

AN INQUIRY INTO CREATING INTENTIONAL SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH ENSEMBLE-BASED MUSIC PROGRAMS

From the 2014 class of Sistema Fellows at New England Conservatory

Amelia Downs
Ayriole Frost
Beverly Hiong
Eriel Huang
Tatjana Merzyn
Megan Moran
Hana Morford
Ricki Nelson
Aubree Weiley
Clara Yang

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
SOCIAL IMPACT	5
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	5
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	5
ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES	7
I. SOCIAL IMPACT	8
HOW CAN WE CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF INTENTIONAL SOCIAL CHANGE IN A WIDER CONTEXT?	9
II. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	12
WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXTS OF LEADERSHIP, OWNERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP?	13
CONCLUSIONS	16
III. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE	18
HOW DOES THE STAFF CULTURE REFLECT THE SOCIAL CHANGE YOU WANT TO CREATE?	19
HOW DO ALL CONSTITUENTS INTERACT IN AND WITH YOUR PROGRAM?	22
CONCLUSIONS	23
IV. ARTISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES	24
HOW DOES ONE CREATE A POSITIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE?	25
HOW CAN ONE SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM, REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES?	28
HOW DOES A PROGRAM'S CHOICE OF REPERTOIRE INFLUENCE ITS SOCIAL IMPACT?	33
HOW MIGHT ONE INCORPORATE CREATIVE MUSIC MAKING, AND WHY?	35
CONCLUSIONS	39
CONCLUSION	41
REFERENCES	42
APPENDIX	43

Acknowledgments

We are tremendously grateful for the invaluable support and guidance from all the Sistema Fellows Program faculty and staff at NEC, particularly Tony Woodcock, Leslie Wu Foley, Heath Marlow, Virginia Hecker, Eric Booth, and Greg Kandel; Sistema Fellows Friends Committee, Fundamusical, Dr. Jose Antonio Abreu, and Rodrigo Guerrero. We would also like to thank the Fellowship alumni for laying the ground work; the founders, directors, and instructors of the EI Sistema-Inspired Programs, as well as the following people and organizations who have generously shared their time, resources, and experiences with us, impacting our thinking, inquiry, and reflections for this paper:

- Anthony Trecek-King and David Howse (Boston Children's Chorus)
- Chuck Carter (Crittenton Women's Union)
- Dan Trahey (OrchKids)
- Erik Holmgren (Massachusetts Cultural Council)
- Kathe Swaback (RAW Art Works)
- Kathleen Jara (Conservatory Lab Charter School)
- Linda Nathan (Boston Arts Academy)
- Marcus Patteson (Sistema Norwich)
- Marshall Marcus (Sistema Europe)
- Sebastian Ruth (Community Music Works)
- Steve Seidel (Harvard Graduate School of Education)
- Alliance for Peacebuilding
- AS220
- Creative Connections
- International Center for Religion and Diplomacy

Introduction

The Fifth Class of Sistema Fellows has written this paper together as a culmination of a year of inquiring, discussing, observing and experiencing. We hope this document will be viewed as our contribution to the ongoing discussion and dialogue around using music for social change, and we see our audience as the leaders and instructors working in the El Sistema-inspired field, as well as those interested in joining the field.

Following research by Elaine Sandoval, many previous Fellows “express the need to develop pedagogy that is specifically designed for a socially-orientated music education program”¹. Although we have dedicated a section of this paper to pedagogical practices, we see this paper as more of a general inquiry than a handbook. Our main objective is to promote questioning, reflection and discussion around ensemble-based music programs that are focused on social outcomes.

We have also chosen not to suggest a definition of social change or what it looks like. Instead we offer a selection of mission statements (see Appendix) that show how other organizations have defined what social change means to them. These organizations are among those we have had the pleasure to visit during the fellowship. Throughout the paper, we draw on examples of best practice from the many socially driven initiatives we have encountered during the fellowship: Venezuela’s El Sistema, El Sistema-inspired programs, community music schools and arts programs. These programs include many different forms and models, a variety of artistic genres, and international settings. The collection of examples has been selected as experiences that particularly resonated with us, and have not necessarily been evaluated for their effectiveness. Rather than presenting scientific research, we hope to encourage new perspectives and reflection.

