings seemingly contradict prevailing wisdom (i.e., PD programs reflected researcher consensus on effectiveness but nevertheless yielded underwhelming results). In one of the largest and most comprehensive studies to date, Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley (2007) screened more than 1,300 PD studies using the credible evidence and methodological rigor standards of the U. S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). They found that of the studies surveyed, only nine met WWC’s standards, suggesting research and design flaws across a large swath of recent PD scholarship. Furthermore, as Guskey and Yoon (2009) noted in their
article on Yoon and colleagues’ (2007) work, the studies that did pass muster presented findings that countered many of the PD best practices that had been proffered over the years (e.g., the inefficacy of outside expert-facilitated and workshop-oriented PD formats). These divergences not only demonstrate the importance of further processual and theoretical investigation of PD implementation; they also highlight the limitations of classical quantitative methods in studying PD phenomena. Indeed, PD’s complexities may make it better suited to naturalistic inquiry.

Formal PD and PD Implementation in Music Education

Music teachers’ PD needs often differ from those of their non-music counterparts—a status owing mostly to the contextual and disciplinary realities of teaching music. Many music teachers are singular music specialists on their campuses, itinerant music specialists on multiple campuses, or part of loosely defined subject matter instructional teams—all of which making it necessary to pursue PD opportunities off-campus and even outside the district (Barrett, 2006). Notwithstanding these key distinctions, music teachers, as operators within the public school context, are subject to the same PD policy mandates that govern non-music teachers. For example, to retain licensure, all teachers are typically required to document a predetermined number of PD credits annually or quasi-annually. Engagement with PD is operationalized and teachers assessed via various quantitative measures (e.g., hours or days attended, continuing education or graduate units earned). What is often unclear, however, are the qualitative underpinnings of such PD experiences, those which extend beyond the relatively superficial hours-obtained indicators to address issues of teacher-, student-, and classroom-level implementation. In this regard, PD practice is not as tightly regulated (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andrew, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). That is, even as PD is required of virtually every
public school teacher, how they (and their students) ought to profit from the PD experience remains largely unspecified in formal PD policy.

Relative to general education, PD research in music education has been more limited in empirical scope and consequence. Music education researchers have explored the perceptions of practicing music teachers with regard to the most useful PD models. Conway and Christensen (2006), for example, studied the self-identified PD needs of a first-year music teacher who reported that, for her, sustained engagements with music-specific PD was most reformative. Eros (2011, 2013), in his consideration of more experienced teachers, highlighted “second-stage” music teachers’ PD needs. He noted that teachers with 4 to 10 years of experience may require PD that addresses larger issues of career advancement, the assumption of leadership roles, and authorship of new curricula. Matters such as classroom management, while proximately critical for novice teachers, were not, in Eros’s estimation, as germane to experienced teachers’ PD. These emphases on context-specific, teacher-tailored PD are pervasive across the music teacher PD literature (e.g., Angeline, 2014; Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Bowles, 2002; Conway & Borst, 2001; Conway & Jeffers, 2004).

Pellegrino (2011) surveyed the potential advantages of music-making as a form of PD. Citing Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow—which she described as a “psychological state of intense interest, a time when someone becomes fully engaged in a challenging activity that causes them to lose sense of time and self and results in feelings of satisfaction” (p. 80)—Pellegrino proffered a suite of PD policies and practices centered on the notion that music teachers realize their best pedagogically when they remain invested musically. Her suggestions included (a) incorporating music-making in departmental and districtwide music teacher meetings (e.g., PLC), (b) extending PD credit to teachers for making music outside the
classroom, (c) facilitating action research projects and/or teacher reflection based on integration of teachers making music with students inside the classroom, and (d) establishing collaborative teacher study groups that include chamber music-making components. The importance of engaging music teachers’ identities as musicians as a form of professional socialization is supported in other literature as well (e.g., Scheib, 2006).

Issues related specifically to the classroom implementation of PD learnings have been examined previously in the music education literature, albeit in a limited fashion. Detailed portrayals of specific PD experiences, models, and programs—rather than theoretical explications of generalized implementation—are most prevalent. For instance, McKoy, MacLeod, Walter, and Nolker (2017) examined the impacts of a five-day workshop on inservice teachers’ perceptions of culturally responsive teaching practices (CRT). Using a pretest/posttest design, the researchers assessed participants’ familiarity, frequency of use, comfort level, concerns, and importance with respect to CRT at the start of the training and again at its conclusion. They found statistically significant pre- to post-test increases in participants’ familiarity with CRT and their perceptions of the importance of using CRT in the classroom. However, all other tested categories, including the crucial implementation-aligned indicator, frequency of use, were statistically nonsignificant. This study, with its limited sample of 18 teachers and its five-day time horizon, provides evidence of targeted PD’s potential to increase teachers’ knowledge. However, without systematic follow-up on classroom implementation, the nature of how the workshop’s content was activated by these teachers after-the-fact remains unknown.

Bauer, Reese, and McAllister (2003) found teachers’ knowledge, comfort, and frequency of use with respect to instructional technology increased in relation to the close of a one-week
intensive workshop that focused on music technology. The PD experience was immediately effective. However, after following up several months later, the researchers discovered that, while teachers’ aggregate facility with music technology was higher than before the week-long training, it had decreased since the initial survey was completed directly after the training. This suggests that without ongoing support, teacher learning—irrespective of its potency at the time of initial delivery—is unlikely to be sustained into medium- and long-range instructional situations, which might limit full implementation. What Bauer and colleagues (2003) did not comprehensively consider, however, were the reasons underlying teachers’ decisions not to sustain adoption of these new instructional technologies. For example, upon closer examination, the authors highlighted more attenuation in teachers’ self-reported frequency of use than teachers’ self-reported knowledge and comfort with the technologies between the pretest and posttest questionnaires. Why were teachers’ self-perceptions of preparedness not wholly consistent with how frequently they actually employed the new learnings? What might have contributed to the lack of continued implementation? Did teachers lack sufficient technical support? Administrator buy-in? Financial resources? Addressing these and related issues requires additional inquiries, such as this one, that consider teacher perspectives around PD implementation more deeply.

National and state conferences are popular venues for music teacher PD (Conway, 2008; Eros, 2013). They usually offer opportunities for music teachers to interface at length with similarly situated teacher colleagues—a departure from the at times isolating experience of serving in the midst of mostly non-music teachers (Rudaitis, 1996; Sindberg, 2011, 2014). Ideally, conferences are also vehicles for the dissemination of the newest and most innovative pedagogical and musical materials. Notwithstanding these well-documented advantages, scholars
have raised questions as to the relevance, usefulness, and structure of large-scale conference paradigm. Two recent content analyses of the Biennial In-Service Conference of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), now the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), provided evidence of a marked increase in the prevalence of instructional technology-focused sessions but noted shortages in sessions focusing on students with special needs (Palkki, Albert, Hill, & Shaw, 2016; Price & Orman, 2001). Given perennial doubts that exceptional student populations are being well-served by traditional public schools, the relative paucity of PD germane to the topic—at least as reflected by the conferences at the center of these inquiries—is a cause for concern. Barrett (2006) highlighted how the episodic nature of large-scale conferences undermined substantive teacher change. These “one-shot” events, as she characterized them, did not provoke the depth of engagement necessary to uncover useful remedies to instructional problems. Bauer and Berg’s (2001) survey of instrumental music educators found that affiliations with professional associations (hosts of many national and state music conferences) did not drive individual reforms in planning, assessment, or teaching. This would seem to reinforce the belief that, to the extent they gain salience at all, learnings derived from conference experiences are sometimes fleeting.

Social and professional exchange between music teachers in non-conference settings has been offered as a PD alternative to the large-scale conference. Sindberg (2016) developed and examined a professional learning community (PLC) of music teachers implementing Comprehensive Musicianship Through Performance (CMP), an instructional planning model that positions as equally essential the broad-based understanding of musical materials and the capture of discrete musical performance skill. To the extent ensemble-based music instruction emphasized the latter (i.e., performance-based music education) to the detriment of the former
(i.e., holistic music education), CMP is intended as a corrective, better balanced approach. Sindberg ultimately observed that because of the collaborative and prolonged nature of the CMP-infused PLC, participating teachers were enabled to establish new systems and pedagogies that actively subverted the status quo. For instance, while the participants raised specific concerns as to the possible degradation of performance standards and the loss of instructional time that could accompany a more “comprehensive” model, they ultimately found that effecting substantive change was possible if they “process[ed] ideas and learn[ed] in community” (p. 216) rather than individually. Collaboration facilitated implementation.

Other researchers have corroborated these impressions. For instance, Stanley, Snell, and Edgar (2014) interviewed eight music teachers who had participated in seven different collaborative PD programs. Participants found the joint problem solving and mentoring embedded in many of their experiences to be highly influential on their subsequent practice. In a similar vein, Burkett (2001) conducted a case study of a multi-district PD program designed for rural instrumental music teachers and conceived as a means of delivering music-specific PD while also alleviating the professional isolation that often accompanies teaching in sparsely populated contexts. The PD program, which was implemented over two academic years and featured seminars and coaching sessions delivered by musicians of a local symphony orchestra, was perceived as effective according to participants, with several mentioning specifically the collaborative nature of the program. In a constructivist study of social PD, Stanley (2012) examined the experiences of three elementary music teachers who were part of a collaborative teacher study group (CTSG). The CTSG, which convened weekly two-hour meetings over the course of seven weeks and was facilitated by Stanley, focused on issues of student collaboration in the general music setting. Participants watched unedited video clips of each other’s teaching
and offered analysis and criticism. Stanley’s main findings suggest participants reacted favorably to their experiences, noting the CTSG’s interdependent nature “seemed to meet the self-avowed need of [participating teachers] to have relevant professional development that instigated learning through collective generation of local wisdom and their own ideas, rather than from an expert” (p. 62). A sustained program of professional exchange seemed to provoke change for the teachers in the study. As Stanley observed, “In searching the data to answer how the participants describe[d] their experience in the [collaborative teacher study group], there [was] evidence [that] the focus on collaboration…changed the teaching practice of these teachers” (p. 59). These studies place in stark relief how social dimensions in music teacher PD can buttress its efficacy and make more likely its classroom-level implementation.

Many PD scholars define PD effectiveness as a function of advancements in student achievement but nevertheless struggle to draw the crucial causal linkages that would substantiate their claims. These limitations may be an artifact of faulty empirical method (Hill, Beisiegel, & Jacob, 2013) or, as I contend here, might actually be based on something even more foundational: an incomplete understanding of how teachers implement PD and how those processes might affect their instructional intentions and, in turn, student outcomes. Whether and to what degree PD influences student learning continues to be linked to whether and to what degree PD is contextualized, adopted, and integrated in teacher-driven implementation processes. Thus, with this study, I focus not on students per se but on how and why PD learnings get implemented into teachers’ practice. PD implementation undoubtedly touches student outcomes insofar as any teacher PD program ought to be targeted toward effecting advancements in student learning. Nevertheless, with this investigation aimed at generating new theory, I
sought first to understand teachers’ PD implementation processes. (I discuss the potential merits of expressly student-focused PD theory-craft in Chapter 5.)

As I have attempted to make clear in the preceding passages, in much of the extant literature, PD researchers often treat PD implementation as an assumed byproduct of any PD experience perceived by teachers to be effective (e.g., Stanley, 2012)—that is, teachers’ self-reported appraisal of a PD experience’s usefulness is considered sufficient evidence as to its presumed classroom-level impact. Implementation is not formally considered. It is neither centralized empirically as an outcome nor identified conceptually as the study’s object of interest. Moreover, some scholars reduce PD implementation considerations operationally to a simple dichotomy (i.e., whether a teacher intends to retain or discard a certain practice that originated from a PD experience) (e.g., Bauer, Reese, & McAllister, 2003). Indeed, while meaningful PD implementation may intuitively seem pivotal to ultimate PD effectiveness, PD scholarship regarding how music teachers engage those processes remains conceptually amorphous, which makes clear the need for more rigorously derived, parsimonious, and data-based explanations.

I endeavored with this study to begin addressing this need. Specifically, through careful collection and analysis of qualitative data, I generated a theory to elucidate music teachers’ PD implementation processes following their participation in a large-scale music conference event(s). I employed grounded theory method (GT) as an empirical vehicle to consider these issues. Of particular relevance to the current study is GT’s emphasis on *processual* explanations. Indeed, action, temporality, and process, rather than thematic description, lay at the core of how social phenomena are explained with GT in all its variants (see Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as is made plain in Schwandt’s (2015) definition of GT:
…[GT] is a specific, rigorous set of procedures for analyzing qualitative data to produce formal, substantive theory of social phenomena. Features that, taken collectively, distinguish [GT] work from other forms of qualitative data analysis include (a) simultaneous collection and analysis of data, (b) analyses of actions and process rather than themes, (c) use of comparative methods, (d) use of multiple sources of data to develop new conceptual categories, (e) use of systematic means of analysis to develop core categories inductively, (f) focus on theory construction rather than description, and (g) employing theoretical sampling. (p. 63)

I describe GT’s philosophical and methodological moorings—as well as their precise employment relating to the current study—in greater detail in Chapter 3. In what follows, I summarize recent GT studies in music education.

Grounded Theories in Music Education

The practical bent of GT has made its use pervasive across a wide range of practice-oriented fields (e.g., nursing, education, clinical psychology, medicine) (Bryant, 2009). In music education, however, the method has found limited application. To date, no scholar has developed a GT on music teacher PD. And further, few methodologically rigorous grounded theories on any issue in music education have been published in recent years.

Studies Employing Classic GT

I identified a single study in music education that employed classic GT. With his dissertation investigation, Haning (2016) sought to theorize the role of presentational performance in K-12 American music education. He defined presentational performance as designed and executed purely for “one group of people to provide entertainment for another group” (p. 10). His research questions included:

1. What role do presentational performances play in American K-12 music programs?

2. How are music teachers’ pedagogical decisions informed or affected by their efforts to mount presentational performances?
What aspects of the music teaching-learning process are affected by efforts to mount presentational performances and what form do these effects take? (Haning, 2016, p. 9)

Haning cited the lack of empirical research in this substantive area as his rationale for selecting GT, and his desire to “set aside…biases and preconceptions” (p. 48) as his justification for specifically employing the classic GT variant. Relative to its successors, classic GT scholars subordinate their role in the theorization process to a greater extent than do their Straussian or constructivist GT counterparts (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015), holding that for theories to be sufficiently grounded in data, they have to be derived via pure induction. As Glaser (1998) contended:

The grounded theorist has no preconceived view of what problems they may encounter in the research or how the participants resolve their problem or main concern. He lets the problems and continued resolving emerge. He trusts to the fact that the world goes on whether or not he knows how. The research issue is to discover a core variable and ensuing theory that accounts for what he is finding to be the main concern of the participants. He sees that forcing only derails and fails this purpose. He does not let the normal intrusions of forcing stop him. (p. 119)

For his part, Haning studied nine music teachers practicing in the state of Ohio and hailing from all major music education sub-disciplines (i.e., band, choir, orchestra, general music). His data were derived from six sources: (a) initial interviews to obtain situational information about each participant in terms of school setting, personal background, music program structure and the “ways in which presentational performance was situated in the context of each individual teaching situation” (p. 65), (b) observations occurring over two full school days for each participant, (c) follow-up interviews after each day of observation, (d) artifacts (e.g., concert programs, lesson plans, written communications to parents, students, colleagues, and community members, sample assignments), (e) participant journal entries on “the ways in which performances or efforts to mount performances affected their teaching” (p. 68), which were completed weekly over an 8-week period, and finally, (f) focus group interviews during
which participants collectively considered the three research questions and responded to
preliminary themes generated through initial data collection phases.

    Haning found as his core category the centrality of performance in American K-12 music
education, noting that “performance activities often serve as the cornerstone of the music
education” (p. 122) enterprise and, as a result, other types of musical engagement are often
subordinated. He related his core category to four subcategories: community expectations
(presentational performance pressures are often necessitated by performance-centric community
support structures), student motivation (students are “highly motivated by performance at all
grade levels” [p. 130]), time management (performances and, more specifically, their scheduling
drives most other instructional and programmatic decision-making), and a distinction between
performance preparation and conceptual teaching activities (teachers prioritized product-
oriented aims that specifically impacted performance goals and deemphasized other less
proximate, holistic musical considerations).

    Haning analyzed data iteratively and comparatively, which was consistent with classic
GT methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, even as he nominally adopted the classic GT
approach, he nevertheless invoked terms and methods from Straussian and constructivist GT,
perhaps highlighting the intersectional nature of the varying GT schools (see Chapter 3 for a
comprehensive discussion). Several of Haning’s methodological choices illustrate this
intersectionality. First, he situated himself within the study, explaining his predilections and
preferences regarding the rightful status of presentational performance in music education—an
admission that would seem aligned with Charmaz (2015) and her constructivist interpretations of
GT. Second, he conducted what seemed to be an early-in-the-process review of extant literature,
a tactic that remains anathema to most classic GT employments (Glaser, 2002; Glaser & Holton,
Third, in describing his data coding process, he cited repeatedly the works of Strauss (1987) and Thornberg and Charmaz (2014), who revised classic GT. Fourth, he presented his resultant theory in the form of atemporal propositional statements, an explanatory device he contended was emulated from Parker (2014). However, Parker, employing Straussian GT (as I explain in the ensuing section), invoked process and temporality more explicitly and, importantly, presented her final theorization diagrammatically. Taken together, these choices made by Haning demonstrate the portability of many GT precepts, such that researchers often employ varying combinations of classic GT, Straussian GT, and constructivist GT to fashion a GT in direct response to their research contexts, as well as their personal philosophies and predilections. In Chapter 3, I discuss this penchant for GT interpretation, which some, including Glaser himself, disapprovingly call the *remodeling* of GT (Glaser, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2007).

Studies Employing Straussian GT

I discovered two studies in music education that featured the Straussian variant of GT. Parker, Bond, and Powell (2017) theorized the processes of preservice teacher lesson planning in the context of choral, instrumental, and general music education courses, aiming to “understand the processes of field experience lesson planning for preservice music educators enrolled in choral, general, and instrumental music education courses within three university contexts” (p. 7). While lesson planning had been examined in the music education literature previously from defined perspectives (e.g., occupational identity development), the researchers observed, its processes germane specifically to preservice music teachers in methods courses with a field experience component has not been theoretically unpacked. Data were derived from four waves of collection and analysis in three methods courses that were taught by each of the investigators.
at three different universities. The first wave consisted of individual interviews on participants’ a priori perceptions and experiences regarding lesson planning. The second wave included analysis of “several sets of observation reports, preplanning prompts, and post-teaching reflections” (p. 11). The third wave included another round of individual interviews. During the fourth and final wave, nine significant participants were engaged for an additional interview in which they were asked to confirm and/or disconfirm the model and its central holdings. Consistent with classic GT precepts, the data collection and analysis, although organized and reported in four waves, was necessarily nonlinear and iterative.

The researchers described how they employed open and axial coding to reduce and ascribe meaning to their data, and the resultant theoretical model explicitly framed actions-interactions, intervening conditions, the central phenomenon, contextual conditions, and propositional statements—phraseology associated with Straussian GT (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The final theoretical model represented the preservice music teacher lesson planning process as an operation manifest in five categories: (a) learning the tasks of teaching, (b) experiencing an authentic teaching context, (c) embracing teaching as an interaction (the central phenomenon around other categories were interrelated), (d) teaching more effectively, and (e) learning about teaching with my style.

Parker (2009, 2014) explored the processual dimensions of social identity development within high school choral music students. She conducted 49 interviews with 36 participants at three different school sites. Her data gathering and analysis were organized simultaneously and in three waves. First, she interviewed five participants from each school (15 total participants). After conducting initial analyses on data derived from those conversations, she commenced a second wave of data collection, in which she theoretically sampled 21 different mixed choir
participants, adhering to an essential GT practice in which researchers choose additional participants on the basis of initial findings and with an aim toward fully developing their emerging theory. The third wave consisted of member checking, a process for which 13 of 36 participants returned to offer feedback on the temporal matrix and propositional statements generated in the first two waves of analysis.

Unlike Haning (2016), Parker, Bond, and Powell’s (2017) and Parker’s (2009, 2014) models were visually depicted via a temporal matrix and were perhaps more coherently Straussian than Haning’s study was classic. That Haning intended to “utilize[.] as much as possible…the original approach” (p. 48) (i.e., classic GT) but nevertheless relied heavily on the tools developed in more recent GT interpretations (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss, 1986) reinforces their inherent functionality while also making clear the deficits embedded in Glaser and Strauss’s (1965, 1967) early GT statements.

Methodologically Amorphous GT Studies

Other music education researchers have invoked the term grounded theory, but seldom have they faithfully executed the procedures and reflected the spirit of either the method’s progenitors (i.e., Glaser and Strauss) or its most famous interpreters (i.e., Strauss, in his later years, Corbin, and Charmaz). Two recent investigations are demonstrations of this misalignment. Barry and Durham (2017)—in their study of preservice music teachers’ experiences in a summertime early childhood music program—simply documented thematic categories, which were neither conceptually developed nor interrelated. The researchers nevertheless cited Glaser and Strauss (1967) to substantiate their method. For his part, Abrahams (2009) conducted what he called a critical GT study to examine perceptions of connection and disconnection between
preservice and inservice music teachers involved in the field experience component of a university methods course. He defined his GT study as critical insofar as its conduct was meant to “initiat[e] a change of perception on the part of the participants” (p. 83). Affixing a critical lens to GT analysis does not appear to be wide practice in educational or sociological GT scholarship, and Abrahams did not provide extant research as a basis for his approach. Furthermore, and perhaps most confounding, even as the term grounded theory is identified in the study’s title, Abrahams did not reference any prominent GT method in the study’s text (e.g., Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Given that so few music education researchers employ GT method in any capacity, the lack of fidelity to GT’s precepts, practices, and philosophies is made doubly problematic. Indeed, few field-specific exemplars exist. With this study of music teacher PD implementation, I apply the rigors of GT to begin addressing these concerns.

Conclusion

In Chapter 2, I first introduced theories of teacher change, exploring specifically Guskey’s (1986, 2002) Model of Teacher Change which places teacher change in action before teacher change in belief. I also reported on more recent scholarship (i.e., Desimone, 2015) that may inverse that temporal order. Second, I explored how policy and practical contexts make impressions upon music teacher PD experiences and may determine whether PD is implemented and supported at the local level. Third, I reviewed relevant research on PD effectiveness and implementation in the general and music education scholarly canons, showing how notions of PD efficacy in both fields have not been empirically allied with commensurate gains in student achievement and how processes of PD implementation in music education specifically have not
been deeply examined. Fourth, and finally, I presented a rationale for the generation of a new PD implementation theory, justified my adoption of the GT approach, and summarized extant GT studies in music education, of which there were few. My pre-study examination of these literatures, while not recommended by some GT methodologists (Glaser, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2007), nevertheless contributed to the sensitivity with which I approached data analysis and the variation and comprehensiveness of the theory I ultimately constructed.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Grounded theorists seek to “move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory...for a process or action” (Creswell, 2013, p. 83). The method “allows for identification of general concepts, the development of theoretical explanations that reach beyond the known, and offers new insights into a variety of experiences and phenomena” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 6). GT scholars ground their analyses and interpretations in data, transcending thematic description to explain processes, relationships, actions, and interactions. As Charmaz (2014) observes, GT starts with “inductive data [e.g., in-depth interviews, observations, artifacts, documents], invokes iterative strategies of going back and forth between data and analysis, uses comparative methods, and keeps [researchers] interacting and involved with...data and emerging analysis” (p. 1). If applied soundly, GT methods produce cogent theories that, as Glaser and Strauss (1967) explain in their seminal GT text, (a) fit the data and have explanatory power within the substantive area, (b) retain decipherability by practitioners within the substantive area, (c) have some degree of generalizability beyond the empirical conditions of the present study, and (d) allow personal agency on the part of those who apply them to a degree that they can find them practically useful.

Later in this chapter, I elucidate the three methodological schools in GT scholarship. However, regardless of the school or school(s) applied within a given study, grounded theorists typically adhere to a common set of core epistemological orientations and “essential methods” (Ralph, Birks, & Chapman, 2015, p. 2). They all emphasize the systematic development of new theory established in empirical observation and analysis (rather than testing and verifying extant theories), and they all utilize, albeit to varying degrees, a shared arsenal of empirical tools such
as theoretical sampling (rather than probability sampling), memo-writing, constant comparison, and open coding (rather than \textit{a priori} coding). In what follows, I explore the principal divergences between schools—namely, the role of and interaction(s) between the researcher and the researched, the function of extant theory in new theory generation, and the centrality of inductive logic.

