Measuring the Impact of Youth Programs

League of American Orchestras 2014

Youth Orchestra Division

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8:45 am – 10:00 am

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Our Time Together

- Beginning Thoughts on Measuring Impact
- Impact Interview: One Example
- Impact Up Close and Personal: Your Examples
- A Conversation of Ideas and Questions
Measuring Impact

What do we mean by “impact”?  
Why measure impact?  
What should be considered?  
What are the essential steps?  
Where do you begin to incorporate assessments and evaluation into your practice?
Why Measure Impact – Historical Background

A shift . . . What do we mean by impact?

**Government Performance and Results Act 1993-1997**
- “Outcome-related goals and objectives”.
- From ‘having’ programs ➞ ‘difference-making’ programs

**Government Performance and Results Modernization Act 2010**
- Clearly defined milestones
- Outcome accountability—WHAT will change—HOW will it be achieved
- Indicators of success—HOW will it be measured—WHAT changed
- Accuracy and reliability – self-report is not enough, surveys are not enough—show the change through work, actions, and performance!
The Value of Measuring Impact
Seeking Shared Purposes and Intentions

*The Countdown . . . . The Expected*

- **Third:** Greater Staff; Community Partners; Funders
  - Seek **funding**; achieve funding; keep funding
  - Match community need with **program choices**
  - Inform the **community** and **communicate** messages
The Value of Measuring Impact
Seeking Shared Purposes and Intentions

Putting Findings to Work . . . .

- Second: Education and Organization
  - Refine intentions
  - Match program intensity (and capacity) with impact
  - Reconsider outcomes and indicators
  - Align teaching with training and program delivery
  - Stewardship of resources

Yet, Most Importantly . . . .
The Value of Measuring Impact
Seeking Shared Purposes and Intentions

The Missing Link . . . .

Carl: Participants—Students, Teachers and Community

- **Know** what they know and can do
- Personal achievement—identify their own **next steps**
- **Transfer** of knowledge, processes, skills— for the rest of their lives!
Theory of Change—Behind the Scenes Interview

Before you begin to measure impact, a Theory of Change

Makes clear WHAT you are doing

...and HOW it will make a difference.

...THEN evaluation tool selection.

ELEMENTS—Taking an Inventory

- **Inputs**—Staff, partners, mortar and bricks, materials, supplies.
- **External Factors**—Circumstances beyond control
- **Rationale**—Why activities will produce results
- **Assumptions**—Facts or conditions you assume to be true
- **Activities**—Actions taken
- **Outputs**—Tangible products that result from activities
Youth Symphony Plus

**Youth Orchestra Training**

**Resources:** Exec. Director, Music Director, conductors, sectional coaches

**Rationale:** High Quality Orchestral Training; Future of Classical Music

**Assumptions:** Access to Excellence; Rigorous training; Providing pre-professional networks

**Activities:** Orchestra rehearsals, Repertoire selection, Concert planning, coaching, weekly communications

**Contact/Intensity:** Weekly 3-hour practice

**IF Student Outcomes** Self-recognizes, when encountering a new work, where to improve in order to play fluently.

**THEN Indicators:** Applies techniques independently using learned/practiced motor memory resulting in flow between hearing and performing the music.

**Assessments:** Student self-assessment; Conductor report

**In-School/Community Programs**

**Resources:** Professional Musician/Teaching artists (coaches); School Partnerships

**Rationale:** Community Responsibility to Equitable Access; Diversity; Future of Classical Music

**Assumptions:** Value of Music Education for academic and personal growth; Opportunities for mastery

**Activities:** Hiring and scheduling artists; identifying students, partnership agreements

**Contact/Intensity:** Weekly 1-hour before school; 1-hour during school; 1-hour in evening, small group and individual coaching

**IF Student Outcomes** Persists in improving a personally challenging passage of music.

**THEN Indicators:** Continues to practice, with ongoing coach’s guidance, to identify a particular musical passage technique or skill level (e.g. fingering).