Following the spirit of an inquiry, this paper poses questions and considers some possible answers. The questions raised by this inquiry have been organized into the following sections:

- I. Social Impact - “How can we consider the impact of intentional social change in a wider context?”
- II. Community Engagement - “How can a program involve all constituents and become an intrinsic part of the community?”
- III. Organizational Culture - “How can a program reflect the social change it wants to see?”
- IV. Artistic and Educational Practices - “How can a program cultivate social change through its artistic and educational practices?”

We hope that by considering these questions, ensemble-based music programs can better determine what social change looks like in their community and how it can be reflected in their programming.

¹ “Wish Fulfilled: A Sistema Fellows Program Interim Report” (Boston, 2013), 28.

Executive Summary

Social Impact

First, we challenge programs to question what exactly the intentional catalyst is that drives social change in their program. We then ask programs to think of their impact not only on individuals, but to consider how they are building social capital in communities. In addition, we posit that taking a longer-term view of impact could lead to short-term decision-making that would align better with the program's vision. Finally, we take a broad view of social programs and put music programs in that context. We ask if music programs are more efficient than other social programs in reaching particular goals, and question if there are the unique outcomes a music program can achieve that will ensure the sustainability and advancement of the field.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is a dynamic, collaborative process amongst music organizations and its constituents. By aligning respective organizational mission and community needs at the outset, in-depth musical experiences can be directed toward a sustained, evolving continuum of intentional social change. At the basis of these efforts are the building, maintaining and managing of relationships through the perpetual dialogue of all stakeholders in the design of the program. We explore three fundamentals: Leadership, Ownership and Partnership.

Leadership in the context of community engagement requires patience, flexibility and creativity. In addition to embodying the vision and mission of the organization, leadership structures need to embrace the community's capacity, the time, the place as well as the sequence of potentially scaling the growth of the organization as appropriate.

Authoritarian Leadership is a style of leadership where the executives clearly define tasks, closely track processes and results, and are responsible for making main decisions.

Facilitative Leadership focuses on taking a step back and allowing people to be at their best. With the perspective of the "best outcome being the group outcome", facilitative leaders value the expertise of their team, and contribute through providing support, advice and resources.

Ownership, in the context of community engagement, invites all the stakeholders to safeguard shared intrinsic values. By taking responsibility with cultural sensitivity and awareness, respecting and protecting identities and associations, organizations and its constituents are able to meet with equal footing.

Broad Base of Ownership: Ownership of the partnership should go beyond the initiators and primary leaders. It is essential that those most directly involved in implementing partnership activities - instructors, artists, parents, administrators - have a strong sense of involvement and control.

Partnership, in the context of community engagement, is a collaborative effort between an arts organization and some manner of constituent(s). This can include other arts organizations, performance venues, schools and even the community at large. A shared vision, joint needs assessment, and clear goals fuel these partnerships from the very beginning.

Organizational Culture

Many programs identify the students and the effect the program wishes to have on them as the main priority in their mission. However, even if it is not implicitly included in the mission statements, most programs that we

visited had the view that social change does not just happen with the students, but it is part of the entire organizational culture: students, staff, parents and other constituents.

To what extent is there a sense of collective ownership in your organization?

There should be a collective commitment to the shared mission and vision of your program to create a positive working culture. It is also important to maintain a collective understanding of expectations and objectives, from using team agreements to clear agendas for meetings. Consider a set of agreed criteria for collective consensus making.

How do members of the organization relate to and collaborate with each other?