I selected GT as the method for this study because within the music education literature there remains a dearth of conceptually coherent processual explanations that link PD experiences to classroom implementation. Further, the systematic, actions-concerned nature of the GT approach—and the temporal properties of the schemes it produces—was particularly useful. PD, while often perceived as a discrete event (e.g., conference, workshop), is in its best conceptualization an active process in which music teachers partake over the course of their careers in furtherance of their professional practice (Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association, n.d.). GT’s emphasis on interpretation, actions-interactions between and among actors, and the fluidity of individual reality was instrumental to deciphering the complexities of pursuing, forfeiting, implementing, and/or sustaining instructional changes vis-à-vis large-scale conference PD experiences.

The method’s core product, substantive theory, can be defined as “a set of well-developed categories (themes, concepts) that are systematically developed in terms of their properties and dimensions and interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains something about a phenomenon” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 62). A well-developed theory transcends conceptual description and centralizes relationship and explanation (Hage, 1972). GT, a flexible and dialogic empirical approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), allows researchers to craft theory even while understanding that no collection of lived
experiences can or will reflect perfectly a tightly construed theoretical perspective. In this chapter, I describe the epistemological, philosophical, and methodological moorings of qualitative inquiry generally and GT specifically, followed by their application to the specific research problem at the center of this investigation: large-scale conference PD implementation.

Naturalistic Inquiry

Qualitative researchers strive to make sense of the social world by examining human speech, image, and interaction (Creswell, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2017). They often scrutinize issues for which well-defined explanations remain unapparent or too myriad for experimental control; they ask questions whose answers may lead them onto paths uncharted at the outset of a study; and, perhaps most importantly, they seek to interpret social phenomena as they exist in their natural settings, to foreground nuance and divergence over convergence and confirmation. Qualitative researchers concern themselves with issues that are, at once, compound and singular, provisional and settled, hidden yet obvious.

PD implementation seems to be one of those phenomena. As I explained in the two preceding chapters, it has an inherent multifacetedness that at times makes it less amenable to strict causality- and/or verification-concerned empirical approaches. Its practical and theoretical underpinnings often elude operationalization and reduction. Thus, a more naturalistic, interpretivist approach was employed in this investigation. The application of GT specifically provided a useful rubric for deriving meanings and theoretical relationships from the in-depth interview data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).
Three Schools of GT Method

Although in the opinion of some, it has attained co-equal status among classic approaches to qualitative inquiry (e.g., Creswell, 2013), GT remains a living, breathing, and contested. One of its founders still writes and teaches extensively on the method in efforts to preserve its past (Glaser, 2002; Glaser & Holton, 2007), while others engage in weighty debates on its due future (Bryant, 2003; Charmaz, 2014). In this subsection, I describe GT’s evolution since its initial codification in the 1960s. This progression, in my view, reflects how the method has yielded to pragmatist currents and, moreover, represents my application of its warrants in the current study. I begin by explicating the pioneering work of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss and classic GT. Next, I track the two sociologists’ professional separation and the method’s pragmatist/interactionist turn. Finally, I discuss the most recent reinventions of the method in two of its most free forms: Charmaz’s (2014) constructivist, and Tavory and Timmerman’s (2012, 2014) abductive statements.

Classic GT

GT was originated by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s. Their foundational GT study, *Awareness in Dying*, published in 1965, posited awareness theory, which described how critically ill patients and their loved ones, along with the doctors and nurses that care for and interact with them, communicate (or fail to communicate) on issues of impending death (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). The four awareness contexts—closed awareness, suspected awareness, mutual pretense awareness, and open awareness—were developed after three years of fieldwork in San Francisco hospitals.

With this early study, Glaser and Strauss exemplified the core tenets of the GT approach.
They began coding at or near the start of their data collection processes and continued throughout (simultaneous data collection and analysis); newly found data were continuously compared with previously found data, highlighting convergences and differences and integrating them into ongoing theorization processes (constant comparison); and the field was entered iteratively and cases sampled theoretically to aid conceptual density rather than randomly (theoretical sampling). They summarized their methods in the Appendix to *Awareness in Dying*.

“We systematically worked out the concepts (and types) of death expectations and awareness contexts, and the paradigm for the study of death expectations and awareness contexts. Thus, a concern with death expectations and awareness guided the preliminary data collection; the systematic formulation of these concepts and of the paradigm governed further data collection and the ensuing analysis; and this book [Awareness in Dying] completes the formulations on the theory of awareness of dying.” (p. 287, emphasis added)

Two years later in 1967, Glaser and Strauss published *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, the initial methodological unpacking of their approach, which was extended primarily in response to what they perceived as a slant toward theory verification in sociological research.

What they proposed was intended as a rigorous and systematic means of fashioning new theories that were “suited to [their] supposed uses” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 3), instead of merely testing existing notions devoid of practical context. Notwithstanding those pronounced motivations, however, Glaser and Strauss’s original method—now known as classic GT—is still thought to reside comfortably within positivistic spheres (Bryant, 2003; Charmaz, 2014; Ramalho, Adams, Huggard, & Hoare, 2015). That is, it remains encoded with terms that centralize objectivity (Ralph, Birks, & Chapman, 2015) and deemphasize the philosophical and epistemological perspectives of the researcher(s) and the social context of the research (Bryant, 2009). Classic GT was defined by Glaser and Holton (2007) as

…simply a set of integrated conceptual hypotheses systematically generated to produce an inductive theory about a substantive area. Classic GT is a highly structured but
eminently flexible methodology. Its data collection and analysis procedures are explicit and the pacing of these procedures is, at once, simultaneous, sequential, subsequent, scheduled and serendipitous, forming an integrated methodological “whole” that enables the emergence of conceptual theory as distinct from the thematic analysis characteristic of [qualitative data analysis] research. (pp. 48-49)

The procedures of classic GT in their ideal employment were put forward to effect inductive discovery of theory. Toward that end, practitioners of classic GT often subordinate or discount their interpretive roles in research process (e.g., Haning, 2016). Latent meanings embedded within data are discovered without frontal consideration of the researcher (Glaser, 1998), rather than being co-constructed by the researcher in close conversation with the researched (Charmaz, 2014). The notion of emergence and its central position in classic GT epistemology constitutes the paramount distinction between classic GT and its successors (i.e., Straussian GT, constructivist GT). Indeed, the fundamental propriety of a theory derived via classic GT methods is often directly associated with the extent to which its central holdings reflect the largely objective reality of the participants—rather than the interpretations or subjectivity of the researcher (Ramalho, Adams, Huggard, & Hoare, 2015). To do otherwise would necessarily impose “preconceived conjecture, preconceptions, forced concepts and organization, logical connections and before-the-fact professional interest” (Glaser & Holton, 2007, p. 50) on the GT, thus tainting it. To Glaser, classic GT scholars developed theoretical sensitivity not by being broadly and deeply ensconced in a research area prior to data collection and analysis—as is customary in many empirical research endeavors—but by “enter[ing] the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible - especially logically deduced, a prior[sic] hypotheses” (Glaser & Holton, 2007, p. 57). Only by adopting that stance were users of classic GT well positioned toward the generation of useful and valid new theory.
Determinations as to the proper role of induction in GT would lay the groundwork for the future divergences and developments discussed next.

Pragmatist and Symbolic Interactionist (Straussian) GT

While many of its procedural rudiments remain largely unchanged (e.g., theoretical sampling, constant comparison, simultaneous data collection and analysis), GT underwent evolution after Glaser and Strauss’s initial introduction (Ralph, Birks, & Chapman, 2015). When Glaser and Strauss ceased professional collaborations in the 1970s, Glaser became in many ways a guardian of classic GT (Glaser & Holton, 2007). He did not look charitably upon those who sought to reinterpret the approach, including his erstwhile colleague, Anselm Strauss, noting that any departure from those conventional perspectives and procedures were tantamount to a “remodeling of GT [grounded theory] methodology to the status of a mixed methods QDA [qualitative data analysis] methodology” (Glaser & Holton, 2007, p. 50). To him, such reinterpretation was a demotion of GT’s conceptual rigor to the anodyne regurgitation of descriptive prose and the needless pursuit of “worrisome accuracy” (Glaser & Holton, 2007, p. 47).

Notwithstanding Glaser’s admonishments, and perhaps to his chagrin, the method has been reimagined in recent years, particularly with regard to how researchers in their personal capacities interact with and reflect on their data, and the ways in which inductive absolutism—especially issues regarding researchers’ engagement with existing theory and literature—made GT practically nonviable in some contexts (e.g., dissertation studies and projects relying on grant funding, which require proposals with literature reviews). Glaser’s fealty to classic GT and his (in)famous reluctance to reimagine it in substantive ways—even as he has written prolifically on
it—has provided for researchers, including myself, a reference point from which to gauge the
degree and suitability of interpretational departures (Ralph, Birks, & Chapman, 2015). That is,
with a clear understanding of foundational classic GT principles, I and others have been enabled
to befit the method to specific research projects and therefore, in an important way, return it to its
deeply practical and pragmatic roots (Bryant, 2009).

Charting the method’s pragmatist evolution is instructive, both in terms of making sense
of its areas of relative stasis (e.g., Glaser, 1998; Glaser & Holton, 2007) and its moments of
departure and development (e.g., Bryant, 2003, 2007; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015;
Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In tracking these developments, Ralph, Birks, and Chapman (2015)
described the notion of methodological dynamism, wherein GT had been evolved to account for
new and emerging philosophical and epistemological perspectives. Whereas classic GT scholars
were reluctant to fully account for social context and researcher reflexivity, Straussian GT
researchers overtly engaged the method’s pragmatist and symbolic interactionist
underpinnings—once thought merely incidental (Bryant, 2003)—throughout the empirical
process (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Indeed, following GT’s refinement as a
qualitative inquiry method could itself be considered a metacognitive exercise in pragmatist
interactionism. The method was adapted to new empirical realities, such that it emerged, to
many, a more practically advantageous approach.

Bryant (2009) was explicit in his elucidation of Straussian GT as pointedly pragmatist, if
not covertly so. Throughout his career, Bryant observed, Strauss was loath to directly invoke his
pragmatist leanings in his writings on GT, an evasion that Bryant considered a deficit of the
grounded theory method that often rendered it vulnerable to criticism (see Charmaz, 2014).
Nevertheless, the method, with its widespread usage in practice-oriented fields such as nursing
(e.g., Busby & Witucki-Brown, 2011), has in many respects always been essentially pragmatist. Indeed, sensing in the 1980s a need for a mechanistic manual elucidating the method for beginning researchers and/or those not steeped in qualitative methodology, Strauss and Corbin (1990) released their seminal text, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. In it they highlighted specific methodological procedures, provided ample illustrations, and elaborated an analytic paradigm (for additional information, see subsection on empirical design). This mechanistic turn drew criticisms from other grounded theorists, including Glaser, but nevertheless provided an entry point for a new generation of researchers looking to craft theory. It now remains the most popular and arguably most straightforward manual for GT method in wide use today.

**Constructivist GT**

Constructivist GT emerged in the early 2000s primarily as a response to what were considered the excessively objectivist and positivist underpinnings of the classic method as taught by Glaser (Breckenridge, Jones, Elliott, & Nicol, 2012; Bryant, 2003; Higginbottom & Lauridsen, 2014). Kathy Charmaz (2014), the constructivist revision’s chief progenitor, made several key departures from her forbears in her work, *Constructing Grounded Theory*. To Charmaz, meanings are not latent until made manifest; they do not lie beneath the surface waiting to be discovered by a discerning researcher (Breckinridge et al., 2012). Meanings are instead actively and equally constructed by both the researcher and the researched. This epistemological stance therefore demands certain acts from the grounded theorist, and foremost among them: an explicit acknowledgement of his or her positionality within the research project. As Charmaz (2014) explains,
In typical grounded theory practice, you follow the leads in your data, as you see them - and constructivist grounded theory takes you one step further. With it, you try to make everyone’s vantage points and their implications explicit - yours as well as those of your various participants [emphasis added]. Not only does a constructivist approach help you to remain clear about the antecedents of your constructed theory, this approach helps other researchers and policy-makers to establish the boundaries of the usefulness of your grounded theory, and possibly, to ascertain how and where to modify it. (p. 339)

This perspective counters the classic grounded theorist’s contention that researcher experiences and perspectives be subordinated to allow room for the theory to “emerge” (e.g., Glaser, 1998). In constructivist GT, insights surface iteratively through interactions between empirical observation and theory, conjectures and facts, hunches and rational dispositions. And the resulting theoretical account is typically more diffuse—presented narratively rather than diagrammatically and with liberal use of participant voice.

Issues Unresolved: Theoretical Innovation and “Inductive Dilemmas”

At the center of the four-decades-long discourse on GT has been the notion of induction. Do meanings emerge from data (e.g., Glaser & Strauss, 1965, 1967), or are they constructed by researchers and participants (e.g., Charmaz, 2014)? From its origination in the early work of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1965, 1967), GT has been a primary vehicle for inductive qualitative inquiry—its precepts founded on pre-theoretical bias mitigation and the generation of new theoretical accounts, grounded in empirical data and responsive to complex social conditions. As an answer to deductive, “if-then” approaches to theory construction that were (and perhaps still are) pervasive in the natural and biological sciences (Strauss & Corbin, 1994), GT—a scheme of “plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts” [emphasis in original]” (Strauss & Corbin, 1978)—emerged from the experiences and perspectives of the persons interfacing with a phenomenon. It was positioned as a vehicle toward
more refined process explanations of intricate social phenomena. In fact, Glaser and Strauss initially conceived their approach in response to what they perceived as disconnection between empiricists and theorists. That is, theory generation was largely the province of sociological philosophers, and empirical researchers only verified or tested existing theories instead of generating them anew.

Nevertheless, as I have explained in the preceding passages, the inductive warrants of GT method have not been accepted without criticism or close inspection. Sociologists Stefan Timmermans and Iddo Tavory (2012) in a discussion of what they called GT’s “inductive dilemma” (p. 169) argued that suspending past knowledge in pursuit of new theory was untenable from the very introduction of the method. They framed it thusly in a subsequent elaboration of their method, *abductive analysis*:

> Researchers were admonished [by classic GT methodologists] to generate new theory without being beholden to preexisting theories, but they still required theoretical sensitivity based on a broad familiarity with existing theories to generate new theories. (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 14)

They contended, furthermore, that the failure to fully grapple with that shortcoming—and propose a defensible alternative—had led to few truly inductive theories in the past 50 years, a sentiment echoed by other GT scholars (e.g., Bryant, 2003). Their answer, *abductive analysis*, was intended as a pragmatic, middle ground. With abduction—rather than pure induction—scholars deliberately activate existing theoretical frames to sensitize themselves to surprising empirical findings, while contemporaneously employing heuristic devices that help to “formalize the process of emergence” (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014, p. 15). In this study, I assumed this middle ground. As I explained in Chapter 2, PD scholarship, particularly in general education, has a decades-long history that, when considered collectively, provides a helpful summary of the principles and practices that guide the field. It is my contention that engaging those literatures—a
process begun long before the current study was initiated—aptly positioned me for the crafting of a new and emergent PD theory. I concur with Tavory and Timmermans (2014): Pure induction and wholesale researcher bias abatement is impractical in the GT context. *Groundedness* (and the inductive spirit) can be properly preserved, however, with an accounting of the researchers’ positionality, which I clarify in Chapter 1, and with the usage of rigorously systematic empirical devices (i.e., Corbin & Strauss, 2015), processes I detail in the subsection that follows.

**Empirical Design**

In this study, I subscribed to Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) and Corbin and Strauss’s (2015) approaches to theory generation. The procedures and processes they advocate comprised a useful rubric for data collection, analysis, and reduction—and ultimately, theory generation. In familiarizing myself with the theoretical and empirical PD literature prior to the conduct of this study, I departed from strictly classic statements of GT. Indeed, PD scholarship in general education, and to a lesser degree in music education, is well established, and a wholesale cordonning off of that information would have been infeasible, if not imprudent. As Tavory and Timmermans (2014) note, “in-depth knowledge of multiple theories is necessary both to find out what is missing or anomalous in an area of study and to stimulate insights about innovative or original theoretical contributions” (p. 41). Their observations echo those of Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Corbin and Strauss (2015), who advocated the use of the technical and nontechnical literature and the frontal engagement of past impressions, experiences, and expertise for the purpose of engendering theoretical sensitivity. Corbin and Strauss also put forward several analytic strategies (e.g., microanalysis, constant comparison) that, to them and others,
sufficiently protect GT researchers from forcing *a priori* conceptualizations on new data. In what follows, I explicate the empirical procedures I used.

Context

The context of this investigation was two national music conferences and one state music conference—namely the National Association for Music Education In-Service Music Education Conference (NAfME), the Midwest Clinic (Midwest), and the Texas Music Educators Association’s annual Clinic/Convention (TMEA), respectively. All three conferences were practitioner-oriented PD events that emphasized, to varying degrees, the integration of learnings into classroom settings. The professional conference differs from longer-range PD events (e.g., professional learning communities) in that they have fixed beginnings and endings and typically last no longer than three working days. While intensive, weeks-long PD events (e.g., summer intensives, graduate education) are undoubtedly useful to practicing teachers, this study’s primary aim was the theoretical explication of implementation processes following three large-scale conference events, a PD model that is popular among practicing teachers.

NAfME, attended by music teachers and administrators from across the country, was held in Grapevine, Texas from November 12-15, 2017. Midwest, a meeting attended mostly by a national audience of instrumental music educators and conductors, was held December 20-23, 2017 in Chicago, Illinois and, if participation in 2017 aligns with past attendance trends, hosted more than 17,000 participants, according to the organization’s website (The Midwest Clinic, n.d.). TMEA was held from February 14-17, 2018 in San Antonio, Texas, and, if years of precedent prevail, involved almost 30,000 participants, including 10,000 active Texas music educators and almost 300 out-of-state attendees (Texas Music Educators Association, n.d.). Non-
teacher TMEA participants include school administrators, exhibitors, attendees’ family members, and retired teachers and administrators. Each of the three conferences had a national scope (i.e., NAfME, Midwest) or a de facto national scope (i.e., TMEA), appealing to teachers from all 50 states. NAfME and TMEA were designed to appeal to all disciplines within music, while Midwest focused on band and orchestra teachers, conductors, and performers. For its part, TMEA holds the distinction as the largest music education conference in the U.S. I selected these conferences because of their reputations within the field, their emphases, albeit to varying degrees, on developing practicing elementary, middle, and high school teachers, and the feasibility of examining the experiences of their participants within the time horizon associated with this study.

Participants

Participants included active classroom teachers with assignments in music or music-related subject areas who attended one of the three events. I employed purposive maximum variation sampling to ensure that the theory I posited would be responsive to differing conditions within this study’s substantive area (i.e., music teacher PD implementation after large-scale conferences). I engaged 32 individuals for participation, a sample size consistent with what qualitative methodologists have suggested for GT studies (Creswell, 2013). The final sample included teachers from a diversity of locational (e.g., suburban, rural, urban, exurban) and socioeconomic contexts (e.g., low, middle, and upper income), specializing in all four of the main music disciplines (i.e., choir, band, orchestra, general music), and who expected to derive different benefits from attending their respective conference event (see Table 1 for a summary of participant characteristics).
Table 1

*Participants’ Personal and Professional Characteristics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
<th>Teaching level/assignment</th>
<th>School urbanicity</th>
<th>School sector</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Experience (years)</th>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
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Note. National Association for Music Education National In-Service Conference (NAfME), Midwest Clinic (Midwest), Texas Music Educators Association Clinic/Convention (TMEA); elementary school (EL), middle school (MS), high school (HS)
I did not prescribe a uniform course of study for participants attending the same conference. Instead, participants self-determined among the full spectrum of conference offerings a program that they thought would be most personally and professionally appealing and that would be reflective of the compendium of sessions, workshops, and concerts normally constituting their conference experience. I adopted these procedures to ensure the final theory would reflect the fact that many teachers who attend professional conferences are unlikely to have their schedules predetermined for them. Furthermore, my incursion toward that end would be impractical and could introduce into the analysis an artificial variable. To account for teachers’ decision-making processes in this regard, which I considered central to understanding PD implementation more generally, I queried participants on the rationales supporting their selection of the specific events in their personal conference schedules—responses incorporated into the final theoretical account.

Data Gathering and Interpretation

One of the defining characteristics of GT procedure—irrespective of epistemological stance or interpretation—is the contention that data analysis and data collection occur simultaneously and iteratively (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), which sets it apart from other empirical approaches. Thus, while the accounts of data collection and data analysis contained within this document are necessarily presented linearly, it is nevertheless important to emphasize the simultaneity of their gathering and interpretation. The conduct of one informed the conduct of the other (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). GT researchers continually develop and verify hypotheses of central processes, make use of constant comparison (i.e., concepts and happenings within the data are cross-compared to document similarity and variation, and to mitigate bias), and samples from the field are drawn theoretically.
until conceptual categories become saturated—that is, the point at which the “theory is elaborated in all of its complexity” (Creswell, 2013, p. 86). Notwithstanding the structure implied by the passages that follow, I collected and interpreted data circularly, iteratively, and comparatively in accordance with the foundations of GT methodology and, ultimately, toward the construction of a theory that is both conceptually rich and practicably meaningful.

Participant Recruitment

I initially generated a list of potential participants via protocols aligned with each conference and its sponsoring organization. To identify attendees to the three conferences, a NAfME research services staff member sent a recruitment e-mail to 5,000 NAfME members on my behalf. As NAfME is an organization with members working at all levels of the discipline (e.g., elementary and secondary public schools, higher education, not-for-profit advocacy entities), I requested the recruitment message be forwarded only to (a) active music educators who (b) currently teach classroom-based music in elementary and secondary public schools. Within the body of that message (see Appendix A for full text), I directed potential participants to an online form to register their interest and provide their contact information. The NAfME recruitment message, disseminated in early November 2017, also generated interest from TMEA and Midwest attendees who held joint affiliations (e.g., NAfME members attending Midwest).

To recruit for TMEA specifically, I sent a recruitment e-mail (see Appendix B for full text) inviting recent University of North Texas music education graduates who were attending TMEA to participate in the study. This communication was facilitated by a list of recent University of North Texas music education graduates made available to me by the College of Music’s Division of Music Education. In a similar fashion to the NAfME requests, I invited
participation of only those teachers who work in classroom-based, public and private school contexts. The TMEA recruitment message was sent in early February 2018. I also invited participants via various music education-related social media forums (e.g., Facebook).

To buttress my online recruitment efforts, I, along with three colleagues who were otherwise unconnected to this study, attended NAfME, Midwest, and TMEA to identify participants in person. After each round of recruitment (i.e., November, December, and February), I reviewed the respondent list and used the criteria on maximum variation described previously to determine the participants that I selected for interviews. I aimed for 10 participants per conference, with quasi-equal disciplinary representation (e.g., band, choir, orchestra, and general music educators working at the elementary, middle, and high school levels).

Interviews

I collected data in a series of two participant interview phases, staggered according to which conference participants attended and when each conference was held. For instance, interviews of NAfME attendees took place in late November/early December 2017 and early January 2018, respectively. All interviews were semi-structured, an interview protocol that allowed me to “maintain some consistency over the concepts that are covered in each interview” (Corbin & Strauss, p. 39) while simultaneously permitting conversational trajectories to be mostly participant-determined. The semi-structured framework also enabled me to build more conceptually dense theorization. (The interview protocols that I used are contained in Appendix C.)

The first phase entailed semi-structured interviews with participants immediately following their respective conference event. I asked them to communicate their expectations of
the conference’s classroom-level impact and to articulate a set of post-conference instructional changes that they thought might emerge from the conference experience. Which sessions did they consider most useful? Least useful? Which ideas, pedagogies, techniques, et cetera, do they intend to integrate into their future teaching? What factors impact these considerations? To understand the contexts in which participants worked, I inquired about their current teaching assignment(s) in terms of students and subject(s) they taught. I also asked participants to describe the extent to which they were financially and temporally supported in their PD endeavors. Did their districts and/or schools provide time off? Did their districts and/or schools fully or partially contribute to their travel to the conference? Were there administrative and bureaucratic hurdles they overcame to secure the provision necessary for attendance? Was their participation incentivized in any way? As I reviewed in Chapter 2, PD policy can have substantial impacts on the nature and extent of teachers’ PD engagements, and thus I sought to fully account for it in the generated theory. Finally, within this first interview phase, I also asked participants to personally define PD. I was interested in learning of their preconceptions concerning PD and whether and/or to what degree those assumptions and experiences influenced their inclinations toward PD implementation.