**Assessments:** Student and teacher checklist.
Your Program: ____________________

Resources: ____________________

Rationale: ____________________

Assumptions: ____________________

Activities: ____________________

External Factors: ____________________

Inputs/Outputs: ____________________

Resources: ____________________

Rationale: ____________________

Assumptions: ____________________

Activities: ____________________

External Factors: ____________________

Inputs/Outputs: ____________________
LEVELS OF IMPACT

- **EXPOSURE**
- **EXPERIENCE**
- **AWARENESS**
- **PRACTICE**
- **APPLICATION**
  - From Guided Instruction
  - To NEW Context

From In-school/After-school Program

To Youth Orchestra Training Program
Outcome-based Evaluation & Assessment

**KNOW**
- Critical Content
- Key Concepts
- Knowledge
  - Cognitive
  - Musically
  - Scientific/Mathematical
  - Historical/Social
  - Artistically

**DO**
- Skills and Processes
  - Affective/Motor
    - Expressive
    - Intellectual
    - Perceptual
    - Reflective
    - Technical

**BE**
- Attitudes
- Habits of Mind
- Dispositions
  - Application
  - Interest
  - Locus of control
  - Motivation
  - Related values
  - Self-concept
Program Evaluation vs. Learning Assessments

**Program Evaluation can.....**

- **Answer:** How well does the program meet its intended achievements? For all?
- **Identify and Align:** Clear measurable outcomes aligned with program activities.
- **Determine:** Program’s benefits compared to costs.
- **Use:** To make decisions about a program’s overall value, changes, continuance, future funding.

**Learning Assessments can ....**

- **Clarify:** What you want students to know and be able to do.
- **Identify:** Observable indicators that show you what students know and can do.
- **Determine:** Collection of student evidence.
- **Use:** To inform:
  1. Students what they know and can do: formative/summative
  2. Changes and strengths in instruction for teachers/artists
  3. Administration, community funders
Characteristics of Quality Outcomes

- Relate directly to the learning outcomes
- One or more traits or dimensions

- Teachable
- Observable
- Clear to students, teacher, rater, parents, administrators, and the general public

- Transparent and valued
- Meaningful – life application

- Current understanding of excellence
- Generalizable to a different context

- Reviewed for bias
Selecting an Assessments Focus

**KNOWLEDGE**
- ___________________ (e.g. content knowledge; musicality; classical vs. modern)
- ___________________

**SKILLS**
- ___________________ (e.g. fingering; inquiry process; reflection process)
- ___________________

**YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
- ___________________ (e.g. self-confidence; self-motivated practice)
- ___________________

**ORCHESTRA/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
- ___________________ (e.g. Retention; instruction; pedagogy; relationships)
- ___________________
Selecting an Evaluation Focus  

SYSO Example

**RECRUITMENT**  (*Knowledge* of Instrumental Music)
- **Outcome**: The number of students who engage in instrumental music lessons increases.
- **Indicator**: Student enrollment in instrumental music reaches capacity OR enlarges by xx%.

**RETENTION**  (*Attitude* to persevere in the study of music)
- **Outcome**: Retention rates of youth orchestras exceed district average /school cohort.
- **Indicator**: xx% youth orchestra students persist in playing an instrument from year-to-year.

**ADVANCEMENT**  (*Skills* and *Attitude* to take on more challenging repertoire)
- **Outcome**: Students are accepted into SYSO audition-based programs.
- **Indicator**: xx% of SYSO students earn entrance into Youth Symphony Training program.

**BEYOND THE MUSIC /YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**  (*Attitude, Disposition*)
- **Outcome**: Students develop a growth mindset transferred to other areas of study.
- **Indicators**: Non-music teachers report increased self-confidence and self-reflection in academic classes related and consistent with youth orchestra study.
The Take-aways

If you only remember 3 things about this presentation, here is what we hope they will be......

1. Less Is More!

2. Know Your Intentions!

3. Naturalize Evaluation as Part of the Fiber of Students!