Your organization should be in agreement on the guidelines and expectations of the group's behavior, and there should be space given to reflecting on how the group is working. Foster a sense of omni-directional mentorship, where all constituents are treated as colleagues and empowered to come up with their own ideas or projects. Encourage self-awareness of the varying skill-sets, strengths and weaknesses of the group, along with the personal communication and working styles of your team. Record how the organization unifies communication and understands staff-student boundaries, cultural awareness and students' experiences outside of the organization.

What needs to be considered when hiring a new member of staff?

When bringing on new people, consider the strongest skill sets of individual, identification with the mission/vision/core values and identification with the community. The hiring process will shape the kinds of candidates you encounter and what skills you can glean during the process. Consider the background you want in a candidate, and the compensation required for the various backgrounds. Be intentional about the orientation process for new members of your organization, whether staff, student, or volunteer.

How can your program support professional development and spirit of lifelong enquiry?

Offer opportunities for colleagues to reflect on and research the issues of their community, to share new ideas and collaborate on their delivery. Facilitate dialogue and harness collective experience in moving towards a greater understanding of how to serve your community through music.

How do you support the teaching and artistry of your staff?

If you have staff members who have less classroom teaching experience, it is important to prepare them for the classroom before they enter. Provide feedback on a regular basis in order to give instructors the opportunity to reflect on their work. Support planning time for your instructors. Create opportunities for your staff to get together and share teaching strategies.

Encourage staff members to create art together. Allow for performing opportunities at your organization. Extend the opportunities for your students to your staff members.

How does your program integrate the ideas of students into its fabric?

Some programs have one-on-one meetings with students, so that each student's concerns and needs are met throughout the year. At several organizations, staff members take the time to discuss their students with all the staff present. Involving students in your decision-making process is a powerful way to stay connected to the main constituents of your program.

How can interpersonal relationships be strengthened among all members of the program?

Food can always bring people together. Find appropriate ways to celebrate your participants and socialize outside of programming and meetings.

How do you collaborate with organizations doing similar work?

Consider exchanging instructors or staff members with a nearby program for a short time. Collaborate on group performing opportunities with other organizations. Share repertoire resources, pedagogical practices and other

strategies for improving your program. Collaborating on professional development can spread the wealth of knowledge in your region while diffusing financial responsibility between several organizations.

Artistic and Educational Practices

As the field expands and initiatives take shape across the United States and abroad, artistic and educational programming of various programs will diversify and mold to the culture and community from which they come. However, what remains constant is the field's unifying desire to identify and develop the social outcomes they hope to see in their students through music. As such, how can artistic and educational programming be intentionally shaped such that they reflect this mission of social change?

How does one create a positive classroom culture?

If El Sistema-inspired programs truly strive to instill a sense of ownership in the students, it may be critical to involve them in creating student centered, value-centric set of expectations. In modeling the behavior that we hope to see in our students, instructors should use positive language, such as consequences with empathy and enforceable statements. An instructor can exercise both approachable and credible demeanors to effectively create a productive and positive learning atmosphere. The structure and pacing of lessons, using hooks, kinesthetic release and effective transitions, can keep students engaged. Incorporating student input can encourage students to learn from each other.

How can one support development of social skills in the classroom, rehearsals or performances?

In the classroom or in rehearsals, instructors may incorporate different styles of peer-to-peer teaching to enhance student learning. In rehearsals, instructors may create space for student-centered rehearsal practices, such as sectionals, rotating seat order, conductor-less playing, student conducting and collaborative interpretation. In performances, students might moderate the concert, lead an interaction with the audience or write program notes.

Some community arts organizations incorporate non-musical programming, in which students explore and ask questions about nonmusical issues, such as identity, leadership and social change. These non-musical programming take many forms, including weekly dinners, discussion in rehearsals, and student-centered workshops during conferences.

How might one incorporate creative music making, and why?

Improvisation can be used within the musical ensemble-based learning environment in order to achieve a diverse set of skills or values, such as listening, responding to the environment and promoting positive social interactions. Composition, unlike improvisation, is a lasting and tangible evidence of creative accomplishment. Through composing, the student can have the power of ownership, in addition to the learning, responding and performance.