During the second phase of data collection, which commenced three to five weeks after the initial phase, 28 of 32 participants were interviewed again. Four participants could not be reached for a second interview. Referencing the implementation plan articulated in the first interview phase, I asked participants to detail whether, to what degree, and how they integrated the new learnings into their classroom instruction. Central to this phase was the discovery of the structures, conditions, and actions-interactions that facilitated or inhibited the integration of specific PD learnings. Has implementation been a “success”? Are students responding as
anticipated or predicted? Why or why not? What has supported implementation? What has hindered implementation? How have contextual conditions (e.g., scheduling, resources, time, administrative support) influenced the implementation process? Do participants intend to retain the new conference-derived pedagogy, perspective, or technique? Why or why not? As I built my theoretical account, I sought to understand in the second interview phase the thought processes underlying participants’ PD implementation decisions. Interviews for both phases were between 20 and 35 minutes in duration, with an average length of 25 minutes, and were conducted via phone.

Theoretical Sampling

Corbin and Strauss (2015) define theoretical sampling as

…a method of data collection based on concepts derived from data. The purpose of theoretical sampling is to collect data from places, people, and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts. (p. 134)

Theoretical sampling is central to GT. Rather than holding representativeness as the objective, grounded theorists allow in-progress theorization processes to dictate sampling decisions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I employed theoretical sampling within this study in two primary ways.

The first layer of theoretical sampling occurred at the conference level, as I sought to build variation and density. TMEA, while the largest of its type, nevertheless remains a conference attended by mostly within-state teachers. Midwest, with its focus on instrumental music, conducting, and pedagogy, could be considered specialized at the sub-discipline level (i.e., band, orchestra), so its participants could provide a unique set of perspectives in that regard. NAfME, comparatively smaller than TMEA and Midwest, provided the perspectives of a national cross-disciplinary music teacher audience. I selected conferences that would collectively
reflect with reasonable validity a mainstream large-scale conference experience for K-12 music teachers.

The second component of theoretical sampling occurred at the individual level, as I sought to understand the large-scale conference experiences of a diverse cross-section of teachers working within the field. After the initial interviews for NAFME were conducted, I commenced data analysis and preliminary concepts began to emerge. With an aim toward conceptual density and variation and with consideration of those emergent concepts, I then determined which Midwest and TMEA participants would be queried next. I used demographic, locational, and personal characteristics of each participant as initial bases for further query, highlighting specifically the need to engage more inexperienced teachers and teachers whose primary assignments were in the choral and/or elementary music classroom.

Analysis

As soon as the initial interviews were conducted and transcriptions made, I began data analysis. Corbin and Strauss (2015) outlined specific procedures for analyzing and interpreting data in the GT vein—a three-pronged analytic process with open, axial, and selective coding. In what follows, I explain each in turn.

Open Coding

The open coding process began with line-by-line coding, whereby the data were “broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions [were] asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 62). More specifically, particularly at the beginning stages of unpacking the data, I used an
analytic tool Corbin and Strauss (2015) termed microanalysis. I examined certain pieces of data (e.g., a one-phrase or one-line participant response to a specific question) and the conceptual labels (i.e., codes) given those data very closely, seeking to fully derive their meaning(s), properties, and dimensions. I then organized the basic codes yielded from these procedures into interim categories. Categories are a degree of abstraction above codes insofar as they subsume several related codes. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) observed, “Categories have conceptual power because they are able to pull together around them other groups of concepts or subcategories” (p. 65).

After collapsing codes/conceptual labels whose relationships were apparent into categories, I further developed the categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. Properties refer to the “characteristics or attributes of a category,” and dimensions indicate “locations of a property along a continuum” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 69). For example, a category termed “color” could have properties such as “intensity” and “hue,” and in turn, each property could be dimensionalized (e.g., darker or lighter hue, high or low color intensity) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Resultant categories derived from this stage of analysis were provisional and did not, on their own, wield the explanatory heft to fully define the substantive theory I sought to generate. Thus, I scrutinized and developed categories further in the axial coding process (see open codebook in Appendix D.)

After micro-analyzing the initial interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), I yielded approximately 300 conceptual labels (or codes) that represented the meanings I found within the data. With a second round of analysis, I collapsed and combined those codes, looking particularly for areas of redundancy and prioritizing parsimony. This constant comparative process yielded approximately 60 open codes, which constituted the first part of my analysis.
Those 60 codes were then taken to another set of interviews to determine, again through constant comparison, if the meanings found in subsequently collected data could plausibly be subsumed under the existing codes. After the intercoder agreement process (Hesse-Biber, 2016), which I describe in more detail below, I refined a final list of 51 open codes, six categories, and nine subcategories (see Appendix E for a list of categories, properties, dimensions, and open codes).

**Axial Coding**

The next analytic phase, axial coding, concerned the conceptual development of each category and a preliminary analysis of its relationship to other categories (final theoretical integration occurred later in the analytic process, namely in selective coding). Axial coding differs from open coding because the focus shifts from dissecting raw data (i.e., participant interview responses collapsed into open codes and then categories) to emerging more abstract concepts with an aim toward conceptual saturation. Conceptual saturation is defined by Corbin and Strauss (2015) as “the process of acquiring sufficient data to develop each category or theme fully in terms of its properties and dimensions and to account for variation” (p. 239). To facilitate the axial coding process, I used Corbin and Strauss’s paradigm tool as a rubric, which directed my analytic focus toward the identification and development of one of three main classifications for each category: conditions, actions-interactions, and consequences/outcomes.

Conditions pertain to issues of why, when, and how come. They are the “reasons that [participants] give for why things happen and the explanations that they give for why they respond in the manner that they [do] through action-interaction” (p. 158). In the context of this study, conditions related primarily to why teachers engaged PD, how they formed their views on and definition(s) of PD, and the PD policy context in which they operated and its effects on their
engagement with PD. In the final theoretical account, explained in greater detail in Chapter 4, I distinguish between personal and policy considerations. Actions-interactions, or “the actual responses [participants] make to the event or problematic situations that occur in their lives” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 158), pertain to participants’ mental determinations, practical actions, and rationales regarding their anticipated and actual level of PD implementation.

Consequences and/or outcomes are the results of these actions-interactions. What do participants anticipate happening because of full/partial/zero PD implementation? What actually happens? How might curricula, instruction, and student learning outcomes be different/the same?

Next, I considered the intersection of conditions, actions-interactions, and consequences. As Corbin and Strauss (2015) wrote:

Beyond what the individual brings to the problematic situation or event in terms of abilities, motive, and so on, there are many conditions originating outside the individual that can influence the form and scope of action-interaction. The outside or macro conditions facilitate or constrain action-interaction by providing or limiting resources persons have to work with; setting policy, rules, and regulations; establishing cultural expectations; and so on. (pp. 160-161).

During each interview, I sought to understand the personal and professional contexts and conditions that influenced teachers’ PD experiences. I aimed to uncover, as Corbin and Strauss (2015) explained in their definition of context, the “explanations or reasons that persons give for what they say, think, feel, and do (action-interaction) in response to problematic situations or events that occur in their lives” (p. 155). When theorizing PD implementation processes, these explanations or reasons are often grounded in personal and policy considerations for teachers. Thus, I pursued lines of inquiry during interviews that helped me to understand not only what participants did as they grappled with change in the PD context, but also how they may have been impacted by various personal, professional, cultural, political, and economic milieus and motivations. As I discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, teacher PD is almost universally manifest in
school policy (e.g., funding and release time for PD, credit toward licensure, promotion, and tenure). In that vein, I wanted to understand how institutional context(s) might condition participants’ engagement with the large-scale conference. Regarding participants’ individually held views, I wanted to understand their histories, motivations, and expectations both with respect to PD in general and the large-scale conference they attended in particular.

Throughout the axial coding process while categories were being independently developed, I constantly compared them with each other and with incoming data. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) observed, “Though open and axial coding are distinct analytic procedures, when the researcher is actually engaged in analysis he or she alternates between the two modes” (p. 98). Emerging from these processes were fully developed and conceptually saturated categories.

**Selective Coding**

Finally, through selective coding, I examined each category in terms of its properties and dimensions and, similar to the axial coding process, looked for conceptual relationships among and between categories. During this iterative and dynamic process, I deemed many categories sufficiently similar and combined them to form a single category and/or to place them within a hierarchy (i.e., category and subcategory). I then undertook theoretical integration, a process that emerged the core category—defined by Corbin and Strauss (2015) as the “main theme of the research” that is “abstract and broad enough to be representative of all participants in the study” (p. 188). I applied their five criteria for determining the suitability of a potential core category:

1. It must be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used as the overarching explanatory concept tying all the other categories together.

2. It must appear frequently in that data. This means that within all, or almost all, cases there are indicators that point to [the core category].

3. It must be logical and consistent with the data. There should be no forcing.
4. It should be sufficiently abstract so that it can be used to do further research leading to the development of general [or formal] theory.

5. It should grow in depth and explanatory power as each of the other categories is related to it through statements of relationships. (p. 189)

Once the core category became apparent, I related remaining categories to it by conceiving a series of propositional statements or a “story that describes the interrelationship of categories in the model” (Creswell, 2013, p. 87). With these statements of hypothesis and prediction, I attempt to explain the actions and processes that characterize the model. In the context of the current study, I used the fully integrated model to address participants’ experiences with PD and PD implementation, and endeavored to more fully understand how music teachers engaged with large-scale conference-derived PD.

The Paradigm

To imbue the analysis with context—namely the conditions under which participants implemented their PD strategies—I used Corbin and Strauss’s (2015) paradigm tool, which they described as a device that “consists of a perspective or a set of questions that can be applied to data to help analysts sort out concepts and establish linkages” (p. 153). In the final theoretical account (see Chapter 4), I do not explicitly classify each category in accordance with the paradigm. As Corbin and Strauss (2015) emphasized, the paradigm aids researchers in building structure and density into their analysis, but it can and should be adapted to accommodate the warrants of a particular research endeavor. They elaborate:

…[T]he paradigm is only a tool and not a set of directives. The logic behind the paradigm is that analysts can use it to sort out and arrange concepts by asking questions and thinking in terms of possible linkages. A common mistake among beginning grounded theorists is that they fixate on the specifics of the paradigm and code only for these features. Being overly concerned on identifying conditions or actions-interactions or consequences rigidifies the analytic process. (Corbin & Strauss, p. 157-158)
Thus, I employed the paradigm primarily as a device to inform my understanding of the logic and temporal ordering of PD implementation process (e.g., What actions did participants take during implementation? What conditions laid the groundwork for those actions? What were the consequences/outcomes of those decisions?).

Summary

I began analysis with open coding of participant interview transcripts. First, I related codes and gave them higher-level conceptual labels (i.e., categories). Second, during axial coding, I more fully developed categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, employing the paradigm (i.e., conditions, actions-interactions, and consequences/outcomes) as a logic frame (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Third, during selective coding, I posited the fully integrated theoretical model. I identified the core category, which holds abstract explanatory power and to which all remaining categories are interrelated, and I drafted theoretical propositions of relationship and prediction. I employed constant comparative analysis throughout all analytic phases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), comparing codes with other codes and categories with other categories. For all my analyses, I used the qualitative data management software, Dedoose (version 8.0.36).

Memos

I composed theoretical memos throughout the coding and analysis procedure for, as Corbin and Strauss (1990) contended, memo-writing helps grounded theorists “keep track of all the categories, properties, hypotheses, and generative questions that evolved from the analytical process” (p. 10). Memos are a critical means of documenting the internal dialogue that occurs between the researcher and his/herself throughout data collection and analysis. Indeed, memos
are where meanings are made manifest, conceptual relations identified, and theories formed. The memo-writing process not only aids comprehensive theoretical elaboration; it provides a “firm base for reporting on the research and its implications” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 10), helping to ensure researcher(s) build theoretical sensitivity and produce rigorous theory. I wrote memos after each analytic episode, relating codes and categories, documenting theoretical insights as they occurred, and attempting to abstract conceptual categories and relationships from the data. Furthermore, I wrote summary memos intermittently as a way to begin formal integration (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Five example memos are included in Appendix F.

Trustworthiness

To ensure accuracy, I made efforts to remain as “grounded” in the data as possible. I transcribed interviews verbatim and in their entirety. I also fully coded all interview transcripts. Using the preliminary code list I refined, selected transcript excerpts were analyzed by an external coder, whose codes were compared with mine to establish inter-coder agreement (Creswell, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2016). After independently coding selected excerpts, we met to discuss similarities and differences, and to agree on changes to the final code list. We did not calculate a reliability estimate or a percentage. Instead, we sought unity through description, interpretation, and conversation. As an additional control, I centralized participants’ voices, as appropriate, by using interview excerpts, dimensionalized excerpts, and in vivo codes in the presentation of the final theoretical model.

In addition to the above-mentioned, I employed three specific validation techniques recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2015). First, after the theory was fully integrated, I took its statements of prediction and hypothesis back to the raw data (i.e., discrete incidents apparent in
interviews) to determine if they fit after abstraction had been lowered. If they do, the “theoretical scheme should be able to explain most of the cases” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 199). Second, after the preliminary theoretical model had been developed, I sent the model diagram, a model summary, and the following two questions to two participants and one nonparticipant: Does the model capture your implementation process well? What does it leave out or not account for? While theories are inherently reductionist and generalist, if they indeed fit the data, “participants should be able to recognize themselves in the larger sense of each category even if the details are different” (p. 199). Participant responses were considered during subsequent model revisions.

Third, and finally, I closely examined the model to make sure it sufficiently accounted for variation, such that “within patterns and categories there [remains] variability with different people…falling at different dimensional points along some properties” (p. 199). I ensured that processual linearity and/or characteristic similarity were not artificially imposed (i.e., outlying and extreme cases are mostly explained by the model).

Product of this Study

In the next chapter, I present the final theoretical model as a visual scheme with temporal and conceptual dimensions. I also advance theoretical propositions of prediction and relationship that tie the theory to the substantive field (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Conclusion

The aim of this GT investigation—with the procedures explicated in this chapter—was to theorize PD implementation processes in music education, with a focus on exploring what stimulated and impeded progress toward comprehensive and long-range classroom integration
among a maximally variant sample of music teachers attending three large-scale music conferences. Researchers have firmly established the educational imperatives of the continuing education of teachers (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2009), but, in music education, PD research remains lacking, particularly as it pertains to understanding the aftermath of such experiences. Because of the dearth of useful explanations of the PD implementation process, I employed GT—a set of systematic tools aimed at original theory-craft—as a means toward addressing these gaps and increasing understanding. Indeed, generating an empirically founded theoretical explanation for these processes could enable PD organizers to design experiences toward maximum classroom impact and, furthermore, might assist PD policymakers, school leaders and, indeed, teachers themselves to more fully grasp the structures, antecedents, and consequences of truly effective PD.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The theory that emerges from the researcher’s collection of and analysis of qualitative data is in one sense equivalent to what he knows systematically about his own data...They are his perceptions, his personal experiences, and his own hard-won analyses.

Glaser & Strauss

Coding is not a precise science; it is primarily an interpretive act. (Saldana, 2016, p. 5)

[T]he potential strength of grounded theory lies in its analytic power to theorize [emphasis in original] how meanings, actions, and social structures are constructed…Any rendering of meaning is an interpretive one. We cannot know what goes on in people’s heads, but we can offer our interpretations of what they say and do. (Charmaz, 2014, p. 285).

Understanding the social world, even through acts of empiricism, is a fundamentally interpretive endeavor. At the core of GT, throughout its many evolved states (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), lies meaning-seeking, sense-making, and—indeed—interpretation. The findings in this chapter, which may seem objective, and which are stated, by necessity, linearly and progressively, represent only my considered interpretations. However, analysis and interpretation never end, even with the positing of cogent theory. What follows, while based on 60 in-depth interviews with 32 music teachers, is my reproduction of the implementation timeline and my interpretation of the data as I perceived them.

The purpose of this study was to generate a theoretical account of the processes of music teacher PD implementation within the context of three large-scale music conferences. To assist me in analysis and to ensure rigor I employed a series of systematic methodological tools—namely the Straussian variant of GT method (outlined in Chapter 3). The result of that work, the Cycle of Music Teacher Large-Scale Conference Professional Development Implementation (C-
MTPDI), is explicated within this chapter (see Figure 1). I begin with a brief meditation on the (contested) presumption of change in PD contexts. Then, as data gathering, analysis, and theory-craft are all fundamentally intertwined in the GT context, I review the study’s empirical procedures. Finally, I outline each of the C-MTPDI’s conceptual and processual categories in terms of properties and dimensions (see Appendix E for a full list of categories with properties and dimensions).

PD as a Vehicle for Change

As a preface to explicating the theory at its center, I must acknowledge a crucial, if contested, notion that underlies this investigation: change adoption as a key motivator for teachers engaging in PD endeavors. The central precept of much teacher PD thought is the supposition that teachers’ knowledge and skills are incomplete and that ongoing proactive measures (e.g., PD) are prerequisite to sustaining effective practice. Much, if not all, PD scholarship is lensed through this type of change frame (see Chapter 2). And moreover, notions of teacher deficit, and therefore the presumption of needed change, seem to pervade discourses on important PD-adjacent policy issues such as teacher evaluation (Robinson, 2015) and student achievement (Richerme, 2016). As participant Leona related when asked her personal definition of PD:

[I]t is really [about] isolating weaknesses and trying to improve areas of weakness and then also strengthening those things that we are already doing well.

These sentiments were typical among participants. Indeed, change adoption, or the implementation of improvements to their practice, was the preferred outcome of the large-scale conference PD experience—notwithstanding the problematic nature of teacher deficit narratives in other contexts. Thus, if this was the aim of the PD experience, as voiced by participants in this
study, what conditions form its predicate, and what factors might prevent its realization? By generating a GT (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), I sought to address these questions.

Summary of Empirical Procedures

Thirty-two active music teachers participated in 60 in-depth semi-structured interviews, conducted in three waves, one for each respective conference (i.e., NAfME, Midwest, TMEA). For each wave, I initially interviewed participants immediately following the conference, querying them on their personal, educational, and professional background, as well as their views on PD in general and their plans for PD implementation following the large-scale conference they attended (see Chapter 3 for an extended discussion of the empirical approach). My analytic process, tracking closely with Corbin and Strauss (2015), began with line-by-line and, occasionally, word-by-word coding. This initial exploration of the data, open coding, was used as a “springboard for analysis” (Corbin & Strauss, p. 221), helping me to identify initial concepts and meanings in the data. What were participants telling me about their PD experiences? How did the experiences of one participant compare/contrast with the experiences of another participant? What conceptual labels, in my estimation, best captured and described these experiences? Using constant comparative analysis, I collapsed like codes into preliminary categories, which were subsequently developed in terms of properties and dimensions. In sum, during open coding, my chief aim was one of sense-making (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

In order to understand the processual, temporal, and contextual dimensions of PD implementation—that is, to explain or theorize it—I commenced axial coding. I more fully developed categories and began relating them to one another using as a general guide the
paradigm model (i.e., conditions, actions/interactions, consequences) put forward by Corbin and Strauss (2015). The paradigm was instrumental to deciphering preliminary categories, aiding me in “sort[ing] out and arrang[ing] concepts” and “asking questions and thinking in terms of possible linkages” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 157). The paradigm’s logic structure was straightforward: I sought to clarify the reasons (conditions) animating participants’ responses (actions-interactions) during the PD implementation process, which induced certain outcomes (consequences). The GT analytic tools I employed, particularly those related to process and context (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), were helpful to me in re-ordering chronologically what participants conveyed to me, which was not necessarily recounted in a time-specific manner. (See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the paradigm and its relevance to this study.)

Final theoretical integration occurred in the selective coding phase, during which I selected a core category, or the main theme of the research, solidified the sequential and theoretical relationships between the categories, devised an integrative diagram, and drafted field-specific theoretical propositions of prediction and relationship. I wrote detailed analytic and theoretical memos throughout all phases of the research process—memos whose text formed not only ongoing manifestations of my thinking but also the basis for the final analysis. (See Appendix F for example memos.)

Cycle of Music Teacher Large-Scale Conference Professional Development Implementation

From the foregoing analytic steps the C-MTPDI emerged (see Figure 1), representing a three-phase process in which participants conceptualized and enacted change(s) to their practice after a large-scale conference experience. In this subsection, I deconstruct the C-MTPDI. First, I elaborate the core category, seeking convergence: relevance practicability, and impact, a notion
which oriented participants’ actions throughout the process. Second, I unpack in turn the three processual components of the model, consideration, realization, and decision. Third, I elucidate how contextual conditions situated teachers’ PD decision-making. Fourth, and finally, I put forward a series of theoretical propositions. To safeguard their privacy, all participants are referenced by pseudonyms.

Seeking Convergence: Relevance, Practicability, and Impact

The core category in GT represents the “main theme of the research” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 188). In this study, the core category emerged as one of relevance-seeking. Early on in analysis, the processes of translation and integration, located midway through the model (see Figure 1), seemed to predominate. In fact, during the initial stages of analysis, I preliminarily identified these processes as the core category, or the central theme, of the research. However, after examining existing data more closely and trying to maintain sensitivity and openness to divergence with the data that were coming in, I found seeking convergence: relevance, practicability, and impact to be more salient because it reflected the actions/interactions of all participants, even those for whom the formal implementation process (i.e., realization phase) was never initiated.

Convergence oriented participant action at each juncture. I identified patterns of convergent thinking in all three phases of the implementation process. To the extent a single notion instigated an act taken by a participant, it seemed to be their judgment of the relevance, practicability, and impact of the choices they had before them.
Figure 1. Cycle of music teacher large-scale conference professional development implementation.
Because of its transcending, cross-phase salience, I depict the core category latently in the integrative diagram (see Figure 1)—that is, it underlies all phases of participants’ PD implementation process, providing plausibly causal dimensions to participants’ actions and decision-making. In what follows, I discuss the three properties, relevance, practicability, and impact, in turn (see Table 2).

Table 2

Properties and Dimensions for Seeking Convergence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>“make connections,” “not a whole lot I was able to use”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicability</td>
<td>“apply directly,” “more inspirational…not as much to take away from them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>&quot;keep [re]inventing myself,&quot; &quot;keep up with what's popular,&quot; &quot;what my kids struggle with,&quot; &quot;help my students&quot;</td>
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</table>

Relevance

Relevance denotes the acts of convergence participants undertook to closely associate their PD experience with their teaching contexts and their students’ needs. I dimensionalized it along a continuum from “make connections” to “not a whole lot I was able to use.” (see Table 2).

Judy spoke of her strategy for aligning her conference schedule with her local priorities:

I just really went and I just tried to find a balance of elementary sessions and cultural competency sessions. Because I felt like…I didn’t really feel like going to a band session or going to an orchestra session or going to a high school session would really benefit me personally. But I really felt that the cultural competency would really benefit my program, so that’s what I looked for.

As an elementary specialist, Judy focused her efforts on sessions targeting teachers of younger students; furthermore, as a teacher in a school whose student population had been diversifying in recent years, she attended sessions on issues of cross-cultural competence. More
broadly, participants were largely disinterested in sessions whose content did not connect in some way to the work that they did in their home settings. Unprompted, Nina described the term *relevant* as a “favorite word of [hers]” as it pertained to PD.

Jackie elaborated on her personal sense of relevance in PD and also discussed her disappointment in local PD offerings that did not tangibly connect to her practice:

There [are] so many professional development [experiences] that I've gone to. For instance, at my first year at my district, we had to go to so much new teacher profession development. So much of that had nothing to do with me as a music teacher. So much of it. And I'm not saying that it's like—because I get that [administrators are] wanting to prepare for the mass audience of the classroom teachers and what are some of the things that the classroom teachers can do. Yes, I have a classroom but I don't need to know how to do the core curriculum stuff. I don't need to know how to do some of these-- some various different things where I feel like my time could be best spent watching a music educator teach.

She continued:

Professional development can be me during my conference time, going over to the middle school and seeing how the middle school choir directors interact with their older kids. Because my fifth graders, I'm at a loss. Or professional development meaning going to observe your peers or them or observing you.

In Jackie’s description of possible alternatives to non-relevant PD, she spoke not only of models that might elicit more authentic connections (i.e., observations of other music teachers), but she spoke specifically of how prevailing formats in her district were failing to address her needs (i.e., “at a loss” with fifth-grade music students). This sentiment was generally represented in participants. To them, relevance did not only concern music-specificity—indeed, all participants in this study engaged PD that was decidedly music-specific. Rather, participants’ concepts of relevance in the PD vein, and *convergence* more broadly, were multi-faceted, well-defined, and pointedly present throughout the implementation cycle.
Practicability

Practicability reflects participants’ emphatic bent toward conference-derived practices and/or perspectives that were both comprehensible and practically feasible. The dimensionalized continuum was anchored by “apply directly” and “more inspirational…not as much to take away from them” (see Table 2).