How does the choice of repertoire influence the social impact of our program?

Familiar and unfamiliar music may have equally important but different places in programming. Classical music education, by virtue of being associated with a higher status, may be one way to access more educational and financial opportunities for many. Because repertoire shapes the learning of an instrument, transmission of emotions, and storytelling, it may influence pedagogy. Classically trained musicians may find teaching different styles of music unfamiliar. Given that authenticity is important, classically trained musicians may benefit from scaffolding in developing the capacity to teach different styles of music. Repertoire choice may affect how a particular program can engage and collaborate with other music programs and instructors.

I. Social Impact

There are multiple areas for consideration when exploring the potential impact of intentional social change through ensemble based music programs. In exploring this impact, it is helpful to have a clearly defined framework. We break this down into two parts: (1) impact on individuals and communities (2) short, medium, or long term. If we do not specify a context and/or time frame, it can become easy to over generalize or inflate the findings of our programs. In the following questions, we hope to provoke the fruitful exploration of the impacts of intentional social change as they may apply to a variety of ensemble-based music programs.

How can we consider the impact of intentional social change in a wider context?

What is the intentional catalyst that drives social change in your program?

Questioning what specific factors of a program cause social change allows us to track program outcomes and impact. For many of us, this process can serve as an exploration into the unknown nuances of our own programs. Thoughtful investigation into the particularities of our programs allows us to easier pinpoint significant factors initiating social change and to illuminate our evaluation process.

In a program with both non-musical and musical activities, how important are each of these components in affecting youth? Does the experience participating in a group discussion on social issues resonate more with youth or the feeling of achievement and being part of a community during performances? Can these experiences be compared or should we view them as complementary?

From a programming point of view, we know that peer-to-peer instruction encourages collaboration and strengthens social skills. If this is an important part of building relationships, how important is having this activity in achieving program outcomes?

How do we think about impact on individuals in the short, medium or long term?

Our field is young and the majority of research has been centered around proving the outcomes of a program on individuals. How can we think about the further implications of our work in the long term and tie this into the vision for our programs? This is significant now because knowing the intentional social change catalyst and taking a longer-term view can affect the way we make immediate decisions in the short term regarding allocating scarce resources (money, instructor's time and effort, space, student's time) and weight of different activities in programming to achieve our goals efficiently and effectively. The goal is not to create identical individuals, but rather to push the students to explore and reach their full potential. We begin with the end in mind.

- **Long Term:** One way to think of the long-term (20, 30, 50 years) influence a program can have on a child is to envision what we want them to look like as adults. What kind of characteristics do we want them to have? How has their socio-economic status changed? How are we helping them to develop skills that lead to healthier life choices? Research has shown that wages correspond to number of years of formal schooling. Are we improving a student's standard of living in the longer term by keeping them in school?
- **Medium Term:** What do graduates from your program look like when they are 18? Is the medium term goal of the program to prepare children for further studies or college? Is the program opening up additional avenues for employment for youth by equipping them with tangible skills such as administrative, teaching or leadership skills?²
- **Short Term:** These are some of the positive outcomes that we have the opportunity to see on a daily basis and make our work gratifying. We are familiar with these: improved grades, improved attitudes and psychological well-being, keeping students off the street, opportunity to visit and perform in concert

² Joshua Guetzkow, "How the Arts Impact Communities: An introduction to the literature on arts impact studies" (paper presented at the Taking the Measure of Culture Conference, Princeton, New Jersey, June 7-8, 2002).

halls and at city hall, and exposure to people they would not otherwise have the chance to meet, etc. How can you design your curriculum to align it with the impact you wish to achieve, now that you have an idea of what drives social change in your program? (Conversation with Andrea Landin, 2014)

How do we think about impact on community in the short, medium or long term?

Malcolm Gladwell writes about the concept of “Tipping point” and this begs an interesting question: At what level of involvement does individual/organizational-level effects begin to have community-level consequences?³ Also, what is the link between individual impact and effect on the community?