Nina discussed practicability at length, noting that she prefers when clinicians advance “specific” and “repeatable” pedagogies and techniques:

I don't want to sit through something that's like, "You should only go to work with these specific students, or these specific scenarios, or community, or whatever." I want something that's going to work with my kids and any kids. I'm not going to have the same kids forever, but something I can actually take back and do. I think I've sat through things that are like, "That's a great idea." But how do you actually do it? I really appreciate the sessions that are here [at TMEA]. "What we want, here is our goal, here is what you actually do, here is how you actually teach it." It's not ideal. Ideals are great and inspiration is great, but if you don't actually help me to take this back and really [do it]… "What do I actually teach? What do I say? How do I guide kids? Where is the scaffolding?" And things like that…If it's something new, like "We've got this cool thing." How do I actually do it? That's important to me.

Judy remarked on the centrality of practical application in her appraisal of PD experiences:

I think there was a lot of talk…I don’t really think there was really techniques [emphasis added]. That’s kind of where I probably was a little disappointed because it was more just abstract talking about it. Talking about the issue rather than necessarily really delving into it and giving techniques to try [emphasis added].

Judy’s usage of the term techniques was illustrative of participants' focus on practicability. PD sessions were appraised for practicability, in part, on the basis of how the participant could see him/herself applying what they were hearing and learning. To the extent participants perceived a particular session as impractical, or whose content was nonspecific or overly theoretical, they typically downgraded their assessment of the session’s usefulness. Developing a list of concrete pedagogical devices, a new perspective on an existing problem, or adding to one’s proverbial
tool bag were foundational to most participants. These issues constituted the core objectives of the conference experience. Myra expressed as much in her first interview:

There are some sessions that were just more inspirational, "You can do it! You can be a good teacher!" Those aren't my favorite, I feel like there's not as much to take away from them.

Nevertheless, appraisals were not wholly dependent on these narrow criteria of utility. For some, they were at least partially contingent upon the participants’ prior expectations of the session. For example, Willie and Salvador both attended sessions at the NAfME conference that they acknowledged did not have specific applicability to their immediate teaching circumstance but were geared toward broad-based issues affecting the profession. To another participant, the content of these sessions could have been deemed insufficiently practicable. However, Willie and Salvador attended these sessions and assessed them positively because they expected at the outset a global scope. The operative matter for them, and others who were similarly inclined, was one of expectations—that is, an assessment of practicability based on a set of individually determined criteria. The differing conceptualizations of practicability between participants like Willie and Salvador, and those like Myra and Nina, further reinforce the explanatory heft of convergence in PD implementation. Without it, the presence of this type of participant-specific variation could be confounding.

Impact

Impact indicates participants’ ongoing search for difference, both as a precondition to engagement (i.e., as they considered sessions and identified practices and/or perspectives for implementation) and as evidence of effectiveness (i.e., as they evaluated outcomes). Perhaps the most consequential part of convergence, I dimensionalized impact on a continuum with "keep

With respect to the first two dimensions, “keep [re]inventing myself,” and “something I’ve never done,” participants were attuned to the extent to which new practices and/or perspectives differed from current practice in ways might help to institute positive change. When asked about why she had flagged a specific practice for immediate implementation, Eleanor responded, “Mostly because it was just something that really struck me as something I've never done before.” She went on to discuss how the new practice, which included a song that introduced students to five-four meter, helped her to reinforce an existing part of her curriculum in a new and exciting way. In her view, newness and the anticipation of positive difference were linked with impact.

Participants saw the large-scale conference as a mechanism for ongoing reinvention. Anna said, “It definitely is motivating when you come back with all these new ideas.” Wilbert commented, “We try to keep an open mind and not keep things stagnant from year to year, as far as curriculum or anything. We keep trying to progress.” He continued, “I always like to try to find clinics that are something new, something I haven’t heard about. Maybe like the new teaching style.” Shaun spoke of the types of social interactions he pursued at Midwest, saying, “I try to find what's new and talk to people about newer ideas and ways that we can make our program better. We're always looking to improve.” Indeed, for most participants, the large-scale conference served as prime venue for innovative exploration.

Also animating participants’ impact considerations and actions throughout the C-MTPDI was a generalized awareness of student needs, which is reflected in the latter two dimensions, “what my kids struggle with” and “help my students.” The student-centeredness as reflected in
impact prevailed in participants’ thinking, along with relevance and practicability, across all three phases. During consideration, students were foremost on the minds of participants as they contemplated how they would engage the conference and the new practices and/or perspectives they sought to implement. As participants enacted change in the realization phase, they were acutely cognizant of how student were responding extemporaneously—judgments that formed the basis for action in the translation-integration-recalibration loop. In the final phase of the C-MTPDI, decision, participants assessed change using a student-focused framework. Put simply, for participants in their pursuit of convergence, students were a chief priority.

Consideration Phase (Before/During Conference)

Consideration, the first of three processual phases in the C-MTPDI, captures the determinations made by participants of their instructional and professional priorities—that is, actions around how these priorities surfaced in participants’ personal conference programs vis-à-vis the selection of sessions, concerts, and other activities, and how they influenced the initial articulation of a personal and/or professional change agenda. Reinforcing convergence, the core category which undergirded all three phases, consideration began with a comprehensive accounting of the needs of participants’ students, their programs, and themselves. It is further elucidated by three sub-processes (or subcategories): needs assessment, direct engagement, and change articulation (see Table 3 for properties and dimensions).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs assessment: students, self, school</td>
<td>Student needs</td>
<td>“look at the weaknesses I’m seeing from year to year,” “meet [students] at their level and build them up from that”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional identity</td>
<td>“I don’t necessarily think of myself that way,” “a vision for what it is that I want for a career”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal background and interests</td>
<td>“my own experiences,” “I really admire them,” “I just wasn’t very intrigued by anything”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School context and culture</td>
<td>“push some issues to the forefront within our state and region,” “it’s apparently never been done that way,” “that’s what our school wants to do”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct engagement: sessions and concerts</td>
<td>Determining personal focus</td>
<td>“get to as [many] different things as I can,” “more of a direction of what I wanted to focus on”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning personal schedule</td>
<td>“I went to as much as I could,” it’s a strategy game,” “it was hard to choose,” “mix it up”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describing session</td>
<td>“I wrote it down,” “I recorded them a bit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retaining information</td>
<td>“I already knew,” “really, really good,” “I didn’t feel like I learned anything”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appraising session</td>
<td>“I won’t ever miss it,” “I might not go again,” “very beneficial”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change envisionment and deliberation</td>
<td>Considering possibilities</td>
<td>“it’s possible for kids of any demographic…to be successful,” “something that…I couldn’t implement in my class,” “the next level”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense-making strategies</td>
<td>“plan it out in my head,” “thinking of my program immediately and in the moment,” “making lists of anything and everything,” “talk it out with as many people as I can,” “this hasn’t been something I’ve talked about with anybody”</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change articulation</td>
<td>Specification</td>
<td>“shooting from the hip,” “direct planning...concrete answer of how and where I want to go”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time horizon</td>
<td>“tomorrow,” “next week,” “next year”</td>
</tr>
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Needs Assessment: Students, Self, School

The first component was participants’ assessment of students’ needs, personal professional needs, and school needs. In order for convergence to happen and for the PD experience to be deemed useful in terms of its classroom- and student-level impact, participants had to fully understand their aims in the PD endeavor. Thus, consideration began with the pre-conference planning process, which for most participants was an immediate precursor to their conference attendance. They did not report an extended period of pre-conference deliberation on the composition of their personal schedules, opting instead to review the official program either en route to the conference venue or after they arrived but before they began attending sessions. For a small group of participants, however, the process of connecting one’s needs to one’s conference schedule began weeks or even months before the conference took place. Nevertheless, in the aggregate, while they presumably had an understanding of their practical circumstances by virtue of daily navigating them, participants did not consciously link the conclusions of the needs assessment with their direct engagement of the conference until they were on the ground in the conference venue. Thus, the C-MTPDI reflects an amorphous before/during frame to capture that variation.

Foremost for the teachers was the needs of students, characterized by dimensions, “look at the weaknesses I’m seeing from year to year” and “meet them at their level and build them up from that” (see Table 3). Leona, in remarking on the perceived deficits in her current approach to sight-singing, provided a student-focused rationale for seeking new ideas at TMEA:

…[L]ast semester we did sight-singing almost every single day but I didn't really like the curriculum. I felt like it was more geared for students who are already in the intermediate or advanced [group] whereas most of my students are beginners, we made it work but it didn't really fit my needs or their needs.
Because her current approach, she thought, “didn’t really fit” or address students’ needs, she sought resources and support via PD at TMEA.

Jonathan, a Midwest attendee, echoed Leona’s sentiments in response to a question about changes to his teaching practice following his conference attendance. The following was indicative of his pre-conference mindset insofar as he defined the student-specific issues on which he intended to concentrate. He articulates what he saw as a clear musical need of his students, a need he emphasized later as he crafted his PD program. The PD experience, to Jonathan and many other participants, was a means to an end for students.

I try to focus more on what my teaching needs to help these students get better on their instruments, rather than just getting better at playing whatever tune we’re working on. Because learning to play your instrument better, those skills are going to transfer. Especially when talking about key signatures. I've been talking a lot about what are your key signatures. Instead of just, “Oh, in this song, it's B-flat.” It's well, "Looking and you figure out what notes are going to be altered."

Participants also considered their own backgrounds, interests, and capacities, demonstrating a keen awareness of his or her personal and professional situation. These determinations, in turn, helped to shape their conference experience. I identified two properties, personal background and interests, which was dimensionalized with “my own experiences,” “I really admire them,” and “I just wasn’t very intrigued by anything,” and professional identity, which was dimensionalized with “I don’t necessarily think of myself that way” and “a vision for what it is that I want for a career” (see Table 3).

Erik, a middle school choir director, described how he ensured his growth priorities were reflected in his TMEA conference program, saying, “It's my first year as Head Director, and it's my first year teaching middle school. I very much feel like, ‘Oh my God, I need help with what I'm doing right now.’” Sanford, a Midwest attendee and a high school band director, reiterated this perspective in response to a question regarding his priorities in planning his conference.
program. “I always ask myself, ‘Where I am at as a teacher?’,” he remarked, “‘What are my strengths? What are my weaknesses?’ I cater the sessions I pick towards my weaknesses as an educator.” Indeed, participants sought to appreciate their personal and professional situation and design their PD experiences to “cater” to it—or converge with it.

Finally, as part of the needs assessment, participants considered the broader school environment in which they practiced. Issues of culture figured prominently in participants’ PD decision-making, as Erik explained:

The structure of the campus is a mess. The expectations of the choir program are not in place. Even district-wide—I’ve heard kids telling me, ‘We don't do well…we never win. Why are you trying to get us to win? We don't win.’ That's the mentality. It's like, "Wow, how do I reach those kids?"

In structuring his PD experience and articulating his needs, those both pressing and otherwise, Erik was attuned to schoolwide culture, factoring into his calculation the acceptability or practicability of certain reforms. Similarly, Phillip related how his views on the artistic merits of band are at times incongruous with those of his broader school culture.

The context about myself and now is not an immediate assumption that a band is a form of art, that band can be a form of highest quality musical expression, that it is a full-time commitment for a lot of kids, that takes a lot of practice. The culture I'm in now, it's very much an outlet. It has something to do if you don't want to do sports, it is an entertainment venue. That's more of the function of it as it say a culture of, "This is fine and entertaining and we exist to support the football team and concert band and it's cute," as opposed to serious artistic band type of thing. We don't care about, you know, this is a great piece of music by one of America's best-known composers. They want something that's going to make them sound good and feel good type thing.

Indeed, regardless of how meritorious a reform was in isolation, participants appreciated how school culture constrained instructional behavior and limited the scope of what seemed possible—and they adjusted their PD schedules and implementation expectations accordingly.
Direct Engagement: Sessions and Concerts

Following an accounting of the needs of their students, their school, and themselves, the next part of the process was directly engaging the conference, which can be described via several properties. The initial steps included determining a focus and planning the personal schedule. Some participants tailored their conference program to a narrowly defined content-related or pedagogical objective, reflecting the “more of a direction of what I wanted to focus on” pole of the dimensional continuum (see Table 3). As an example, Earl, a high school band director and NAfME attendee, had two specific aims: (a) shoring up his capacities with music technology for a course he was proposing at his school and (b) deepening his understanding of music education advocacy issues because of a leadership role he was to assume in the near term. These two matters formed his session selection criteria, as he explained in his first interview:

I really didn’t peruse [the printed program] so much and go ‘oh, okay, what am I…’—for my experience this time, it wasn’t really perusing to see what I might be interested in. It was more of a ‘how many sessions can I get to that have technology in them that are applicable?’ and then the advocacy stuff, and that pretty much filled my schedule.

For Earl, his pre-conference goals were directly and deliberately linked to the sessions he attended, which were, in turn, associated with his after-conference implementation strategy.

Focusing on two specific subjects (i.e., music technology, advocacy) and restricting his conference program to only sessions pertaining to those topics was a successful strategy for Earl. He elaborated on that strategy in his second interview.

Earl: I tailored my experience there to what I wanted to accomplish and what I wanted to do. No I wouldn't say there's anything that I would change on that though.

Justin: Yes, you seem like you had a really targeted plan. Do you do that for every conference you go to? Do you always have [a] really coherent strategy for the sessions you're going to attend and what you are going to get from them?

Earl: More so recently than in the past, yes. In the past it was more of a take and choose some things that I was interested in [and there] may be a clinic on…It was more like I
was taking [an] interest rather than targeting an area. In the past few years it shifted more to, ‘Okay. I want to accomplish this, so I'm going to go to these particular sessions and follow that path.’

Justin: Why have made that switch?

Earl: To grow—just to grow as a teacher.

Others took a less defined approach to session selection, reflected in the “get to as [many] different things as I can” end of the dimensional continuum (see Table 3). While sessions were still linked to participants’ assessments of needs as reflected in the previous component of the consideration phase, they cohered to a lesser degree and could not necessarily be reduced into one or two topical categories. Erik focused his sessions on those that pertained to middle school, saying,

Absolutely, I sought out those things that were about middle school—how to tame the middle school beast…absolutely everything was targeted towards a middle school or had to do something about inspiration or just how to reach kids.

The next component (i.e., property) of direct engagement was participants’ session attendance, as well as the strategies they employed to retain the information being transmitted to them. The nature of participant engagement in the conference was characterized largely by how instruction was delivered in sessions, the strategies employed to retain information, and generalized appraisals of session and concert content.

The efficacy of participants’ content retention efforts was theoretically consequential in later stages of the C-MTPDI as they sought to recall and integrate conference-derived learnings. To that end, most participants reported copious notetaking. Generally, participants attending the elementary-targeted sessions described a more interactive instructional delivery format, while those taking part in secondary-targeted sessions reported traditional, lecture-style delivery methods, leading at least some to remark that traditionally delivered sessions were more
conducive to memorializing via notepad (or the electronic equivalent). Others audio-recorded sessions or referenced presenter-provided handouts. Very few wholly relied on short-term memory.

Louis described his retention strategy, which was comparatively deliberative among participants. He began by recounting his during-session notetaking:

Usually the first thing that I do is I look for any pamphlets or anything that they’re handing out. For the most part, I usually have a little notebook with me, because I don't have to carry a lot of crazy things, but I'll have a little backpack with a little notebook. I'm really good about remembering my little tick and scratch notes. I'll be like, "Okay, I'll remember that", or stuff like that. There's just simple little words that I'll write down, that reminds me of what they said. It's very helpful to me when they have an actual pamphlet or a paper that I can write on.

He goes on to outline how he separated his notes, handouts, and sheet music into two “stacks,” one for immediate and near-term implementation and the other for longer range aims:

Justin: Do you reference these notes frequently after you come back and go back to teaching?

Louis: I do, I actually separate them in stacks, because I'm weird like that.

Justin: You do what?

Louis: I actually separate those papers in stacks. I separate the stuff that I need to look over, and like this is really helpful. Then I separate those that [I] might be able to work with in the future. Because [festival] is coming up, I tend to really focus on those. I do the ones that are immediately connections to me, like, "Okay, this can work." Rather than having something that's really nice to try maybe in the future, those are the different stacks that I have.

Justin: Okay, you have a stack of things you're going to do immediately and then things that might be goals for some time in the future?

Louis: That's correct. When I leave the hotel or whatever, I have two different bags…and I'll separate the[m] with music that I need to look over right now or information that I need to study right now. Then I'll separate in another bag things that I can go back and reference, rather than having to look over it right now.
Direct engagement ended with participants putting forward appraisals of the sessions they attended, as well as assessing their overall conference experience. Their impressions were carefully linked to the *convergence* factor—that is, to whether they emerged from the conference with new practices and/or perspectives they deemed relevant to their local circumstances (relevance), feasibly implemented (practicability), and likely to bear fruit for their students (impact). Participants’ impressions were also based in part on the mechanics of the session in terms of how it was presented and the perceived credibility of the presenters. Wilbert’s valuation of a particular session at Midwest was illustrative of the session appraisal rubric employed by many participants.

The one that really stood out was by—his name is [clinician name], he was the [name of state] teacher of the year. He has a band up in [name of state]. His whole speech was trying to be-- intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation and taking away rewards to motivate students to get them to want to do things and to motivate them internally to make it a more rewarding experience. I thought that was—it was my favorite clinic by far this year. Sometimes the clinics can wane a little bit, or if they’re selling a product, you can zone out. This one had the entire audience fully engaged the entire time. It was a really good clinic.

One of the things that I think all band directors are always trying to find is ways to motivate their kids to do things. So anytime I see a clinic like that I try to jump at it. Plus he is one of the head people of the [state name] CMP, the Comprehensive Musicianship Project, which is something I’m really into. So I wanted to—I haven’t seen a lecture from him incorporating that so I was really interested in going to see that.

Wilbert’s basis for a positive assessment was his perception of the presenter’s credibility (“one of the head people”), how the session was delivered instructionally (“audience fully engaged”), and the alignment of the session content with his professional goals and interests (“something I’m really into”). This degree of evaluative multi-facetedness was not uncommon among participants. In interviews, the sessions participants described and appraised were usually the ones from which they derived their concrete implementation plans. Thus, I sought to fully
understand the ways in which they made valuations as a means of understanding how they made the implementation decisions that I unpack in the ensuing sections.

*Change Envisionment and Deliberation*

As participants attended sessions, they began to contemplate how they might integrate certain learnings and what those integrations might mean for them and their students. Phillip recounted, “As I listen in real time, I'm actually thinking about my program immediately in the moment or how I can apply it.” This was the start of a synthesizing, or sense-making, process, whereby participants, in most cases during the sessions themselves, mentally wrestled with the implications of possible implementation(s). I reflect it in the C-MTPDI during change envisionment and deliberation, a component of the process that was characterized by liminality, or the interim period after direct engagement but before defined implementation. Participants had come to some degree of understanding of their aims during the needs assessment phase, but they had not yet articulated in concrete language a plan for activating that agenda via PD implementation.

The two properties associated with this subcategory were considering possibilities (e.g., Do participants see themselves and their students finding success with this practice or perspective?) and sense-making strategies (e.g., What meanings do participants derive from session content and how do they become concretized into new practices and/or perspectives?) (see Table 3 for dimensions). These were important considerations for participants. If they misunderstood the new practices and/or perspectives being purveyed by presenters, misapplication could result. Erik described his thought process as he distilled several possibilities into an actionable implementation agenda. In the following excerpt, he appraises the ideas while
simultaneously placing them squarely within his teaching context, paying close attention to the possible timing of integration.

[I]t's really great and a lot of good ideas. Lots of great thoughts go onto my head, but at the same time it's like, "Okay, well, how do I implement this now?" We only got two and a half months of school left. It's hard.

 Conjuring mental images and predictions of how change might manifest on a ground level was central to many participants. To what extent do potential changes converge with participants’ understanding of their teaching contexts? Salvador said, “Yeah, I could see actually applying that to my classroom. Maybe even learn melodies by ear, allowing them to make arrangements themselves. So, yeah…I could use that in my classroom.” Important factors included the proximity of what the session presenter was offering to what the teacher needs or perceives as needs for his or her student. The greater that distance, the less likely participants were to report seeing, or envisioning, themselves within a constructive implementation process. Sensing a possible lack of fit, Leona commented, “I was at one presentation and I was like, ‘Oh my gosh, she works in like a perfect environment. She has everything she needs. My kids cannot do that.’

 The capacity to see themselves activating the PD learning(s) was crucial to participants’ assessments of relevance and impact, but it also dovetailed with the notion of practicability. As I elaborated in the previous explanation of the components of convergence, the more technical, practical, step-by-step the session content, the more comfortable teachers felt in implementation. And, indeed, at the end of the consideration phase, participants had a preliminary sense of the conference items that they intended to comprise their change agenda—a program they would articulate more fully in the next phase of the process (i.e., change articulation). Envisionment and
deliberation, though a fundamental step on the path toward implementation, in itself, left the change process unfinished.

**Change Articulation**

Participants pronounced their change agenda in material terms at the conclusion of *consideration*—after accounting for the needs of their students, themselves, and the school, and following direct engagement in the conference. In contrast to how they thought about change during needs assessment and envisionment, participants were much more explicit in this part of the process. Most formulated plans for implementing two to three new practices and/or perspectives derived from the conference. Two properties characterized the actions-interactions taken by participants during *change articulation*: (a) specification, or the pronouncement of the implementation plan and the associated level of detail apparent in participants’ thinking, and (b) time horizon, or when participants planned to begin implementation.

During change articulation, participants tied session content to specific changes they planned to make in the near term. Benjamin said, “[A]s of Monday, we're going to start reworking the boys' choir rehearsals to implement some of the ideas that were found in that workshop.” In a similar vein, Leona said:

I'm definitely planning on using [a new sight-singing resource] starting on Monday because I was like, ‘These patterns make sense because they are the most typical patterns that you will see in your music.’ I felt like that is absolutely the way we should go. So that's something else that I learned and I'm actually really excited about it.

The degrees of specificity and time horizons in participants’ implementation plans were widely varied. As indicated by the dimensions listed in Table 3, participants at one end of the spectrum would describe their implementation plans as “shooting from the hip,” while at the opposite end, participants would engage in more “direct planning.” In the former condition,
participants would report having a general sense of how they planned to integrate a new practice or perspective into their teaching but stop short of drafting a written plan. This informal approach was evident in Colleen’s second interview.

Colleen: I probably launched my own from there. Just took his basic gist of it and said, ‘well this is how I can apply.’

Justin: Tell me about the process of thinking about your implementation plan. Do you actually write it down? What is your approach?

Colleen: No, I don’t write it down. [laughs] Definitely not.

Colleen’s articulation strategy, which was nonspecific, can be contrasted with Nina’s, who reported preparing formal lesson plans while attending the conference.

I hadn't written any lesson plan for this week when I got to TMEA. So it's like Friday on TMEA, [and] I'm like, "I need to write lesson plans for next week so I know what I'm teaching." I know a lot of at least elementary musicians that...just do [their] lesson plan[s] for the next week like that weekend at TMEA.

Participants’ intended time horizons were variable as well. As the previous excerpts in this subsection demonstrate, some participants articulated plans that they intended to activate in the immediate future (e.g., “as of Monday”) or, in some cases, had already activated. Louis, for instance, initiated implementation of a new warm-up and sight-reading strategy “right off the bat.” Conversely, some participants in their second interview had not overlaid a concrete timeline on their implementations. Gina, as an example, intended to “probably” discuss reforms with a colleague “over the summer” for possible enactment the following fall.

Deterrent Factors/Contingencies

Following articulation of their change agenda during the initial interview, participants in their follow-up conversations related the obstacles they encountered when attempting enactment. Deterrent factors and contingencies included performance pressures, inflexible schedules/general
lack of time, and external events (see Table 4 for properties and dimensions). These emergent issues precluded or postponed participants’ implementation plans and led them to decisions of discontinuation or deferral, bypassing formal implementation—within the time frame of this study—altogether (see Figure 1).

Table 4

*Properties and Dimensions for Deterrent Factors/Contingencies Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance pressures</td>
<td>&quot;contests [are] coming up,&quot; &quot;willing to give up time away from concert music,&quot; &quot;feeling the pressure&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflexible schedules/general lack of time</td>
<td>&quot;no time for me to dig in,&quot; &quot;time and scheduling…it can work against you&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External events</td>
<td>&quot;I lost my students for classes,&quot; &quot;snow days,&quot; &quot;delays&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common impediment to implementation cited by participants were the predicted collateral impacts that could materialize if time, energy, and resources were devoted to fully integrating new practices and perspectives. Even as participants thought a new practice/perspective beneficial to their students, time-related dynamics still predominated in many instances. Anna’s discontinuation/deferral experience was illustrative of this. She described timing and scheduling as the biggest impediment to trying new things in her classroom—an issue that was made manifest in her attempts at implementation after Midwest.