- **Medium Term/Long Term:** One of the goals a program can strive to intentionally foster is building social capital. “Social capital refers to those stocks of social trust, norms and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems. Networks of civic engagement, such as neighborhood associations, sports clubs, and cooperatives, are an essential form of social capital, and the denser these networks, the more likely that members of a community will cooperate for mutual benefit.”⁴ We can ask if our program encourages more social interaction in the community than would exist otherwise and what is the quality of that interaction? How does the idea of intentionally creating an environment where people can interact and build positive relationships affect the way we run our program? Perhaps we could incorporate volunteering into the fabric of the organization or hire a person familiar with the local community as a liaison into the fabric of the program.
- **Short Term:** We have seen many wonderful examples of community impact in the short term. These include greater family support of a student’s achievement and multi-cultural interactions that lead to greater acceptance and celebration of different cultures. If a group of students who had poor attendance rates now have stellar records in schools, does this affect their classmates positively? Is there a shift in culture of the school because of the change in attitudes of these children? Have mindsets of adults changed with regard to youth as a result of the attitude change observed after participating in a music program?

The way we define community is important because the impact of a program with 100 children in a community of 10,000 will be much more significant than in a community with 100,000 people. At the same time, given limited resources, providing an in-depth experience to a smaller number of children and families could build greater social capital, as family and friends of students who are more dedicated will more likely participate in activities that the program organizes. We have to make a decision regarding establishing social capital through the size of a program or depth of involvement.

Will money spent on a music program with intentional social outcomes have *more* of an impact than other social programs? What are some of the *unique* outcomes a music program achieves?

As musicians, we all believe and understand that a powerful experience in the arts can benefit youth immensely. When thinking about addressing social problems in a larger context, an interesting question to address within a program or across the board is “how can we reach this social goal most efficiently”? If we take reforming at-risk youth as an example, without a doubt, providing them access to a music program will achieve desirable outcomes. However, is the music program *more* effective than Boy Scouts or basketball in achieving

³ Guetzkow, “How the Arts Impact Communities.”

⁴ “Social Capital,” Civic Practices Network, last modified, May 11, 2014, <http://www.cpn.org/tools/dictionary/capital.html>

those outcomes? What are we giving up in order to fund this program and is this the best use of the money to reform these youth?⁵

Some difficulties involved in this consideration include varying program goals and desired impact.⁶ Also, the lack of data and the difficulty in measuring the impact of intangible outcomes from arts programs compounds this problem.

These questions are not meant to antagonize or to instigate competition among social programs. Given that we are musicians, and our tool is music, trying to teach basketball because it is a more cost efficient way to achieve the same outcomes will be hilarious, at best. Rather, having an understanding of social programs in a wider context and a thoughtful response to the unique outcomes of a music program with intentional social change (surely putting youth in a basketball program will have different outcomes than putting them in a music program) could be one of the ways to ensure the sustainability and an advancement of the field.

⁵ Guetzkow, "How the Arts Impact Communities."

⁶ Ibid.

II. Community Engagement

This inquiry revolves around the questions: who are we serving, what are their needs, what are we offering, how are we doing it, and why? These questions have been addressed in different guises, predominantly associated with *outreach* and *engagement*.⁷ Each of these terms may conjure up nuanced definitions and varied implications.

The notion of outreach suggests a provider and a recipient, responding to a need with a somewhat linear, one-sided power structure. Engagement, on the other hand is an active, needs-based interplay of exchange. In order to explore the full potential of community engagement, we suggest the following definition:

Community engagement is a dynamic, collaborative process amongst music organizations and its constituents. By aligning respective organizational mission and community needs at the outset, in-depth musical experiences can be directed toward a sustained, evolving continuum of intentional social change.

In this section, we explore the fundamentals needed to achieve shared goals between artistic partnerships. At the basis of these efforts are the building, maintaining and managing of relationships through the perpetual dialogue of all stakeholders in the design of the program. We share observations of organizations that reflect key elements of these interconnected relationships: leadership, partnership and ownership. These three elements are in no particular order of importance or hierarchy.

⁷ “Webinar: From outreach to community engagement,” YouTube video, 1:04:40, posted by “AssocCASymph,” April 16, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8xXfHHJaqA&app=desktop>.

What is community engagement within the contexts of leadership, ownership and partnership?

How does leadership affect community engagement?

In the context of community engagement, leadership requires patience, flexibility and creativity. In addition to embodying the vision and mission of the organization, leadership structures need to embrace the community's capacity, the time, the place as well as the sequence of potentially scaling the growth of the organization as appropriate.

- **Authoritarian Leadership:** is a style of leadership where the executives clearly define tasks, closely track processes and results, and are responsible for making main decisions.
- **Facilitative Leadership** focuses on taking a step back and allowing people to be at their best. With the perspective of the “best outcome being the group outcome,” facilitative leaders value the expertise of their team, and contribute through providing support, advice and resources.
 - *Example:* Laura Jekel, Program Director of MYCincinnati, a youth orchestra that operates under the umbrella of Price Hill Will, a non-profit that serves the community of Price Hill, OH. Executive director, Ken Smith, leads Price Hill Will. Ken demonstrates a facilitative leadership style through his understanding of Laura's strength and qualifications as a program director. Within the parameters of the mission and her budget, Laura has full freedom to pilot MYCincinnati as she sees fit. This display of trust is not only a warm gesture, but also shows an immense respect for Laura's vision.
 - *Desired outcome:* Facilitative leadership can promote an ideal workspace - one where everyone's voices are heard. The executive director's trust in Laura's judgment has empowered her to design an effective curriculum, and to nurture a thriving organizational culture.
- Youth Leadership: Boston Children's Chorus, RAW Art Works, AS220 and Community Music Works all have structures within the organization that are intentionally designed for youth to experience and execute leadership. Mentored by instructors, youth leaders have the platform and freedom within safe boundaries to exercise their full potential amongst their peers.

How does ownership affect community engagement?

Ownership, in the context of community engagement, invites all the stakeholders to safeguard shared values. By taking responsibility with cultural sensitivity and awareness, respecting and protecting identities and associations, organizations and its constituents are able to meet with equal footing.

- **Broad Base of Ownership:** Ownership of the partnership should go beyond the initiators and primary leaders. It is essential that those most directly involved in implementing partnership activities - instructors, artists, parents, administrators- have a strong sense of involvement and control.⁸
 - *Example:* Broad Base of Ownership is an essential component of the community of Austin Soundwaves, led by Patrick Slevin. When observing the program, it was clear that Patrick had invested time in nurturing relationships with not only students and colleagues, but everyone else on

⁸ Steven Seidel, Meredith Eppel, Maria Martiniello, *Arts Survive: A Study of Sustainability in Arts Education Partnerships*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Project Zero, 2001).

the ground including the custodians, parents, front desk attendants and other school staff members. The result was a program that students and parents could relate to and feel safe – to the point that they would often *gladly* volunteer themselves for many of the mundane daily tasks including ensemble set-up, selling raffle tickets, and event logistics. The groundkeepers and parent volunteers engaged with Patrick and his staff frequently and freely, and it was clear they put faith and value in Patrick’s vision.