Like I mentioned, a lot of times [timing and scheduling] can work against you. We didn't have a lot of things. A lot of wonderful opportunities at the school, but sometimes things get really busy. Like I said, this intermediate group, although I do have high hopes to introduce more advanced subjects and more advanced material, it's really difficult to do so in the time that I have with them and also the deadlines that we have to meet for concerts, then losing rehearsal time when students go out of town, losing rehearsal time when we travel, losing rehearsal time when we have to rehearse the [festival] band. There's just a lot of extraneous circumstances that I think impede teachers’ abilities to plan off the cuff and insert new things in the curriculum when they hadn't planned for it.
In this excerpt, Anna is communicating her “high hopes” for furthering the progress of her intermediate band ensemble. However, she cites the difficulty of “insert[ing] new things in the curriculum” when she was constantly “los[ing] rehearsal time.”

Anna’s comments were not unique among participants, several of whom cited the intrusion of performance schedules on their capacity to implement their PD plans. As I conceptualized the raw data early in the analysis, this seemed to be a function of time periods at which two of the conferences at the center of this study took place. Namely, the NAfME event was situated in mid-November 2017 just before Thanksgiving and on the heels of what one participant termed a “crazy December,” and for its part, Midwest happened in December 2017 after most participants’ schools had adjourned for the fall term. As I analyzed and constantly compared interviews in the third data wave (i.e., TMEA in February) to those happening in the two prior waves (i.e., NAfME and Midwest), it became apparent that performance demands were not wholly determined by the specifics of the academic calendar. They were, instead, more systemic and, to some degree, cultural in nature. Jonathan characterized it succinctly, saying, “I’m always reluctant to try new things when I know we have a big performance coming up.”

Bonnie grappled with effects of performance-centrism on her ability to integrate new practices and perspectives into her instruction:

Being willing to give up time away from concert music into something other than that. I actually have a big sign right in front of me, I'm actually sitting at my desk right now, at my desk and it says over and over and over again, "Know the difference between wasting time and investing time in concepts that pay dividends." Then it says, "...invest." That's something that I need to be reminded [of]—that concert music is important because that is the public display of what my students are learning. Sometimes parents don't always understand if a piece of music crashes it doesn't necessarily mean that students aren't learning anything in class. Concert music is important, but at the same time, at the end of the day one of my responsibilities is [as] a teacher, not necessarily just [as] a director.
Notwithstanding the preventive impacts of performance-centrism on full implementation, many participants adopted an adaptive posture. That is, during the consideration phase and its needs assessment component, they took into account their performance needs. Many constructed their conference schedules around their performance-related aims, prioritizing sessions that would align with or buttress preexisting performance objectives. Others who were less impacted by performance-centrism enjoyed greater latitude for time-intensive implementations. For participants whose intentions to implement were effectively interrupted by performance-related scheduling or prioritization concerns, they expressed an interest in deferral until an opportune time.

Realization Phase (immediate post-conference):

The realization phase was initiated as participants sought to actualize the new practices and/or perspectives within their teaching contexts. This phase is characterized by three sub-processes (i.e., subcategories): translation, integration, and recalibration. While I describe them linearly in what follows, it is important to note that participants experienced them recursively.

Table 5

Properties and Dimensions for Realization Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>Implementation fidelity</td>
<td>“verbatim,” &quot;pretty identical,&quot; &quot;adapted&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disruption factor</td>
<td>&quot;I've always used it,&quot; &quot;definitely a shift&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>&quot;taken afoot,&quot; &quot;definitely incorporated&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External supports and resources</td>
<td>&quot;approval from administrators,&quot; “we got computers” &quot;books”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalibration</td>
<td>Experimentation</td>
<td>&quot;try it and see if it even works,&quot; &quot;let it settle in,&quot; &quot;an open mind,&quot; “unless I knew it was going to go well&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student sentiment</td>
<td>&quot;they like feeling valued in the process,&quot; &quot;They're still pretty hesitant&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This portion of the C-MTPDI was circular in nature, with translation, integration, and recalibration each having multiple, mutually reinforcing iterations prior to entering the decision phase. In interviews most participants related their translational strategies concurrently with their accounts of integration and recalibration, which required close analysis and comparison to theoretically disentangle. In what follows, I explicate each sub-process in turn. (See Table 5 for properties and dimensions.)

**Translation**

Translation was the process participants underwent as they contextualized and adapted conference learnings to their local settings. Implementation fidelity, or the level of resemblance of an integration approach to how it was presented at the conference, was not a major concern for participants. Virtually every participant acknowledged some degree of difference between the way a session presenter intended a pedagogy be enacted and how it was ultimately realized by the participant. Dimensions for implementation fidelity were “verbatim,” “pretty identical,” and “adapted.” The student-, program-, and school-level needs as revealed during the consideration phase were instrumental in making translational judgments. Gina’s sentiments were representative of how many participants approached translation:

I adapted it a little bit, because [the session presenter’s] boys that she did her stuff with were a little bit different than my boys. I don’t know. We just have a different situation since we split in the middle of the year, rather than at the beginning of the year. I didn't quite have that rapport with them. But they also had a better musical foundation, and so I could go a little bit quicker with some of the things, which helped, because otherwise, they would've gotten bored. I took it a little bit more quickly than she was suggesting.

Gina contemplated specific alterations that would ensure the new practice aligned with her students’ musical capacities. She described a nuanced circumstance wherein, as an artifact of scheduling, she had lesser rapport with her students even though they had a “better musical
foundation,” which helped her to proceed more “quickly than [the session presenter] was suggesting.” Conversely, Benjamin commented on how he tries new practices “verbatim at first” to “see if [they] work,” going on to say, “I'm not going to modify until I see this version does not work.”

Another issue that emerged repeatedly was the notion of disruption, which was dimensionalized along a continuum from “I’ve always used it” to “definitely a shift” (see Table 5). Participants were aware of whether and to what extent a new practice and/or perspective departed from the status quo. This was a central consideration in the translational decision-making process. If practices and/or perspectives were congruent with current approaches or implementable within operative time/schedule constraints, less translation was necessary. Jan characterized her thinking as a process of determining “what's going to be somewhat similar to what [she’s] currently doing but just enough change that it is different and helpful.”

Convergent thinking was evident in the translation phase, reinforcing the core category’s impact property specifically. Louis described his translational process, which he makes clear was focused on optimizing the new practice/perspective for maximum student impact.

The things that I started with was basic. I was adapting a little bit of what I was doing with my advanced classes, I don't want to use the word dumbing it down, but just making a little bit more simpler I guess. I feel like this change was directly towards them. It would really benefit them 100% and it wasn't something that I’m adapting from an advanced class. You know where I was, they were specifically for them.

However, while all participants foregrounded translation toward student ends, others also oriented their contextualization/adaptation efforts toward increasing their own comfort with implementing reforms. Benjamin said,

I would say probably your own lack of experience on whatever you're trying to do. If you haven't done something before, you're going to hesitate, you're going to feel awkward about it. Then, because of that, you question yourself you're probably going to make a mistake and then you're going to say, "Oh, this wasn't affected." When the reality is you
just don't know how to properly handle it yet. You have to give it another try and figure it out.

As a general matter, most participants were skeptical, at least initially, of the practices and/or perspectives advocated by conference presenters. Phillip was blunt:

Sometimes a lot of these [presenters], typically if you're presenting at Midwest, you come from a very affluent band program with money. You have decades of experience, your program is decades old and it's stable. You haven’t had a lot of turnover or a high attrition rate, so you’re able to do things, I guess, that not everyone is able to do. For me, I come from a very rural poor [region] and so things like, again, purchasing a [Yamaha] Harmony Director, I can’t do. Because my $1,200 needs to go to a new concert euphonium or a used marching baritone or something like that.

Not only did participants largely dismiss that which they perceived as unrealistic in their local circumstances or immaterial to their instructional targets, but they went further, holding translation as an implicit prerequisite to integration. Again, virtually all participants reported translated PD learnings, to some degree, prior to implementation.

Notwithstanding this posture, a possible paradox remained. Insofar as participants sought practices and/or perspectives that were, at the outset, clearly defined and deemed practicable—as opposed to purely “inspirational” as one participant characterized it—the universality of after-the-fact translation would seem incompatible. However, I analyzed this issue not as a contradiction, but rather as a reinforcement of the theoretical salience of convergence.

Participants’ convergent thinking predominated their otherwise strongly held predispositions toward PD learnings that were immediately implementable. Judy in the excerpt below communicated her preference for practicable ideas that could nevertheless be adapted to her context.

…I do like concrete ideas. And of those concrete ideas, I might not do it, you know, the way that they did it, but I might be able to come up with something for my classroom out of that, you know, to improve my practices.
Integration

Integration was the process by which participants formally implemented new practices and/or perspectives once they sustained translational alterations from the previous phase. It was characterized by two main properties: (a) the strategies participants employed to integrate, and (b) the external supports and resources they cited as helpful to that process. Amanda described her experience integrating a new practice she learned about at TMEA.

[The new practice] came from a restorative practice session and [the presenter] was saying how she has this huge, I don't know, a format that she puts everything in—but I made it simple. I made it a list and I said, "We need to have three rules, three things that I expect from you, and then how are we going to get there." We talked about how we're going to get there and then we talked about some incentives like, "If you can meet these three things every day, then we can earn a pizza party," or something like that.

Notable in Amanda’s account was how she adapted the PD learning for her students before formal integration—evidence of her convergent thinking. Sensing a better approach for her students, she “made it simple” by reducing the “huge…format” to “three rules.”

After articulating musicianship fundamentals as a key plank in her change agenda, Anna described her integration approach, saying, “I've definitely incorporated an idea of getting back to the fundamentals. We went through quite extensive warm-up sequences with our intermediate group.” Clara recounted her integration strategy surrounding a new perspective. Relative to Amanda and Anna who enumerated techniques in specific terms (i.e., “extensive warm-up sequences,” “three rules,”) , Clara adopted a more generalized approach:

[I’m] just really trying to be aware of the ways in which I'm presenting material, and how am I making students, let them feel like they can contribute to the class, versus just me talking all the time.

During the integration stage, several participants mentioned specific supports that aided them in enacting change, including “approval from administrators,” “computers,” and “books” (see Table 5). However, written materials were singular in this regard. At all three large-scale
conferences, according to participants, many presenters elaborated in books and other written resources on the practices/perspectives around which their sessions were focused. Having these materials readily available was cited by many participants as a significant boon to retention and, later, to integration. Melvin, who identified singing tone development as part of his change agenda, remarked, “The biggest thing [was]—I purchased a book that has rounds in [it] and certain rounds that are good for tones, for certain vowels or things that nature.” Nina said, “I printed out all the handouts yesterday before they [were] removed from people’s various web sites just so I can have it in my personal book resource lesson plan file.” Phillip, meanwhile, related that he “keep[s] [the presenter’s] handout nearby [to] refer back to it for rehearsal techniques and ideas.”

Most participants mentioned written materials (e.g., books, handouts), hardware (e.g., computers), and software (e.g., music notation/production interfaces) as primary sources of external support. However, other external influencers, namely school administrators, colored implementation experiences as well. Earl, who identified the development of a new music technology course as part of his change agenda, remarked on how his local administrators had been initially supportive, adding, “As the course grows, we'll be able to fund it more once the administration see that, ‘Okay. This is a viable class, this was cool, the kids learned a lot. I love their performance, I love the music.’” In Earl’s case, administrators were directly implicated in integration. For others, however, as I explain later in the contextual conditions subsection, administrators’ role was limited to issues of conference funding, travel, and release.

*Recalibration*

While virtually all participants acknowledged at least one iteration of translation before
integration, many expressed a need for another round of translation vis-à-vis recalibration before a final conclusion on a new practice or perspective could be reached. Participants afforded themselves several trials before assessing efficacy or inefficacy of any particular new practice and/or perspective. They were open to varying degrees of experimentation, which was dimensionalized with “try it and see if it even works,” “let it settle in,” “an open mind,” and “unless I knew it was going to go well” (see Table 5).

Jan described the integration-translation-recalibration loop concisely:

…I found value when I first heard the idea, if I found a value in it and wanted to try it with my students then I have all that information. I'll try. If it didn't work the first time, I might try to restructure it so that a part of it could be successful for my students. If it's not working at all, then I'll just kind of shelve it but I don't ever just [get] rid of it because it could make an appearance with a different group at a different time, just depending on the makeup of the students.

Eleanor detailed a similar approach:

Justin: Now, are you doing it the exact way that it was taught in the session, or are you adapting it in any way?

Eleanor: I've adapted a little bit. In the session, we immediately went into small groups, and I tried that with a few of my classes and went ahead and went to the whole group for the movement portion at the beginning and then switching.

As participants made decisions regarding subsequent trials, they were attuned to their students’ level of support for change. The relevant property, student sentiment, was dimensionalized along a continuum from “they like feeling valued in the process” to “they’re still pretty hesitant.” Eleanor also said, “Well right now, I still would like to get the kids more comfortable with it because I would like to extend [the song] and make it a round.” Jan frontally appealed to students for their implementation support:

Sometimes I even explain to the kids like, "Hey, I was just gone for these three days. I want to try something new so let's go. [Be] flexible with me.” They're usually willing to step out of that box and go with me and see what happens. Then I ask them, if it's a new warm up or something, like, "How does that feel? Was that weird?” I'm like, "Was it
weird because it was new? Is it weird because it just feels weird?” I try to get some of their input and feedback too, so I know if it was worth it for us to use.

As Jan’s experience demonstrates, deciphering the needs of students was not necessarily a sole function of teacher-driven professional judgment. Indeed, for some participants, asking the students directly was a complementary and effective barometer.

Decision Phase (3-5 Weeks Post-Conference)

In the decision phase, I asked teachers to draw conclusions as to whether they perceived PD-derived practices and/or perspectives as sufficiently effective to warrant their continuation or, alternatively, largely ineffective or ill-timed and well positioned for discontinuation/deferral. Two properties, evaluation and future action, characterized the decision category (see Table 6).

Table 6

Properties and Dimensions for Decision Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>&quot;crashed and burned,&quot; &quot;too early to tell,&quot;  &quot;worked really well&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future action</td>
<td>“stopped,” &quot;definitely continuing,&quot; &quot;go deeper&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation

Decisional determinations were made largely on the basis of whether the teachers perceived student-level effects as meaningfully positive. Since the follow-up interview for each conference commenced only three to five weeks after the initial interview, many participants were not yet ready to issue final conclusions on newly integrated practices and/or perspectives, commenting that more time was necessary to fully assess efficacy. As Wilbert said, “I decided, ‘Let's try something new. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work, but we're going to try it. We're going
to try it for a year, no matter what.’” Jan echoed, “I won't just discard it in one day. I'll try to bring it back again because I know one day doesn't give you the tell-all.” As was also evident in the realization phase of the C-MTPDI, participants underwent multiple trials before determining next steps. Evaluative judgments regarding new practices and/or perspectives surfaced on a dimensionalized continuum (see Table 6) from “crashed and burned,” to “too early to tell,” to “worked really well”—assessments based almost exclusively on student feedback.

Lydia conducted an extended trial and assembled student-based evidence prior to abandoning a new practice.

I used [a new set of vocal warm-ups] for about a week and a half. It wasn't beneficial…I stopped using them. It did not work the way that I thought it would. I gave it a shot for about a week…They were supposed to be targeting vowel shapes and we would work on them but the kids would end up connecting them in a weird way. I couldn't get them to undo it…I figured if they worked for someone else, they'll probably work for my kids too. That's not always the case.

Benjamin echoed Lydia’s long-range orientation as he discussed how he situated the implementation of new practices and/or perspectives into specific frames of time.

Giving it roughly about a week or two weeks’ time, I would say, is generally enough to tell me whether or not this is having any effects. I can't do it for one class period and then because it was new maybe it worked really well or maybe because it was new it didn't work so well.

He continued:

By two weeks, if I went from seven to thirteen [students] acting out, it clearly says this technique is not working. That's where there's no questions asked. Drop it [and] go back to what you were doing. Stake out a new plan afterwards.

Benjamin’s comments were also noteworthy insofar as his evaluative process entailed making fine attributional discriminations with respect to novelty. He viewed the unfamiliarity of a new practice and/or perspective as a possible confounder when assessing impacts. Thus, he allowed reforms to take root over longer ranges of time before finally adjudicating their
effectiveness. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the second excerpt, he attended carefully to observational evidence of efficacy, or in this particular instance, degeneration (e.g., “from seven to thirteen students acting out”).

Future Action

As a final step in the implementation process, participants determined whether they would continue a practice and/or perspective. My analysis of early interview data led me to two processual labels, adoption and discontinuation. However, after repeatedly encountering sentiments among participants of incompletion, ambivalence, or “too early to tell,” it became apparent that adoption connoted a stronger commitment than participants were actually betraying in interviews. Thus, to reflect participants’ reluctance to arrive at a final decision, I revised the decision designations to continuation and discontinuation or deferral, which were dimensionalized on a continuum anchored by “stopped,” “definitely continuing,” and “go deeper” (see Table 7).

Bonnie, one of the few participants to report an implementation failure within the time frame of the study, remarked on how she determined future action (e.g., “stopped”) with respect to a new student practice log she integrated after Midwest, saying, “I decided to put it in my seventh and eighth graders to challenge them, have been doing that for two weeks now and they're in a third week of it. It's kind of busted.” She went on:

It hasn't produced what I wanted it to…The reality is, I have students who live in a two bedroom apartment with ten people…As much as I’d love every single kid to practice two hours a week, the reality is that it's just not feasible for every kid that's in my classroom.

Bonnie seems to attribute lack of success to a convergence failure. The reform was not practicable in her local setting due to a number of factors, but most salient in her judgment was a
discrepancy between the presenter’s ideal and her reality. The overarching aim (i.e., increasing students’ personal accountability) was identical, but the practical implementation conditions differed materially, causing divergence instead of convergence. Thus, she decided to discontinue the practice—although she conceded she had not yet determined precisely how she would phase it out.

At the other end of the evaluative spectrum, Louis commented on the lasting impacts of a successful implementation trial and his intentions to adapt and extend the new practice for future use (e.g., “go deeper”).

It's not just the warm-up itself, it's just the fact that they get to do something and be successful at it. The level of the warm-up is really definitely going to use it more. If I can find similar things like that in the future, that would be awesome, then I'll refer to some of the authors that they gave us those warm-ups.

Jill situated her evaluation of a new behavioral approach she integrated within the context of her personal and professional growth trajectory. Like other participants, she had identified mechanisms of success, and planned to adapt and continue their use.

I think as I continue to become more familiar with the kids, as I see more and more students and more and more examples of different behaviors, I will continue to be able to recognize the behavior for what it is or at least develop even more strategies other than just—I feel like now I have one or two really solid strategies and that's awesome, but I know that those one or two strategies won't necessarily work for every single student for the next 30 years I'm teaching. At least I feel like now I have a grip and I have some strategies, which is more than I had two months ago.

While the rationales underlying evaluative decisions differed between participants, one phenomenon remained strikingly constant: Absent multiple trials and convincing evidence in either direction, participants were unlikely to report having wholly ended or adopted a new practice and/or perspective. And furthermore, participants viewed the PD implementation process and the practices and perspectives they integrated as part of an ongoing project of growth.
whose scope was inclusive of the large-scale conference experience but was not limited or defined by it.

Contextual Conditions

I sought with this study not only to theorize the process of music teacher PD implementation, but to contextualize it as well. It was critical for me to appreciate how contextual conditions at the individual (e.g., preconceptions about and experiences with PD) and institutional (e.g., financial and temporal supports for PD) levels shaped participants’ PD implementation experiences. Together, PD worldview and PD policy environment constituted the contextual conditions under which participants rendered judgments and instituted conference-derived change (see Table 7 for properties and dimensions).

Table 7

Properties and Dimensions for Contextual Conditions Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD worldview</td>
<td>definitions/preferences</td>
<td>&quot;boring meetings,&quot; &quot;rolling my eyes,&quot; &quot;be the best teacher for my students,&quot; &quot;always keep learning,&quot; “love the networking,” “[performances] as valuable as sessions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experience</td>
<td>&quot;every year,&quot; &quot;for the first time&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>motivations</td>
<td>&quot;hungry for credits,&quot; &quot;reminded what good teaching is,&quot; &quot;everyone is here,&quot; &quot;fill me up a little bit&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD policy environment</td>
<td>permissions</td>
<td>&quot;very supportive,&quot; &quot;have to justify&quot;</td>
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<td>release time</td>
<td>&quot;able to take professional leave,&quot; &quot;took personal days&quot;</td>
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<td>funding</td>
<td>&quot;absolutely not,&quot; &quot;rotation,&quot; &quot;a certain allotment,&quot; &quot;they paid for travel, hotel, food, [and registration]&quot;</td>
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Participants’ PD worldview was informed by three considerations: (a) their personal definitions/preferences of PD, (b) their past experiences with PD, and (c) factors motivating their PD engagement (see Table 7 for dimensions). As I noted in Chapter 3, in this study, participants’ conference schedules, as well as their conceptualizations/appraisals of the PD enterprise generally, were self-made. Thus, during analysis, I was able to draw linkages between participants’ held views and, for instance, how they selected and appraised sessions, and how they made judgments as to the new practices and/or perspectives targeted for implementation. Probing these matters was instrumental to my understanding of the philosophies and preconceptions undergirding participants’ conference experience.

Definitions/preferences. All participants conceived of their respective conference as a form of PD. As I discussed in Chapter 1, scholars have tended to conceptualize the PD enterprise either as an indeterminate process (e.g., Little, 2003; Louis & Marks, 1998) or a time-defined event (e.g., Guskey, 1986, 2002; Little, 1987). For my part, with this study, after allowing participants to self-determine the precise conceptualization of PD, a different, but related, dichotomy emerged. Instead of a continuum anchored by process and event, participants conveyed understandings of PD that coalesced around two related phenomena I termed compliance and generic growth. Some conceptualized PD as a perfunctory compliance endeavor (i.e., one in which, to participants, there was no ostensible developmental end, but rather a policy- or protocol-oriented one), while others viewed it as an endeavor aimed toward long-range growth (i.e., one which was time-undefined and largely driven by participants’ self-interested growth ideals). Many participants simultaneously held both views.
In the compliance vein, Lydia defined PD as, “normally, a day of sitting at school, listening to [administrators] talk about [a high-stakes, standardized] test, or some initiative they're trying to use amongst core subjects.” Myra echoed that sentiment, stating PD to her was “boring meetings with [her] principal, talking about things that don't apply to [music] very well.” When asked what PD meant to him personally, Benjamin was starkly terse, responding, “cringe and waste my time.” Phillip summarized the juxtaposition between the policy and the personal/professional warrants of PD, defining it thusly:

…[t]hings that I can use to better my teaching and actually use. For me, I guess professional development in my county again splits it through a slideshow presentation about PowerSchool [education management software program]. Well, like okay, it's PowerSchool, it's not going to be that hard to figure it out. That's more of a time waste for me. Professional development is things like Midwest, for me to get out things that I can actively use in my classroom or my students in my particular situation.

In the growth vein, Louis defined PD as “any practice that you're doing to make yourself better as an educator and as a musician.” Amanda subscribed to similarly expansive view, stating:

When I hear ‘professional development,’ I think of anything, not just a conference or sitting in a school cafeteria. I think of anything that can help me grow myself professionally. That could even be, for me, performing with a community band or volunteering with a non-profit organization or anything like that.

Jill tracked her views on PD as they evolved from preservice to inservice practice:

Before I became an elementary music teacher, professional development in my head meant boring days where you sit and listen to somebody talk at you and it's no fun and it's awful.

She continued:

When I think of personal development now, I think of learning new tricks, and tips and adding stuff to your bag to pull out on a rainy day such as today—just all sorts of things like that. When I think of personal development these days, I get excited because I know that there's a lot for me to learn and I know that now I have the people and the resources to learn those things.
Also consequential to participants’ PD definitions were the types of PD they were predisposed to positively appreciating—their PD preferences. In this regard, participants made plain a very strong preference for social PD. In the early stages of analysis, this inclination seemed phase-specific—that is, participants were noting the social benefits in relation to how they engaged directly with the conference (i.e., consideration phase) or how they translated new practices/perspectives in collaboration with colleagues (i.e., realization phase). However, as I constantly compared categories (phases) and conceptual relationships began to saturate and concretize, participants’ social tendencies seemed more contextual than overtly processual, and seemed to be more central to their overall PD worldview than explanatory of any specific action taken in one of the phases. I understood them to be part of the vector of preconceptions participants brought with them to the PD experience. Louis explained it succinctly:

I like the connections and networking that TMEA does. It's really, really good. Besides having all those exhibits and the vendors and all that, you get to connect with a lot of other teachers that you haven't seen in a while or, "Hey, I'm in your situation", and we get to share music and share experiences. Which I love, because we don't get to do that often.

For many participants, PD was an ongoing, self-sustained journey toward improved practice that, as Jill indicated, was subject to change as maturation into the profession occurred. Participants’ attendance at their respective conference represented but a plank in a larger PD agenda.

Experience. PD worldview was also informed by participants’ past attendance patterns and histories with respect to PD in general and the conference they attended in particular. Nearly all participants had attended NAfME, Midwest, or TMEA previously and were familiar with large-scale conference PD. This undergirded their motivations toward attendance, which were based, at least in part, on the extent and nature of their past PD engagements. I dimensionalized experience straightforwardly on a continuum from “every year” to “for the first time.”
Motivations. The rationales expressed by participants for attending the conferences emerged as particularly salient components of PD worldview. With queries pertaining to participants’ self-determined PD definitions, I sought to clarify their global understandings of PD (i.e., not necessarily related directly to the conference they attended). Conversely, by asking their motivations, I wanted to link those considerations and preconceptions to the mental determinations (and later the actions taken) with respect to the specific conferences in this study. In communicating their motivations, participants’ responses varied from “hungry for [PD] credits” to wanting to be “reminded [of] what good teaching is” to attending to be “fill[ed]…up” by the musical and self-growth aspects of the conference (see Table 7). Echoing sentiments conveyed by many participants, Nina spoke of the conference as a mechanism for reconnection and rejuvenation:

I like seeing my other music teacher friends who I never get to see, and…San Antonio [is] fun. Let's face it, it's a three-day break. Not a break from teaching. I love teaching, but it's also a three-day break, where you also get to go learn stuff. It's cake with icing and sprinkles.

Anna emphasized the reputational element, saying, “This conference [Midwest] is really, I mean, the pinnacle of music educators. I think everybody who’s everybody is mostly there.” Jill noted social factors as well, while also adding an oft-cited reputational pull, saying, “…[W]hy wouldn't you go? It's like a giant wealth of knowledge all in one place and it's every friend I have ever had all in one place.”

Nina emphasized self-growth:

I'm still really new at this, and I want to be taught by people who've been teaching as long as I've been alive. I want to soak up all the things and learn all the tricks and cool, awesome music teacher things that I absolutely can because I want to be really, really good at this.
While certainly multi-faceted, participants’ express motivations toward attendance were virtually all grounded in fundamental notions of self-growth, whether they were manifest as personal professional aims or as objectives related to students.

**PD Policy Environment**

I organized participants’ perceptions of how enacted policies, those both explicit and tacit, impacted their PD engagement and implementation experiences into the subcategory termed PD policy environment, which was further characterized with the properties of permissions release time, and funding. As I wrote in Chapter 1, teacher PD, while in many respects a matter with deeply personal facets, remains an issue of public policy and public concern.

*Permissions.* Permissions pertains to participants’ sense of overall administrator/policy support for their PD, dimensionalized on a continuum from “have to justify” to “very supportive” (see Table 7). Every participant reported at least one encounter with an administrator(s), or his or her designee, to gain approval for their large-scale conference attendance. While funding and release time are issues for which teachers technically seek permission, upon inspecting the data more closely, I chose to differentiate them to signify permissions’ broader significance. Indeed, as participants described requesting permission for various supports pertaining to their conference PD experience, it became clear that, for many of them, the tenor of conversations with superiors, grant-makers, and others was just as important as the decisions ultimately handed down. Judy commented in her initial interview:

> I think we have to justify some things more. They have these grants coming out from the district for innovation and those are not available to art, music, and PE, or encore classes in middle school. They’re only for classroom teachers right now, and they might expand them to use in the future. But, you know, it’s all math and English.
The sentiments expressed here by Judy were broadly shared among participants in responses to questions about levels of local support for music teacher PD, particularly as compared with non-music disciplines. Jan remarked:

I wish that there were more opportunities for real professional development for the fine arts teachers. Our other core teachers have a professional development period. I'm not exactly 100% certain what they do during that time, other than look at student data and lesson plan together so that they're more aligned. We, as fine arts teachers, don't get that. We get maybe one conference period, [and] that's your administration time. You don't really get to plan necessarily with your other [fine arts team] members at that point.

These types of conditions, while not plainly tied to the conference experiences at the center of this investigation, nevertheless contributed to participants’ understanding of the policy environments in which they worked. And, moreover, they could conceivably help determine whether and to what degree participants sought more concrete measures of support, funding, and release time, which are discussed next.

Release time. Excepting a few Midwest attendees who were structurally advantaged by the timing of the conference (i.e., late December), every participant had to secure release time. Levels of support ranged from “able to take professional leave” to “took personal days” (see Table 7). Jackie described how her administrators provided release time but avoided the costs associated with it, reporting that “they sa[id] that they['d] cover my substitute, but they [didn’t]. What they [did was], unfortunately, they [had] my enrichment team, like the art and the P.E. and library [teachers]—they [had] them split up my class.” Nettie, after criticizing a lack of funding for travel, said of release time, “The only thing they covered was letting me take professional development days.” Meanwhile, Gina, reported no formal release time, saying she expended “personal days” in order to attend TMEA.

Funding. Perhaps the most significant measure of policy support for participants was the special funding, or lack thereof, subsidizing their conference travel. Overall, participants’
funding levels were dimensionalized on a continuum with “absolutely not,” “rotation,” “a certain allotment,” and “they paid for travel, hotel, food, [and registration]” (see Table 7). There was a wide range of financial means represented among participants. However, it must be noted, by virtue of their involvement in this study, participants demonstrated at least some imperviousness to funding volatility.

For Jackie, scant funding determined her decision not to attend TMEA in the previous year. She said, candidly, “I did not get to go because of money.” The current year’s funding structure was impacted by district-wide policy providing conference funding on a rotational basis. Leona described how she secured outside funding:

In order for me to go to TMEA, our fine arts coordinator told me about a travel grant that she was on the board for, so I applied for that and that's how I was able to go this year, but in the last two years I've paid out of pocket.

Other participants noted partial and shared funding arrangements. Sanford described his situation, saying, “The general policy that's been going on is that my school will pay for the registration, but my boosters will cover hotel and transportation.” Earl and Ashley also had contributions from their programs’ parent organizations. Irrespective of the particulars of participants’ personal situation, the robustness of funding, and of policy support generally, emerged as key contextual indicators in the C-MTPDI.

Theoretical Propositions

The final stage of theoretical integration is to propose statements of relationship and prediction that link the substantive theory to the field of practice (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I, therefore, posit the following 11 propositions on the process of music teacher large-scale conference PD implementation.
1. Music teachers understand PD as an enterprise aimed at self-growth, professional growth, and student growth.

2. Music teachers find value in a variety of conference-related PD events, including sessions, concerts, and informal conversation. They are likely to probe each experience in search of some tangible benefit, regardless of whether their preliminary assessments lead them in that direction.

3. While music teachers engage large-scale conferences (e.g., as they partake in sessions), they frame their experiences in a contextualized manner, making extemporaneous linkages between session content and their local context. The more direct those linkages, the higher the likelihood of implementation.

4. The perceived constraints (e.g., school culture, availability of resources, administrative support, scheduling) present in the local teaching context shape teachers’ engagement in the PD experience, determining both the probability and the nature of future implementations.

5. Music teachers are adaptive to a wide range of supportive/unsupportive PD policy environments. Funding and release time scarcities do not absolutely preclude engagement in PD activities.

6. After engaging large-scale conferences, music teachers translate and contextualize new practices/perspectives prior to implementing them in their local classroom settings.

7. The adoption of instructional innovations occurs only after multiple trials and a comprehensive assessment of student impact.
8. Most music teachers, irrespective of disciplinary background and context, view conference PD as a relevance-seeking endeavor. Topics and techniques that do not connect have little chance of implementation.

9. Performance centrism—or the privileging of the performance ends of music education over the non-performance ends—is a potent consideration for music teachers as they determine the utility and feasibility of new practices/perspectives within their local context.

10. Scrupulous planning before-the-fact and critical examination during-the-fact decrease the likelihood of attending sessions with limited local applicability.

11. Music teachers perceive conference-derived PD practices and/or perspectives as heuristics—that is, they are ways of approaching particular problems that may or may not prove fruitful but are worth exploring regardless.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this investigation was to generate a theoretical account of music teachers’ PD implementation processes in the context of large-scale conferences. The central result, the Cycle of Music Teacher Large-Scale Conference Professional Development Implementation, or C-MTPDI, which was explicated in detail in Chapter 4, will be situated within PD thought and action in the current chapter. First, I reexamine the teacher change theories discussed in Chapter 2 in light of the newly emergent framework. Second, I consider this study’s findings within the context of extant understandings about music teacher PD implementation and put forward recommendations for future scholarship. Third, and finally, I discuss implications for future PD policy and practice in the field.

Teacher Change Theory in the Context of Formal PD

As I expounded in Chapter 4, at the center of the PD experience is the presumption of change. All participants in this study understood a successful PD event as one that induced improvements to their capacities as teachers. They all perceived the formal PD experience of which they partook (i.e., the large-scale conference) as a fertile context for change. Thus, as I sought to theorize music teacher PD implementation for this investigation, I looked to extant teacher change theories in the context of formal PD to sensitize myself. In this subsection, I locate the findings of this study within these literatures, focusing specifically on the juxtaposition of the teacher change frameworks posited by Guskey (1986, 2002) and Desimone (2009) and the C-MTPDI.
As discussed in Chapter 2, Guskey’s (1986, 1988, 2002) Model of Teacher Change remains a seminal PD theory in education, helping scholars to better understand how teachers entrench change to their practice after formal PD events. It should be noted that Guskey’s theory could be described as formal in scope such that it is applicable across multiple domains or substantive areas. The substantive theory I developed is responsive within a more limited context (i.e., music teacher PD implementation following large-scale conferences). Thus, even though the C-MTPDI and Guskey’s Model of Teacher Change address similar phenomena, I expected conceptual and relational differences to emerge because the two theories are situated at different abstraction levels (i.e., formal, substantive) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Guskey’s (1986, 2002) four processual phases—(a) attending a PD event, (b) changing practice, (c) evaluating efficacy evidence in light of new practice, (d) changing attitudes, perspectives—highlight the evidence-first orientation teachers often adopt before institutionalizing a new practice. As Guskey (2002) wrote, “significant change in teachers’ attitudes and beliefs occurs primarily after [emphasis added] they gain evidence of improvements in student learning” (p. 383). With the C-MTPDI (see Figure 1 in Chapter 3), which largely supports Guskey’s earlier model in terms of the determinative role of efficacy evidence, I theorize the teacher change process with added nuances. How teachers engage the PD experience, how they arrive at judgments regarding the selection of new practices and/or perspectives to implement, and the actions they take as they pursue implementation were considerations, largely unaccounted for by Guskey, that figure prominently in the C-MTPDI.

In the C-MTPDI consideration phase, participants studied the needs of their students, themselves, and their schools—an assessment linked directly to the nature of participants’
engagement in the conference (e.g., sessions and concerts attended, topics of collegial conversation). Participants were unlikely to attempt changes that did not address these perceived needs. While Guskey’s model does not directly address why a teacher might pursue implementation of a new practice or perspective, it nevertheless has a student-focused valence insofar as teachers’ attitudes and beliefs were altered only after desired student outcomes were evidenced. This focus was fully evident in interviews for the current study and, thus, indicate a point of cohesion between Guskey’s model and the C-MTPDI.

Another crucial commonality was the difficulty and non-linearity of substantive teacher change. Guskey (2002) acknowledged, as I do elsewhere in this document, that distilling change to a neat theoretical model could “overly simplif[y] a highly complex process” that was in nature more “cyclical than linear” (p. 385). With the C-MTPDI, I endeavored to capture complexity and variation within the implementation process. For instance, deterrent factors/contingencies capture participants’ forfeiture of intended implementations prior to fruition. And furthermore, within the realization phase, the translation-integration-recalibration loop represents the experimental nature of installing new practices/perspectives as participants underwent multiple trials spanning, in many cases, multiple sittings, before making tentative decisions on whether to continue a practice.

The most apparent distinctions between the C-MTPDI and Guskey’s work revolve around practical differences between the work of music and non-music teachers. For instance, while Guskey (1986) does not explicitly define PD program when he initially posited the Model of Teacher Change, a broader consideration of his body of work (e.g., Guskey, 1988, 2002) makes his focus on specially-designed, within-district and/or within-school PD experiences apparent. Formal PD of this nature would typically entail the convening of grade- and/or subject-
specific teams to engage in a day(s)-long workshop or lecture series on a narrow topic (e.g., reading intervention, instructional technology, campus-wide student discipline initiative). This type of PD is fundamentally different from the large-scale conferences in this study, which were music-specific and teacher-guided experiences.

Desimone’s PD Effectiveness Framework

I also discussed in Chapter 2 Desimone’s (2009) “core conceptual framework for studying the effects of professional development on teachers and students” (p. 185). Like Guskey (1986, 2002), Desimone theorized the teacher change process in four phases—(a) PD event, (b) increased teacher instructional capacity and changed attitudes and beliefs, (c) changes to instruction, and (d) improvements to student learning. A key divergence, however, was temporal sequencing. Guskey held teacher change as a function of evidence of student outcomes while, for Desimone, increases in teachers’ knowledge and skills and changes in teachers’ beliefs and attitudes flowed directly from any PD experience deemed effective. The C-MTPDI is largely congruous with Desimone’s proposed framework. Two areas of commonality and one area of divergence are particularly noteworthy.

First, Desimone, unlike Guskey, characterized “effective” PD experiences as those reflecting five “critical features” (p. 183): (a) content focus (i.e., discipline-specific), (b) active learning (i.e., inquiry-based and teacher-led), (c) coherence between PD and teachers’ knowledge and beliefs, (d) sufficient duration, and (e) collective participation (i.e., ample opportunity for social discourse). With the possible exception of duration, participants in the current study were attuned to Desimone’s critical features. The core category of convergence reflects the critical features of content focus and coherence. Participants were in constant pursuit
of relevant and practicable practices and perspectives that were musical in nature (content focus) and well aligned with practical notions of their daily operations and held beliefs (coherence). Preferences for collective participation were evident in participants’ repeated citations of the social facets of the conferences as both incentives to attend and aids for sense-making and implementation.

Second, Desimone’s invocation of context, itself an implicit acknowledgement of context’s importance to PD implementation and teacher change, was similarly evident in participant experience and the C-MTPDI. As explained in Chapter 4, participants’ implementation plans, during all three phases of the process, were contextually situated. Furthermore, Desimone’s definition of context as “teacher and student characteristics, curriculum, school leadership, [and] policy environment” (p. 185) was broadly similar to context as represented in the C-MTPDI, reinforcing the moderating and mediating influence of individual and institutional contextual conditions on teachers’ pursuit of PD.

Third, and finally, there is one area of possible divergence between Desimone’s framework and the C-MTPDI. After experiencing a PD event deemed effective, Desimone holds that teachers’ increased knowledge/skills and changes to their attitudes/beliefs are situated within the same phase of the overall change process. Unlike Guskey’s (1986, 2002) Model of Teacher Change and departing from a core holding in the C-MTPDI, changes to teachers’ attitudes/beliefs within Desimone’s framework were not contingent upon an evaluation of student-level efficacy evidence. Instead, they resulted directly from the PD experience. Admittedly, Desimone posited her framework as a theoretical means to a methodological end—that is, her model was put forward principally for “use in…empirical causal studies of professional development” (p. 184), not as a proper theory of implementation. While PD scholars will test its warrants against
observational evidence and offer refinements as appropriate, this apparent difference of emphasis with the C-MTPDI was nevertheless noteworthy.

Understanding PD and PD Implementation: Meanings, Mechanisms, Theory, Policy, and Practice

PD in music education has many fertile frontiers for future inquiry. As I demonstrate with the summary of extant literature in Chapter 2, few PD researchers have considered implementation in a frontal manner and fewer still, if any, have developed cogent theories of the implementation process. I hope in this regard the C-MTPDI represents a distinctive and useful theoretical contribution and, moreover, provides impetus for positive change to PD policy and practice. In the following subsections I situate the C-MTPDI within contemporary discourses on PD and PD implementation, focusing specifically on (a) the core features of effective PD for music teachers (i.e., meanings), (b) prime vehicles for the delivery of PD (i.e., mechanisms), (c) avenues for advancing PD scholarship (i.e., theory), (d) issues of PD policy, and (e) ground-level implications for how teachers might optimize their conference PD experiences and achieve their preferred outcomes (i.e., practice).

Meaning(s): Core Features of Effective PD for Music Teachers

Repeatedly in previous chapters I have demarcated PD in terms of its meanings and its ends. In Chapter 3, I tracked the understandings of PD and PD implementation that prevail in music and non-music education scholarship. In Chapter 1, I unpacked PD definitionally, noting the work of scholars that imagined the phenomenon as a discrete event (e.g., Guskey, 1986) and those who perceived it as a time-undefined process (e.g., Little, 2003). In Chapter 4, I reconsidered this dichotomy in light of this study’s findings—specifically reporting on the
emergence of *compliance* (e.g., immaterial yet mandatory, pursuant to policy) and *generic growth* (e.g., self-determined, growth-oriented) as the conceptual binary conveyed to me by participants as part of their *PD worldview*. Understanding meaning in PD—with respect to its precise definition but also its most fitting ends—has been and will undoubtedly remain at the center of PD discourse. In what follows I reflect on a query that emerged essential to participants’ experiences as theorized in the C-MTPDI and to their derivation of meaning in the PD process: What makes a PD experience *effective*?

The Area for Strategic Planning and Action (ASPA) on Professional Development for Experienced Teachers, a consortium of music education researchers affiliated with the National Association for Music Education—Society for Music Teacher Education, enumerated seven “essential elements” of effective music teacher PD:

1. Is musical
2. Differentiates between needs of beginning and experienced teachers
3. Places teachers within a supportive community of learners
4. Is voluntary, featuring elements of autonomy and choice
5. Provides opportunity for reflection in a cycle of innovation, feedback, and reconsideration
6. Is sustained, with ample site-specific support for classroom implementation
7. Results in improved musical achievement for students (National Association for Music Education, 2015)

Many of these indicators are consistent with past teacher PD scholarship in music and non-music spheres (e.g., Barrett, 2006; Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Bowles, 2002; Conway & Borst, 2001; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Hill, 2007).

Since many music teachers work as sole specialists or as part of small instructional teams, school- and district-provided PD experiences are often not appropriately tailored to meet
their content needs, compelling them to seek meaningful PD elsewhere. Thus, as suggested above, a first-order benchmark for effectiveness and meaningfulness in music teacher PD is often music-specificity. In the music teacher PD literature, scholars often focus on music vs. non-music PD structures, models, and experiences (e.g., Bauer, 2007; Hammel, 2007), holding that, perhaps unsurprisingly, music teachers regularly perceive music-specific PD as more valuable and more relevant than music-nonspecific PD—a noncontroversial assertion.

With this study, by exploring PD implementation exclusively within music-specific arenas (i.e., NAfME, Midwest, TMEA), I sought to understand the nature of effective PD through situations wherein the basic music-specificity criterion was satisfied. I wanted to probe beneath the music/non-music dichotomy to show the nuances of PD effectiveness evaluations. Thus, a more textured meaning-making process is reflected in the C-MTPDI. Particularly salient was the extent to which PD content connected (or could be connected via the translation-integration-recalibration loop) in tangible ways to participants’ local instructional setting. Even as they attended large-scale conferences that were broad-based in scope, participants still sought localized experiences. They had to successfully negotiate scores of sessions, concerts, and conversations to derive a personally meaningful experience. This task—a weeks-long, three-phase process I term convergence—served a clarifying purpose for teachers, compelling them to identify, prioritize, and target specific areas for improvements. In this regard, PD effectiveness emerged as a relative concern, contextually situated and individually determined. It was a direct function of convergence. To the extent PD experiences were perceived as convergent (i.e., relevant to, practicable in, and impactful on practical manifestations of teachers’ work), associated appraisals were typically more positive.
This underscores the imperative for PD providers and policymakers to design and support PD experiences that are not merely music-specific, but rather identify convergence as an explicit end. In subsequent subsections I contemplate convergence-related enhancements to the large-scale conference as a mechanism of PD and to PD policies writ large. Here, however, using the definitional subcategories of convergence (i.e., relevance, practicability, impact), I offer three overarching design principles of convergent PD.

First, to be relevant, PD experiences should reflect the instructional realities of teachers’ work. At a most fundamental level, this pertains to the music-specificity criterion. However, as observed by participants in this study, relevance-seeking often involves considerations beyond music-specificity. Second, to be practicable, PD experiences should account for possible idealism-realism imbalances that lessen the likelihood of certain implementations. Do teachers emerge from PD with the conceptual and procedural tools necessary for implementation? Third, to be impactful, PD experiences should disseminate practices and/or perspectives likely to materially effect change on students, teachers, schools, and/or school systems. Understanding how PD participants themselves (e.g., teachers) make impact determinations is crucial to this effort.

To move scholarship on PD effectiveness forward, researchers might test questions of PD design among and within music-specific PD models. As consensus on the contours of effective PD for music teachers continues to develop, it will be important to fully interrogate PD assumptions and conventions. Scholars might compare the diffuse nature of the large-scale music conference to narrowly-tailored PD experiences such as single-topic intensive workshops (e.g., McKoy, MacLeod, Walter, & Nolker, 2017) and specially-organized collaborative teacher study groups (e.g., Stanley, 2012). I offer a few additional points of departure:
1. What are the defining characteristics of effective long-range models, such as the intensive summer workshop? How might organizers mechanize after-workshop follow-through to prevent regression and to support implementation?

2. Are summer workshops, during which teachers are typically recessed from work duty, inherently better, or are they merely the more pragmatic path (i.e., no considerations of release time)? Would teachers derive more benefit from during-the-year models that lend themselves to more immediate implementation?

3. Is a week-long, single-topic clinic necessarily more meaningful for teachers than a large-scale conference featuring five or six CRT-related sessions? If differences emerge, what might explain them?

The theorized processes in the C-MTPDI suggest a systematic relationship between convergence, meaning(s), and effectiveness. The derivation of meaning from PD experiences flows directly from assessments of effectiveness, which, in turn, is a function of convergent deliberation. The more convergent a PD experience, the more effective and meaningful it tends to be viewed by teachers. The matter outstanding: If the contour of effective PD is notionally known, how might it best be provided?

Mechanisms: Recasting the Large-Scale Conference as Useful PD

Vessels for PD delivery abound—professional learning communities (PLC), collaborative teacher study groups, intensive summer workshops, graduate education, computer-mediated learning modules, large-scale conferences, and more. Of the aforementioned, the large-scale conference is arguably the single most popular among music teachers (Conway, 2008; Eros, 2013). However, notwithstanding this popularity, scholarly fixations on non-conference PD proliferate the canon, presumably because when superimposing effective PD characteristics (see previous subsection) on practical PD models, large-scale conferences are not neatly satisfactory.
At two- or three-days-long, they are characteristically ephemeral (not long-range); many sessions are delivered via lectures and demonstrations (not interactive and collaborative); while they have latitude in choosing their personal schedules, attendees are still beholden to the content conference organizers offer (not fully self-determined). Indeed, the large-scale conference is often criticized as de-personalized, diffuse, and one-shot in nature—lacking the deliberativeness and prolonged engagement of other PD models of better design (Barrett, 2006).

Curiously, however, participants in this study almost universally praised their conference experiences when compared to other PD activities, highlighting the attraction of in-person, music-specific PD. They viewed convening with other music teachers as a welcome respite from potentially isolating local contexts (Rudaitis, 1996; Sindberg, 2011; 2014) and were largely undaunted by the conference’s one-shot nature. (An exception to this sentiment was noted by a participant who pondered the potential benefits of ongoing post-conference engagement with session presenters.) The latter phases of the C-MTPDI—namely, realization and decision—explain how music teachers effectively convert a one-shot conference experience into something with which they interact over longer frames of time. While many participants noted that the conference they attended was not “life-changing,” they nevertheless were able to identify at least two or three practices and/or perspectives for implementation, and most participants within the study’s time frame reported evidence of positive change.

This also underscores the notion that large-scale conferences—designed as comprehensive and perceived as singular (i.e., the only music-specific PD event many music teachers may experience in a given year)—are but a single measure in a larger personal/professional growth agenda. Notwithstanding a possible perception of the large-scale conference event as singularly worthwhile, music teachers, as revealed by this study’s
participants, appreciate the career-spanning nature of PD and understand that a lone conference occurrence is unlikely to eradicate their instructional and/or musical problems. Future PD scholars might seek to understand whether this perception stems from teachers themselves, a notion that I have presented evidence against, or if it is grounded in broader professional assumptions about effective PD and supportive PD policy.

By positing the C-MTPDI, I argue that large-scale conference PD might be recast as an incomplete, but not vitally flawed, enterprise. To improve it, conference designers should place two considerations at the center of their charge: action and alignment. By emphasizing action, organizers recognize the centrality of change in teachers’ perceptions and motivations surrounding PD (i.e., their PD worldview), and by underscoring alignment, organizers appreciate the catalyzing function of convergence in the PD implementation process.

Increasing the likelihood of future implementation should be an organizing principle. As made evident by this study’s participants, local action is perhaps PD’s most desired end. Teachers seek change. Thus, the degree to which conference organizers program and promote sessions that are oriented toward practical action bears heavily on implementation likelihood. Invited presenters could be closely vetted in terms of the content (e.g., Is it useful? Tangible?) and delivery method (e.g., Will he/she likely be engaged?) of their session(s). Organizers might even emphasize through the application process that session proposals with clearly practical bents will be preferentially adjudicated.

There were myriad manifestations of convergence in participants’ experiences. As I wrote in Chapter 4, some confined their personal programs to one or two topically aligned content areas (e.g., advocacy, music technology), while others pursued sessions pertaining to a jumble of unrelated matters that simply piqued their curiosity. Regardless of how teachers might
activate *convergence* in the PD setting, conference organizers should nevertheless encourage some degree of focus. That is, attendees are more likely to find *convergent* PD experiences useful and, therefore, should align their efforts with some set of defined objectives. As the *consideration* phase in the C-MTPDI suggests, attendees, at various levels of consciousness, already work to understand how they, their students, and/or their school/school system might profit from a conference experience. Thus, the role for organizers centers on helping attendees align those expectations and objectives in meaningful ways with the conference itself.

Most conference-goers plan their programs and make future-use predictions based on session descriptions. In many cases, these are the only “data” attendees use to inform their pre-conference decision-making. Thus, the paragraph(s)-long summations in conference programs should be written with clarity and honesty. After acceptance, or perhaps during the adjudication process, organizers could work with session presenters to optimize their session abstracts to ensure they richly, yet briefly, describe what the presenter offers and how it may improve teachers’ practice. Presenters and organizers should assiduously avoid misrepresentation—even if it may attract additional attendees to the session. Overestimation and under-delivery, as noted by at least two participants in this study, depresses implementation likelihood. To avert fidelity-related implementation failures, organizers might also ask presenters to clearly identify the key components or elements of a particular reform (Crandall, 1983) that should not be subject to translation. This could be communicated through a session’s written materials (e.g., description in conference program, handout) or its oral presentation.

Organizers might also consider *themes* and/or *tracks* as they structure conference master schedules, which would serve at least two purposes. First, themes and/or tracks could promote coherence in attendees’ conference programs, emphasizing the salience of bringing self-
determined aims into convergence with conference experiences. Second, by design, themes and/or tracks encourage attendees to explore a particular topic over multiple sessions, which might deepen their understanding and thus increase the likelihood of implementation success.

Themes and/or tracks could be at the conference-level or pertain only to certain sessions. For instance, organizers may adopt a global theme of “Music Education in the 21st Century: Teaching and Technology” or “Pluralism and Inclusion in Contemporary Music Education.” Themes might also characterize a two- or three-session block, such as “Urban and Rural Music Teaching, Part One: Confronting Deficit Perspectives,” “Urban and Rural Music Teaching, Part Two: Tools for Advocacy, Engagement, and Support,” and “Urban and Rural Music Teaching, Part Three: Questions and Answers.” To further promote focus, organizers could offer special conference-specific credentials that certify attendees’ participation in a certain session track. In the aforementioned example, organizers could offer an urban and rural music teaching credential. Other examples include music technology, music education advocacy and administration, assessment, and more.

In sum, while conference PD remains under-examined in the music teacher PD literature, with the C-MTPDI and its possible applications, organizers have at their disposal some of the underpinnings of effective conference PD design. Developing large-scale conferences that reflect these tenets could recast the conference model, which remains popular among practicing teachers, as a worthwhile PD investment. Further theory-building and policy development will aid in this task, which I discuss in respective subsections below.

Theory: Advancing PD Scholarship

Three particularly noteworthy avenues for future PD study arose with the conduct of this
study. First, I explore *implementation fidelity*—the degree of sameness between reforms-as-intended and reforms-as-enacted—to understand its manifestations in empirical versus practical realms. Second, I examine the warrants of formalizing PD implementation theory. Third, I seek to understand in light of this study the state of causality in PD research.

**High-Fidelity Implementation: Preferred or Problematic?**

Across a wide range of recent intervention-based PD studies, scholars have tied high-fidelity PD implementation (i.e., PD integration identical or substantially similar to) to increases in PD effectiveness (Hill, Beiseigel, & Jacob, 2013; Kisa & Correnti, 2015; Woolley, Rose, Mercado, & Orthner, 2013). Indeed, it follows that if an intervention (e.g., new reading pedagogy) is to take root and effect school- and/or system-level reform, it has to be accurately represented in each implementation site (e.g., classroom). Implementation fidelity also surfaces as an experimental issue (i.e., internal validity) as researchers attempt to compare PD models. Valid inter-group comparisons cannot be generated absent some degree of sameness in implementation. Otherwise, estimates of efficacy could be confounded. Were effects attributable to the PD models’ characteristics or idiosyncrasies in the ways interventions were implemented? For these reasons, PD researchers typically value high levels of implementation fidelity.

As previously noted, the C-MTPDI has at its center the notion of *convergence*. Participants molded their PD experiences in their own image, both with respect to how they engaged the conference and how they integrated or did not integrate certain learnings. In less circumscribed PD settings where specific interventions are unlikely to be tested and courses of study might vary considerably by attendee (e.g., the large-scale conference), high-fidelity implementation is not a central issue. Indeed, as this study’s participants sought *convergence,*
they often held up low-fidelity implementation strategies (e.g., translating, contextualizing, increasing *local* fit) as a boon to PD success. And, as explained previously, teachers self-determined their PD programs, selecting sessions and concerts to address their individual needs. Furthermore, after selecting practices and/or perspectives for integration, post-conference modifications were endemic to the implementation process. Although implementation fidelity was not a chief focus of this study, participants nevertheless seemed to embrace the low-fidelity path, largely rejecting practices and/or perspectives considered unyielding to translational change.

To settle these differences, PD scholars should explore the relationship between implementation fidelity and implementation success. Several queries are germane. For instance, researchers typically study implementation fidelity within bounded systems (e.g., schools, districts) and pertaining to specific and discrete reform programs (e.g., mathematics intervention). As a result, they typically find in favor of high-fidelity implementations. Large-scale conferences are fundamentally different. Thus, in that context, does high-fidelity implementation matter? Might it actually undermine reform for some teachers (as this study preliminarily suggests)? Does enhanced fidelity necessarily beget enhanced outcomes? What matters more—empowerment of teachers through the personalization/contextualization of PD content (i.e., *convergence*), or strict adherence to practices and/or perspectives as they were presented?

*Causal Claims: Focusing on Students*

Establishing linkages between specific PD structures/designs and student-level performance outcomes has largely eluded PD researchers over the years (Hill, Beisiegel, &
Jacob, 2013)—particularly in settings less amenable to experimental control (e.g., large-scale conferences). Although I indirectly theorize student-level PD impacts in the C-MTPDI’s decision phase, thus far, no researcher in music education, including myself, has made a credible causal claim as to the effect of teacher PD on students. Myriad issues (e.g., low-fidelity implementation, impossibility of random selection and assignment) complicate researchers’ capacity to stand up the rigidly controlled experiments necessary for causal inference. Notwithstanding these headwinds, I offer now an alternative to the causal claim in this sphere: PD scholars in music education should shift their unit of analysis from teachers to students.

Most PD studies in music education, similar to this one and to those reviewed previously (see Chapter 2), are designed to capture teacher sentiment. Researchers typically ask teachers about their PD experiences and their predictions/perceptions of classroom- and student-level impacts. Teachers constitute the unit of analysis. What if researchers observed and queried students instead? What if they interviewed teachers and students for purposes of comparison? If researchers are to understand PD’s effect on students, even stopping short of advancing airtight causal inferences, seeking their perspectives and understanding their behavior seems a logical initial step.

Toward Formal Theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their initial articulation of GT method defined substantive theories as “developed for a substantive, or empirical, area of sociological inquiry” (p. 32). They contrasted substantive theories to formal theories, which they described as “developed for a formal, or conceptual, area of sociological inquiry” (p. 32). As I discussed previously, the theory developed for this study, the C-MTPDI, is considered substantive. That is, it was generated from
a finite set of empirical observations and meant to apply directly to only those participants and theoretically to only those who operate within substantially similar substantive fields.

Given that the C-MTPDI is substantive in scope, I encourage future scholarship to formalize its basic holdings. For instance, scholars might theorize the PD implementation process across disparate PD contexts and not just large-scale conferences. Indeed, as noted repeatedly throughout this document, music teachers engage PD in numerous ways. Some attend large-scale conferences; others discourse informally with similarly situated colleagues; others still engage only what their local schools and districts provide. Can a formal theoretical account elucidate implementation across these settings? Would it lead to better, and perhaps more realistic, understandings of music teacher PD as a multi-modal, years-long endeavor? These queries and more might be addressed with the development of a formal theory in this sphere.

Policy: Supporting Meaningful PD

Policies incentivize PD. Policies create PD culture. Policies fund PD. Throughout this document, I have reiterated the centrality of formal and informal policy to the PD enterprise—impressions grounded in my own experience, the extant PD and PD policy literatures, and in the primary findings of this study. Corbin and Strauss (2015) advocated the use of GT to inform public policy. Thus, in this subsection I consider two policy issues that intersect with the core holdings of the C-MTPDI.

Social Connection

I wrote recently about how PD policy might be instrumental in proliferating social capital, a crucial resource for school and teacher improvement (West, 2017). (My argument in
that article was not restricted to the large-scale conference, but instead addressed a variety of
teacher PD venues.) In discussing the fundamentally social nature of teacher PD, I offered three
overarching principles for the development of “social capital-advancing” PD policy:

1. PD experiences should emphasize cooperation, trust, and mutual beneficence
   [emphasis in original] among participants, recognizing that all deep learning is social;

2. PD experiences should facilitate post-PD teacher reflection, enactment, and
   reinvention [emphasis in original], recognizing that substantive change is a long and
   iterative process and involves teachers reconsidering both actions and beliefs;

3. PD experiences should proactively account for differences between bounded, nested
   social and organizational contexts [emphasis in original], either by prioritizing
   locally relevant PD or supplementing [non-local] PD experiences with mechanisms
   that will localize their content. (p. 6)

The current study’s findings provide empirical and theoretical support to the policy
principles I previously put forward. The significance of relational exchange was made evident by
participants throughout the PD implementation process, with many citing mutual exchange (e.g.,
between sessions and concerts, in common areas and corridors, at mealtimes) as critical to their
sense-making and translational processes. Furthermore, as reflected in the C-MTPDI, the
predominance of convergence, and the importance of context, participants were greatly attuned
to their local settings. Large-scale conferences can be prime vehicles for social capital
generation—particularly within a music education field whose teachers confront structural
problems of professional isolation—and, thus, policies supporting teachers participation in them
might be encouraged. In addition to the means of direct support (e.g., release time, funding) that
are discussed in the next section, other PD-oriented social policies might be advanced.

As a starting point, school leaders might support collaborative exchange and reflection
through school- and/or district-based teacher workgroups and professional learning communities
(PLC) that follow conference experiences—social PD models previously identified as effective
in non-conference contexts (e.g., Sindberg, 2016; Stanley, 2012). The C-MTPDI provides a basic
structure for similar efforts surrounding conferences. As teachers synthesize learnings and articulate implementation plans during the consideration phase, attempt integration during the realization phase, and evaluate efficacy during the decision phase, they could regularly convene as a PLC and discuss their implementation efforts. In early meetings, teachers might formally draft implementation plans, identifying and talking through specific instructional problems and PD integration strategies. In later meetings, PLC members might participate in low-stakes peer-to-peer observations to offer constructive feedback and social support. Regardless of its precise contours, such a PLC initiative could provide teachers a social capital-generating means for practicing convergent thinking in a sustained and deliberate manner.

PD Policy, Funding Parity, and Funding Equity

More than $25 billion is expended in the U.S. on PD and PD-related activities each year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016). This is without regard to demographic considerations such as sector (i.e., public, private) or teaching area (e.g., music, math). Looking more closely, based on an analysis of another nationally representative dataset, Gallo (2015, 2018) revealed relative PD funding parity between music and non-music disciplines. Contrary to prevailing wisdom, music teachers did not appear systematically disadvantaged. While there are certainly individual-, school-, and district-level differences beneath the surface, as the current study makes clear, at initial inspection, this may seem an unlikely finding. Indeed, funding scarcity and music program elimination remain distinctly possible realities for many schools across the country (Major, 2013).

As the contextual conditions of the C-MTPDI emerged—namely, PD policy environment and the broad range of participants’ experiences regarding funding (i.e., zero, partial,
rotational)—it became apparent that nominal funding parity might obscure real funding inequity. While virtually every teacher is compelled to seek PD pursuant to licensure and renewal policies (Kennedy, 2016), many teachers in non-music disciplines are afforded opportunities to fulfill those requirements locally. School districts often have “staff development days” conveniently structured into their master calendars, and some even host summertime workshops and institutes. For music teachers, however, these local options oftentimes fall short because they are typically not music-specific—a key characteristic of effective music teacher PD. Thus, to partake in content-specific, relevant PD, music teachers have to leave their local districts, cities, and/or states and attend large-scale conference events like those in the current study, which makes providing music teachers with a level of content-specific PD commensurate to their non-music counterparts a costly proposition. To the extent music teacher PD is administered under broad-based discipline-nonspecific funding paradigms, funding inequities can emerge even if funding parity exists.

Scholars in the PD sphere should work with stakeholders (e.g., music teachers, administrators) to develop policy prescriptions to resolve this possible inequity issue. A few practically-oriented queries might guide their early work. What is the real cost of robust music teacher PD? How are cost burdens distributed? Are separate policy frameworks operating in parallel (i.e., one for teachers outside the academic core, another for teachers within it) administrable at the local level? Does PD funding inequity as a problematic matter engender political salience and support, particularly within non-music constituencies?

Practice: Music Teachers and Large-Scale Conferences

I discuss in Chapter 1 the pragmatist lens through which I tend to view the PD enterprise.
To be effective, in my judgment, PD must bear fruit in tangible, observable, and personally and contextually meaningful respects. Teachers’ practice should positively change; student outcomes might improve as well. The conduct of this study, and the significance of convergence to its core finding, the C-MTPDI, has hardened that perspective. Thus, I consider in this final topical subsection the direct implications of the C-MTPDI for teachers’ work. How can teachers understand and interact with large-scale conference PD as an instrument of practical local change?

As I have discussed in this and the previous chapter, while large-scale conference PD is not universally regarded among scholars as a particularly reformative PD model (e.g., Barrett, 2006), this study demonstrates that music teachers themselves might largely disagree. Not only did most participants report changes to their instructional practices and/or perspectives, virtually all of them conveyed approval of their respective conference. They remarked on the breadth of sessions and concerts offered, as well as the conference’s capacity for personal rejuvenation and social (re)connection. Thus, as a first-order implication in an era of limited PD resources, teachers might understand large-scale conferences as specially valuable and self-advocate accordingly.

Status quo disruption (i.e., change) is intrinsically conflictual. Innovations, irrespective of their merits, can prove difficult to establish and outmoded instructional conventions difficult to displace. These conditions describe why, despite its many facets, PD’s duration might be the most salient determinant of its effectiveness. Typically, the longer a teacher focuses on a problem, the likelier he or she is to uncover a useful remedy. That stipulated, the processual dimensions of the C-MTPDI provide a frame for how teachers might reimagine the large-scale conference, by itself time-limited and possibly useless, as an investment in long-range problem-
solving. As I clarified elsewhere in this document, participants’ convergent thinking not only directed their action in all three phases (i.e., consideration, realization, decision); it emerged as a powerful indicator of both implementation likelihood and implementation success. Thus, I argue, the utility of any conference PD experience for teachers could be a direct function of the extent to which they realize convergence.

Informed by the C-MTPDI, I propose a set of questions/actions teachers could contemplate for a convergent (and constructive) conference experience. While it might be most effective when all questions/actions are employed in tandem, any single action could be meaningful.

1. **What are my needs?** Develop a written account of needs. It ought not be extensive or particularly formal, but its contents should reflect a critical assessment of personal, professional, student, program, and school considerations. Articulate areas for growth in local terms.

2. **What should I integrate?** Study conference programs in advance, examining session descriptions closely to unearth associations to locally identified needs. The benefits of any new practice and/or perspective need not be guaranteed, nor the implementation itself risk-free, but they should be nevertheless clear.

3. **How should I integrate?** Consider the timeliness and propriety of any proposed implementation (e.g., scheduling/logistics, student development, teacher capacity, performance demands).

4. **How much should I translate?** Contextualize and adapt practices and/or perspectives to the local circumstance to the extent appropriate—a practical threshold determined by a combination of student- and teacher-level evidence.
5. *Did it work?* Commit to multiple trials before rendering initial judgments on a reform’s effectiveness/ineffectiveness. Seek to understand the full scope of an implementation’s success or failure, and use these determinations as baseline “data” that inform subsequent PD experiences.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this investigation was to generate a new theoretical account. Specifically, through 60 interviews with 32 active music teachers across three large-scale conference events, I sought to understand the process of PD implementation. I analyzed data in accordance with grounded theory method (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). I openly, axially, and selectively coded interview transcripts, engaging in constant comparison and writing analytic and methodological memos throughout (see Chapter 3). I developed categories in terms of properties and dimensions (see Appendix E and Appendix F), advanced 11 theoretical propositions of prediction and relationship (see Chapter 4), and devised an integrative diagram depicting the core finding, the Cycle of Music Teacher Large-Scale Conference Professional Development Implementation (see Figure 1).

The results underline the multi-dimensional, context-dependent, and deeply personal nature of teachers’ PD. The processes of PD implementation are nonlinear and variable; they are individual, social, and institutional; they are captured by context, students, change-centrism, and policy. Put otherwise: the PD implementation process, and indeed PD generally, resembles education itself. The more the PD enterprise reflects this, perhaps, the more effective it will become.
APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT E-MAIL FOR NAFME AND MIDWEST
Dear colleague,

My name is Justin West, a PhD candidate in music education at the University of North Texas, and I am conducting a study of music teacher professional development (PD) implementation. I am interested in developing a deeper understanding of how music teachers make decisions on integrating or not integrating what they learn in PD experiences into their future classroom instruction.

I am looking to interview active music teachers who are planning to attend one of two upcoming music conferences:

National Association for Music Education (NAfME) In-Service Conference in Dallas from November 12 - 15, 2017
Midwest Clinic in Chicago from December 20 - 23, 2017

If you are attending one of these conferences, I want to hear from you! Your perspectives are incredibly valuable!

Your participation would involve 2-3 interviews with me, one happening immediately after the conference and another scheduled for 4-6 weeks after the conference. I am recruiting participants from all four music education disciplines (i.e., band, choir, orchestra, general music [elementary and secondary]).

To sign up, please complete a sign-up form by following the link below.

[Google form URL]

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Justin West (Investigator), with Dr. Sean Powell (Supervisor)
Division of Music Education, College of Music
University of North Texas
APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT E-MAIL FOR TMEA
Dear colleague,

My name is Justin West, a PhD candidate in music education at the University of North Texas, and I am conducting a study of music teacher professional development (PD) implementation. I am interested in developing a deeper understanding of how music teachers make decisions on integrating or not integrating what they learn in PD experiences into their future classroom instruction.

If you are attending the TMEA Clinic and Convention in February, I want to hear from you! Your perspectives are incredibly valuable!

Your participation would involve 2-3 interviews with me, one happening immediately after the conference and another scheduled for 4-6 weeks after the conference. I am recruiting participants from all four music education disciplines (i.e., band, choir, orchestra, general music [elementary and secondary]).

To sign up, please complete a sign-up form by following the link below.

[Google form URL]

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Justin West (Investigator), with Dr. Sean Powell (Supervisor)
Division of Music Education, College of Music
University of North Texas
APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
**Initial interview** (immediately after the conference)

What are your thoughts about professional development? What does “professional development” mean to you? What first comes to mind when you hear the term “professional development?”

Think back to your last conference experience. How does this one compare? What specifically do you hope to bring back to your classroom as a result of your participation in the music conference?

What sessions did you attend? Why did you choose those sessions specifically?

What were the positive aspects of your experience at the music conference?

What were the negative aspects of your experience at the music conference?

What are your plans for implementation? What do you specifically hope to bring back to your classroom? On what time horizon?

What content presented at the conference do you plan to implement? Why this content and not other content? What goes into these decisions? Describe your thinking.

**Follow-up interview** (4-6 weeks after the conference)

*Thanks for speaking with me again. I really appreciate it. For our interview today, we are going to talk about some of the things you’ve done since the conference.*

Before we get into the specific items that you’d mentioned in our last conversation, I’d like to start by asking you: How are things going? I’m interested in your macro-level assessment of your implementation strategy so far.

When we last spoke, you mentioned that you were going to look into implementing [PRACTICE AND/OR PERSPECTIVE]. How’s that coming along?

How did you plan?
Specific implementation process
Students’ response?
Smooth? Impeded implementation?
Things that helped? Things that hindered implementation?
Will you keep this new approach? Why or why not?

*A few general questions before we wrap up.*

Generally speaking, what do you see as the biggest impediment to trying new things in your classroom?
What would you change to make PD implementation a smoother, better process for you and your students?

How do you think your conference attendance altered the way you approach teaching and think about teaching, if it did at all?

Do those views have any bearing on whether and to what degree you integrated learnings from this most recent conference into your classroom instruction?
APPENDIX D

OPEN CODES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relating to one's context: assessing program needs</td>
<td>tying PD choices to the perceived needs of one's home program</td>
<td>“One thing I think was lacking in this particular program was its own unique culture.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comparing self/context to others</td>
<td>participants compare/contrast themselves and their teaching setting to that of other teachers attending, presenting, or performing at the conference</td>
<td>“I really feel like it’s important for you to look and hear, and just listen to different on samples and performances of the groups that you have, so you can see the things that they are doing and listen to some of the things that they are doing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>centralizing the needs of students</td>
<td>linking PD choices to the identified needs of one's students</td>
<td>“It's going to who am I teaching, what am I teaching, what are we are talking about in our classrooms? That's just at the forefront of my current thinking process right now, as an educator.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to one's context: considering school culture</td>
<td>PD determinations that take into account practicability or acceptability of certain reforms as it relates to the unique school culture of the participants</td>
<td>“The structure of the campus is a mess. The expectations of the choir program are not in place.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to one's self: considering needs, identity, and interests</td>
<td>participants accounting for the personal professional growth needs, interests, identity, and learning styles/proclivities as they choose/appraise their PD program</td>
<td>“Now I see myself more as a choir director. This is my first year of middle school choir, but I'm loving it. I mean it's my first year to take groups to UIL, or to take students to our region. I've been in choir since I was a sixth grader. It was always a dream to be a high school choir director, and now with five kids, I'm like, &quot;I think middle school's fine for me.&quot;</td>
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<td>Open Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relating to one's self: considering background</td>
<td>associating PD decisions with characteristics of personal background (e.g., where participants have taught, the type of program in which they spent their formative years)</td>
<td>“I come from a culture and band programs that are nothing like what I teach in currently.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to one's self: evolving views</td>
<td>acknowledging a shift in viewpoints/perspectives as experience grows</td>
<td>“I would say that when I was younger, it didn't really. Didn't fully understand everything, I guess. I was a little naive when I was a younger teacher”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tying PD to local initiatives/programs</td>
<td>linking PD choices/actions to school priorities</td>
<td>“And why did you end up in that session? I hear in my school district a lot of discussion like that”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conveying disapproval of session</td>
<td>generalized unfavorable appraisal of PD session</td>
<td>“I hear he's a great player, and I hear that he's done some really awesome stuff in brass playing, and in developing brass playing, but as far as being taught in that session, I didn't feel like I learned anything.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conveying approval of session</td>
<td>generalized favorable appraisal of PD session</td>
<td>“That was a really informative session with a great speaker”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determining personal program: &quot;if the schedule permits…”</td>
<td>considering the expanse and complexity of the official conference program</td>
<td>“I always feel like you just can't do it all. In fact, the first two days, on Thursday and Friday, I didn't even eat lunch because I was just trying to make as much as I could, if that makes sense.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| determining scope: breadth vs. depth | making determinations as to how broad or narrow the conference focus and/or implementation plan will be | “I think I was more picky. There were some that were kind of on the border like, "I don't know." They weren't super-descriptive. I didn't
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Open Code</th>
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<tr>
<td>general assessment of the conference</td>
<td>overall appraisal of conference experience</td>
<td>actually spend my time going to them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managing expectations: &quot;hit or miss&quot;</td>
<td>expectation-setting around the PD experience (e.g., does the session description accurately reflect session content?)</td>
<td>“But I felt a little bit led astray by the session description cause it was really the basics of Google classroom in a music room, which didn’t really fit what I was looking for.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>session description</td>
<td>participants' summarization of session content</td>
<td>“I feel like it was great. To me there tends to be a lot of people, but that's not something that we can control. There's so many people went. It's good that it's big, but my overall is it's a fantastic musical experience and I feel like it's a great thing that we're doing with TMEA.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I already knew&quot;</td>
<td>session content not new in participants' estimation</td>
<td>“I haven’t actually written anything down because the thing about it is a lot of what I heard, were things that I had done before.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>retaining information</td>
<td>participants' strategies for summarizing and remembering PD content for purposes of later implementation</td>
<td>“I took a lot of notes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: synthesizing strategies</td>
<td>active reflection on PD learnings for the purpose of integrating them into teaching</td>
<td>“There's always a busy time right after things. I want to definitely use the information, but it's just going to take me a little while to figure out how I'm going to use it and when I'm going to use it.”</td>
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<td>Open Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>collaborative strategizing and synthesis</td>
<td>participants working with colleagues/sharing with students to make sense of PD learnings and develop strategies for integration</td>
<td>“I like talking with people. I like talking to the presenter, being able to chat with the presenter, and be like, &quot;Okay. This is what I got from your session.&quot; Just bouncing ideas off of other people.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>committing to future application</td>
<td>verbalizing commitment to apply PD in the future or investigate its substance further</td>
<td>“In the next school year, one of my general music classes is supposed to turn into musical theater class. That will be my first time to teach musical theater. I've done a lot of musical theater but still, it's going to be different to teach it. That's why I went to the session also just because I love musical theatre, but I haven't really done anything yet with that. It's just-- I need to be preparing. I need to be looking at how to outline the class and everything. I have not really touched on that yet.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quick implementation</td>
<td>participants began implementation soon after conference (expressed in interview 1)</td>
<td>“There was a couple of things from the session of the poems, the books that I actually brought one back and did with my fifth graders this week”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: performances and/or performance pressures</td>
<td>performances (performance pressures) that may delay or impede implementation</td>
<td>“There have been times when I'm like, &quot; Wow our fundamental time took a 35 minutes or 45 minutes class.&quot; Which is not that all the time but you have to get to the rep.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: schedules and lack of time</td>
<td>consideration of time available to implement, the inflexibility of schedules, reflection on whether timing is opportune in terms of students' developmental trajectory</td>
<td>“Yes, because this week, like I said, we got an all-district band concert. My student teacher is finishing up next Friday, so his university professor is coming out this week to do his final observations. Even though that some of the ideas are absolutely great, it might take me just a few days or a week to get back in the swing of things after being gone”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: external events and interruptions</td>
<td>intrusion of external events on implementation plan (e.g., weather, testing)</td>
<td>“We've had a lot of testing at our school like SAT and ACT exams. Getting everyone in class has not happened the last two weeks. That's only delayed our learning process so we are off of the schedule now.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: integration strategies</td>
<td>participants report on the extent to which they integrated thus far</td>
<td>“I definitely came back and I tried some classroom management strategy that I learned at TMEA. It's around incentives and how to build those out.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: translating and contextualizing</td>
<td>localizing PD learnings to make them manageable and to increase their likelihood of effectiveness/relevance</td>
<td>“We'll see, I'm trying it and it works and I have to adapt a little bit of it to make sure that they're doing it correctly because it's really hard as far as what are they singing in their heads”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| "try it and see if it even works" | unsure of what may or may or not be effective, trial-and-error sentiment | “I think I'm going to try them out verbatim at first, see if it works. These are new concepts to me. I've
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>implementation: degree of disruption</td>
<td>extent to which PD learnings and intended implementations divert from the norms, traditions, conventions that constitute the teacher's/student's/school's status quo</td>
<td>“At the same time, it's hard this late in the year to impact something like the culture of the program.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: external resources and support</td>
<td>availability of outside resources, including technology, monies, local administrative support, incentives, conference handouts/materials, mentoring, to smooth implementation</td>
<td>“I printed out all the handouts yesterday before they are removed from you know people various Web sites just so I can have it in my personal book resource lesson plan file.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: engendering student buy-in</td>
<td>informal/formative assessments of patterns of student feedback during implementation, recalibrating based on students response</td>
<td>“If I have not taught my students to be flexible for new things, because I think sometimes I'm a very routine person and when I want to try something new, if it's different than what would be outside my normal range, then they give some pushback like, &quot;Miss, this is weird,&quot; or, &quot;We don't want to do that,&quot; so it's a way of making them feel comfortable with trying new things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessing change: lasting impacts, &quot;go deeper&quot;</td>
<td>commenting/ruminating on how proximate PD learnings can be extended and adapted for future teaching circumstances</td>
<td>“Just that I feel it will change me in the future, have a better impact on me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessing change: successful so far</td>
<td>perceiving PD integration as effective</td>
<td>“I'm doing that with my younger students, and they've been responding really well.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessing change: &quot;too early to tell,&quot; mixed results</td>
<td>holding off on final assessment as to whether a PD reform will have meaningful permanence; results inconclusive</td>
<td>“Just having been back to school two days, it's our second day back, we are really, just honestly we are just getting back into things so it's a little too early to tell.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessing change: &quot;crashed and burned&quot;</td>
<td>implementation and/or student response indicates new practice not effective</td>
<td>“I did try one thing, and I wasn't, back in January, I wasn't planning on implementing it, but it crashed and burned in a way.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD as compliance endeavor</td>
<td>perceiving PD as more a way to satisfy formal policy and/or administrative directives</td>
<td>“Boring meetings with our principal, talking about things that don't apply to us very well.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD as generic growth endeavor</td>
<td>perceiving PD as more a way to provoke personal, long-range growth</td>
<td>“Growing professionally as a-- My profession is teaching music, and so developing as a teacher”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conference attendance patterns/history</td>
<td>participants' history regarding the specific conference or their history/personal patterns of conference attendance overall</td>
<td>“This is my third year going”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceiving networking as form of PD</td>
<td>conceiving broadly of PD to include informal social interactions with professional colleagues</td>
<td>“I like the connections and networking that TMEA does. It's really, really good. Besides having all those exhibits and the vendors and all that, you get to connect with a lot of other teachers that you haven't seen in a while or, &quot;Hey, I'm in your situation&quot;, and we get to share music and share experiences.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Code</td>
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<td>Example</td>
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<tr>
<td>perceiving performances as PD</td>
<td>conceiving broadly of PD to include concerts and performances</td>
<td>“Which I love, because we don’t get to do that often.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceiving PD differently as career progresses</td>
<td>changing PD perceptions by dint of participants’ experience/career trajectories</td>
<td>“From an educational stand point, it’s just good to just know what the standard is. This is the world standard of what a public school ensemble can sound like. It’s that’s something to restore.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financial support for attendance</td>
<td>pecuniary provision allowing for teachers’ conference participation</td>
<td>“My school is paying for only my registration fee.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requesting permission</td>
<td>petitioning for approval to attend conference, applying for support</td>
<td>“thankfully I just asked. I said that this was the professional development of the year and the largest in the country, it would behoove them to let me go.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shaping PD through policy</td>
<td>participants citing formal policies as motivating factor(s) for PD action</td>
<td>“I’ve also done online courses to get to a particular level of my paycheck, because it gets rewarded at a different point.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supportive administration</td>
<td>describing levels of leadership support for PD engagements</td>
<td>“I know that my principal is not going to support this idea that I”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
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<tr>
<td>time-based support for attendance</td>
<td>temporal provision allowing for teachers' conference participation</td>
<td>“But the school did provide us with professional development days so we didn’t have to use our sick days or personal days to attend”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deciding to attend</td>
<td>factors bearing on participants' decision(s) to attend a particular PD conference</td>
<td>“But a big part of why I go is because if you have that many musical people all in one place, why wouldn't you go? It's like a giant wealth of knowledge all in one place and it's every friend I have ever had all in one place.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessing PD culture and practices</td>
<td>participants' perceptions of overall PD culture, support for PD in the profession</td>
<td>“Students of color are really not well-represented at the state conferences. And I don’t know what it looks like to bring more balance.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seeking relevance</td>
<td>participants in pursuit of direct association between PD ideas/sessions and their local teaching setting</td>
<td>“That was really helpful to me because I'm struggling a lot with classroom management with those I mentioned before is completely understandable as first-year teacher, mid-year and a bilingual title in campus. That was really good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finding the practical</td>
<td>seeking out most practicable ideas within and between PD sessions</td>
<td>“I feel like when the clinician is very down to earth and explains specific things about the voice or a specific student, and how to handle something, they give an example of something that relates to you and”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Example</td>
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<tr>
<td>looking to innovate</td>
<td>participants prioritizing newness as they design their PD programs (implicit dissatisfaction with current practices)</td>
<td>“Mostly because it was just something that really struck me as something I've never done before.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation: tailored PD experience</td>
<td>participants linking implementation to the extent to which conference program was narrowed to discrete and measurable goals/objectives aligned around topics of interest</td>
<td>“I tailored my experience there to what I wanted to accomplish and what I wanted to do.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

CATEGORIES WITH PROPERTIES, DIMENSIONS, AND OPEN CODES
Table E1

Properties, Dimensions, and Open Codes for Seeking Convergence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Associated open codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeking Convergence</td>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>“make connections,” “not a whole lot I was able to use”</td>
<td>seeking relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practicability</td>
<td>“apply directly,” “more inspirational…not as much to take away from them”</td>
<td>finding the practical, looking to innovate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>&quot;keep [re]inventing myself,&quot; &quot;keep up with what's popular,&quot; &quot;what my kids struggle with,&quot; &quot;help my students&quot;</td>
<td>centralizing the needs of students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E2

Properties, Dimensions, and Open Codes for Consideration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Associated open codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consideration</td>
<td>Needs assessment: students, self, school</td>
<td>Student needs</td>
<td>“look at the weaknesses I’m seeing from year to year,” “meet [students] at their level and build them up from that”</td>
<td>relating to one’s context: assessing program needs, comparing self/context to others, centralizing the needs of students, relating to one’s context: considering school culture, relating to one’s self: considering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t necessarily think of myself that way,” “a vision for what it is that I want for a career”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal background and interests</td>
<td></td>
<td>“my own experiences,” “I really admire them,” “I just wasn’t very intrigued by anything”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School context and culture</td>
<td>Direct engagement: sessions and concerts</td>
<td>Determining personal focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>“push some issues to the forefront within our state and region,” “it’s apparently never been done that way,” “that’s what our school wants to do”</td>
<td>“get to as [many] different things as I can,” “more of a direction of what I wanted to focus on”</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning personal schedule</td>
<td>“I went to as much as I could,” it’s a strategy game,” “it was hard to choose,” “mix it up”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describing session</td>
<td>Retaining information</td>
<td>“I wrote it down,” “I recorded them a bit”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraising session</td>
<td>“I already knew,” “really, really good,” “I didn’t feel like I learned anything”</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraising the conference</td>
<td>“I won’t ever miss it,” “I might not go again,” “very beneficial”</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change envisionment and deliberation</td>
<td>Considering possibilities</td>
<td>“it’s possible for kids of any demographic…to be successful,” “something that…I couldn’t implement in my class,” “the next level”</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sense-making strategies | “plan it out in my head,” “thinking of my program” | needs, identity, and interests relating to one’s self: considering background tying PD to local initiatives/programs relating to one’s self: evolving views retaining information conveying disapproval of session conveying approval of session determining personal program: “if the schedule permits” determining scope: breadth vs. depth general assessment of the conference managing expectations: “hit or miss” session description “I already knew” implementation: synthesizing strategies
immediately and in the moment,” “making lists of anything and everything,” “talk it out with as many people as I can,” “this hasn’t been something I’ve talked about with anybody”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change articulation</th>
<th>Specification</th>
<th>Time horizon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“shooting from the hip,” “direct planning…concrete answer of how and where I want to go”</td>
<td>“tomorrow,” “next week,” “next year”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E3

Properties, Dimensions, and Open Codes for Deterrent Factors/Contingencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Associated open codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deterrent factors/Contingencies</td>
<td>Performance pressures</td>
<td>&quot;contests [are] coming up,&quot; &quot;willing to give up time away from concert music,&quot; &quot;feeling the pressure&quot;</td>
<td>Implementation: performances and/or performance pressures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;no time for me to dig in,&quot; &quot;time and scheduling…it can work against you&quot;</td>
<td>Implementation: schedules and lack of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflexible schedules/general lack of time</td>
<td>&quot;I lost my students for classes,&quot; &quot;snow days,&quot; &quot;delays&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;no time for me to dig in,&quot; &quot;time and scheduling…it can work against you&quot;</td>
<td>Implementation: external events and interruptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table E4

*Properties, Dimensions, and Open Codes for Realization*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Associated open codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realization</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>Implementation fidelity</td>
<td>&quot;verbatim,&quot;</td>
<td>Implementation: integration strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;pretty identical,&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;adapted&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Disruption factor</td>
<td>&quot;I've always used it,&quot;</td>
<td>Implementation: translating and contextualizing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;definitely a shift&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>&quot;taken afoot,&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;try it and see if it even works&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>External supports and resources</td>
<td>&quot;approval from administrators,&quot;</td>
<td>Implementation: degree of disruption</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>&quot;we got computers&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;books&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalibration</td>
<td>Experimentation</td>
<td>&quot;try it and see if it even works,&quot;</td>
<td>Implementation: external resources and support</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>&quot;let it settle in,&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;an open mind,&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;unless I knew it was going to go well&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student sentiment</td>
<td>&quot;they like feeling valued in the process,&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation: engendering student buy-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;They're still pretty hesitant&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table E5

*Properties, Dimensions, and Open Codes for Decision*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Associated open codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>&quot;crashed and burned,&quot; &quot;too early to tell,&quot; &quot;worked really well&quot;</td>
<td>assessing change: lasting impacts, “go deeper”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future action</td>
<td>“stopped,” &quot;definitely continuing,&quot; &quot;go deeper&quot;</td>
<td>assessing change: successful so far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>assessing change: “too early to tell,” mixed results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>assessing change: “crashed and burned”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table E6

*Properties, Dimensions, and Open Codes for Contextual Conditions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Associated open codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context/conditions</td>
<td>PD worldview</td>
<td>definitions/preferences</td>
<td>&quot;boring meetings,&quot; &quot;rolling my eyes,&quot; &quot;be the best teacher for my students,&quot; &quot;always keep learning,&quot; “love the networking,” “[performances] as valuable as sessions”</td>
<td>PD as compliance endeavor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>experience</td>
<td>&quot;every year,&quot; &quot;for the first time&quot;</td>
<td>PD as generic growth endeavor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>conference attendance patterns/history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>perceiving networking as form of PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD policy environment</td>
<td>motivations</td>
<td>&quot;hungry for credits,&quot; &quot;reminded what good teaching is,&quot; &quot;everyone is here,&quot; &quot;fill me up a little bit&quot;</td>
<td>perceiving performances as PD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>perceived PD differently as career progresses</td>
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<tr>
<td>permissions</td>
<td>&quot;very supportive,&quot; &quot;have to justify&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>release time</td>
<td>&quot;able to take professional leave,&quot; &quot;took personal days&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>funding</td>
<td>&quot;absolutely not,&quot; &quot;rotation,&quot; &quot;a certain allotment,&quot; &quot;they paid for travel, hotel, food, [and registration]&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Financial support for attendance
- Requesting permission
- Shaping PD through policy
- Supportive administration
- Time-based support for attendance
- Deciding to attend
- Assessing PD culture and practices
APPENDIX F

EXAMPLE MEMOS
Saturday, January 27 - analytic session

Illustrative quote from [Participant name] on concept/code, RELATING TO ONE’S SELF: ASSESSING NEEDS AS A TEACHER

*I always ask myself where I am at as a teacher? What are my strengths? What are my weaknesses? I cater the sessions I pick towards my weaknesses as an educator.*

Participants seemed attuned to their personal needs as educators, which they often, but not always, tied to the demands of their positions. I coded these as mostly separate from the program- and student-oriented concerns. Participants engaged PD personally but also contextually. They considered their individual deficits (i.e., issues that are related to them and their personal capacities) and their students’ needs (i.e., issues that stem from student characteristics or capacities that they are charged with responding to).

Thursday, February 1 - analytic session

In the post-conference interviews, the notion of synthesis and translation has become a focal point. The extent to which a teacher concretely and comprehensively plans for their conference attendance in advance seems to be connected to the degree, efficacy, and applicability of implementation efforts. [Participant C] expressed a very detailed and thoughtful approach to planning for a successful conference event. He seems like an “intense” case insofar as his purported degree of direct pre- and post-reflection on the conference experience and the specificity of his implementation efforts seems to be unique among participants to whom I have spoken so far.

[Participant A] and [Participant B] have both remarked at length about the translation process. What do these ideas, tips, and techniques mean for my students? Are they practicable in my context? Strategies for translation: (a) framing the session experience, during the session, in a contextualized manner; (b) talking with session presenters after the fact to help contextualization, (c) conversing with colleagues both at the conference and in the local setting to understand how to make connections, (d) engaging in scrupulous planning before-the-fact to decrease the likelihood of attending a session with severely limited personal applicability.

Friday, February 2 - analytic session

Context: The judgments participants are making with regard to their PD engagement are all formed, influenced, constrained, and/or afforded by the conditions in which they find themselves practicing. I see the conditions as manifest in three levels: self, student, and school.

SELF: What do I need as a teacher? What are my goals for professional growth?

STUDENTS: What do my students need from me as their teacher? What are my goals for them?
SCHOOL: How does the local context in which I practice influence my ability to implement new things within my classroom?

Tuesday, February 12 - analytic session

[Participant name] talks about not having the time to develop a comprehensive implementation plan, while also acknowledging that his future implementation (and teaching) might suffer without one due to his relative lack of experience in teaching. He seems to be describing a quandary that faces a lot of teachers as they consider their own PD. Motivated toward change, but a lack of needed infrastructure to actually effectuate change.

PD implementation is really a sense-making enterprise. What’s in it for me and my students? How can I understand how the things I’m learning apply to me and my students? Translation is key.

Future-casting: Participants constantly look ahead—making predictions, gauging feasibility, thinking about whether something will be effective or not. This seems to bear heavily on their intentions to implement particular learnings and, indeed, on how they engage the PD experience overall.

Monday, February 19 - analytic session

[Participant name]—the causal chain is starting to form. He entered the conference with an overall disposition that reflected his priorities in terms of students’ needs and his professional needs. His conference program, developed by him, also reflected those priorities. Reading the second interview transcript has revealed to me that the reason his implementation seems to be going smoothly is because of the linkages between his assessment of his students’ needs, his programming toward those ends, his translation of what he’s learned into something useful for this students (he did not, like many of the other participants, implement the PD learning exactly as it was presented), and his intentions of continuing those practices after an initial (positive) assessment of their usefulness.
APPENDIX G

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER
October 16, 2017

Dr. Sean Powell
Student Investigator: Justin West
Department of Music Education
University of North Texas

Re: Human Subjects Application No. 17-431

Dear Dr. Powell:

As permitted by federal law and regulations governing the use of human subjects in research projects (45 CFR 46), the UNT Institutional Review Board has reviewed your proposed project titled "A Grounded Theory of Music Teacher Professional Development Implementation." The risks inherent in this research are minimal, and the potential benefits to the subject outweigh those risks. The submitted protocol is hereby approved for the use of human subjects in this study. Federal Policy 45 CFR 46.109(e) stipulates that IRB approval is for one year only, October 16, 2017 to October 15, 2018.

Enclosed are the consent documents with stamped IRB approval. Please copy and use this form only for your study subjects.

It is your responsibility according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations to submit annual and terminal progress reports to the IRB for this project. The IRB must also review this project prior to any modifications. If continuing review is not granted before October 15, 2018, IRB approval of this research expires on that date.

Please contact The Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at 940-565-4643, if you wish to make changes or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Chad Trubson, Ph.D.
Professor
Chair, Institutional Review Board

CT:jm
APPENDIX H

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
University of North Texas Institutional Review Board

Informed Consent Notice

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

Title of Study: A Grounded Theory of Music Teacher Professional Development Implementation

Student Investigator: Justin West, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Music Education.

Supervising Investigator: Dr. Sean Powell, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Music Education.

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study which involves interviewing you about your intentions to integrate and learnings from selected music teacher professional development experiences into your classroom practice.

Study Procedures: You will be asked to partake in two to three 45-minute-long face-to-face interviews, conducted either via Skype/another video-conferencing platform or in-person. The interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. Interview transcripts will be analyzed as the primary data source for this study and will be maintained in a secure location on a computer at the UNT campus for a period of three years past the end of the study. After three years, data will be permanently erased from that computer and its hard drive.

Foreseeable Risks: No foreseeable risks are involved in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: Participation in this study may allow you to contribute to the development of deeper and more useful understandings of how music teachers contextualize and integrate professional development learnings into instruction. Findings could allow teacher educators, music education leaders/policymakers, other scholars, and teachers themselves to enact better professional development policies that drive practices that actually further teachers’ professional growth.

Compensation for Participants: None

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: Confidentiality will be strictly maintained. For interviews being conducted via Skype, confidentiality will be maintained to the degree possible given the technology and practices used by the online video-conferencing company. Your participation in this online video-conference involves risks to confidentiality similar to a person’s everyday use of the internet. All identifying information will be removed

Office of Research Integrity & Compliance
University of North Texas
Last Updated: August 9, 2007

APPROVED BY THE UNT IRB
10/16/2017 – 10/15/2018

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from the data prior to analysis. In all published research reports, participants and their contexts of employment will be referenced exclusively by pseudonyms. Data will be securely stored on the UNT campus for a period of three years past the end of the study.

**Questions about the Study:** If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Justin West at justinwest2@my.unt.edu, or Dr. Sean Powell at sean.powell@unt.edu

**Review for the Protection of Participants:** This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-4643 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

**Research Participants’ Rights:**

Your participation in the study confirms that you have read all of the above and that you agree to all of the following:

- Justin West has explained the study to you and you have had an opportunity to contact him/her with any questions about the study. You have been informed of the possible benefits and the potential risks of the study.
- You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.
- You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
- You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study.
- You understand you may print a copy of this form for your records.
APPENDIX I

VERIFICATION PROTOCOL
Hi, [participant]—

I hope all is well. As promised, I’m contacting you again because I’d like your feedback on the theory that I developed in my PD implementation study. I know this message is long, but I’d be really grateful for your feedback.

Please review the model diagram (attached) and read the following summary. After you’re done, please answer these questions: **Does the model capture your implementation process well? What does it leave out or not account for?**

Your responses can be as brief or as long as you’d like to make them. However, I am on a tight deadline, so I’d like a quick turnaround (by this Friday if possible!). Thanks so much for your help! Let me know if you have questions. -Justin

**MODEL SUMMARY (see diagram in attachment)**

- **First**, teachers consider change before and during the conference. This entails assessing their needs, attending the conference and envisioning change in the abstract, and then making a more concrete commitment to change via new practices or perspectives. After deciding which practices/perspectives to implement, deterrent factors/contingencies can prevent immediate implementation, leading teachers to give up a new practice/perspective or postpone its integration until a later date.
- **Second**, teachers realize change immediately after the conference. This is when they attempt to put into practice what they’ve learned. They first translate the practice/perspective to adapt it and contextualize it to their context and their students. Then, they integrate it. Sometimes the practice needs adjustments and another round of translation (recalibration) before trying it again. This cycle repeats itself until teachers feel like they have enough information to make a decision as to the new practice/perspective’s effectiveness.
- **Third**, teachers evaluate the new practice using student-related evidence (i.e., Are students getting better?). If they deem it effective, they continue it. If not, they either discontinue it without plans for bringing it back up in the future, or they defer it (in many cases until the next academic year).

Underlying the whole process is the notion of **convergence**, which can be defined as the extent to which teachers feel like the PD experience and the new practices/perspectives they pick up are relevant to them and their students, practicable in their contexts (i.e., feasibly implemented), and likely to have a positive impact on their students. These issues are top of mind for music teachers throughout all three phases.

Finally, the contextual conditions represent the circumstances in which teachers are working (e.g., Did they receive funding/release time to attend the conference?) and the personally held views teachers have regarding PD (e.g., How do they define PD? What’s most important to them?)
REFERENCES


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