- *Desired outcome:* This web of ownership translates to a culture of lasting cooperation, warmth and support. Studies show that the broader the feeling of ownership in partnership activities, the more likely there will be support in times of challenge and crisis.
- **Community Liaison officer:** A familiar member of the community who can relate to the everyday lives of the students and parents. This individual often has multiple roles within the program, and as a liaison, they are responsible for communicating with parents and students and other constituents. In addition to staying connected, these individuals can help bridge the understanding of cultural values between the program leaders and community.
 - *Example:* Lilly Torres, operations manager of the People’s Music School in Chicago, IL, plays many roles within the organization – site logistics, volunteer coordination and parent liaison. As a woman of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent, she is a hometown representative – a friendly face for parents and students to engage with. Lilly jokingly describes herself as “chatty”, but this quality of hers actually seems to help connect with the parents of the students. She believes that in a community engagement program, everyone is responsible for what goes on, and as volunteer coordinator, she works tirelessly to keep parents involved throughout. Having someone as a liaison from the community can immensely help connect the rest of community, and provide cultural context for what is going on in the program to both, families and administration.
 - *Desired outcome:* It is important to prioritize finding people like Lilly, who are from the communities that are being served. They know what the community values, can be a voice which connects cross-culturally, and, because word-of-mouth is a powerful tool, they can help build the trust and reputation of an organization. Not enough thanks can be given for many of the unspoken services that they deliver.
- **Special Needs Program:** Based on the community needs to include students with physical and mental disabilities, a tailored curriculum was pioneered by staff and specialists at the Barquisimeto Conservatory in Venezuela. Parents accompany their children to classes. In the White Hands Choir, abled and disabled students are placed alongside each other where the audio impaired students sing with sign language next to visually impaired students. Ensembles of recorders and percussion are set up so the students are also fully able to participate in the music learning process.
- **Parents Ensembles:** In Merida, we observed a choir formed by parents. This opportunity gave parents the first hand encounter of what their children were experiencing in the ensemble music making process.
- **Framework for a “Call to Action:”** The National Summit on Creative Youth Development was a nationwide convention of over 200 leaders, funders, policymakers, researchers and youth. Together, they came up with a policy framework to advocate for the sector and its programs as a catalyst for young people to be active contributors to their societies. The agenda is currently being rolled out on a national, state and local level by numerous arts organizations.
- **Arts Advocacy Day:** Representatives of arts organizations from all the states met in Washington DC to discuss “the ask” for the fiscal year 2015 of \$155 million. This endeavor is an indication of arts

organizations taking financial responsibility for their livelihood to be of service to the community. It also is a demand for the government to be accountable to its citizens.

How do partnerships affect community engagement?

Within the context of community engagement, a partnership is a collaborative effort between an arts organization and some manner of constituent(s). This can include other arts organizations, performance venues, schools and even the community at large. A shared vision, joint needs assessment, and clear goals fuel these partnerships from the very beginning.

- **Visibility:** The location and venue where the concerts are held can be impactful for the community awareness, reputation and sustainability of an organization. Strategic partnerships with performance spaces such as churches, universities and symphony halls can attract a lot of good press. Also, many community events, such as town hall meetings, have slots for music performance. This is one of the quickest ways to meet community leaders!
 - *Example:* Dantes Rameau, executive director of Atlanta Music Project, makes it a point to keep AMP visible and connected to the community. Within one week, AMP students had the privilege to perform in two venues: Atlanta Symphony Hall and the Georgia Aquarium that hosted the Box Tops for Education Town Hall meeting. At the symphony hall, the AMP students performed an hour before Yo-Yo Ma, and attracted some foot-traffic. At the town hall meeting, there were prominent African American news anchors from CNN, and even R&B singer, Monica.
 - *Desired outcome:* Not only does this ignite community awareness, but also it gives the kids a chance to interact with town leaders from all over the city.
- **“Entry Point” programming:** The spirit of keeping the constituency in the discussion at all times relates to music programming as much as it does the organization itself. Especially, when using classical music as the core practice, it is important to respect and engage with musical styles that communicate to the community being served.
 - *Example:* Aisha Bowden is the director of AMPlify, the flagship choral ensemble of Atlanta Music Project. Aisha and Dante carefully crafted a program which both, stayed true to their classical foundation, but also connected to the audience and the kids of Atlanta, GA. As Atlanta has an immensely heavy African-American population, they included two African spirituals and a song by R&B singer Monica called “Searching”. The AMP orchestra added some variety and played Bach - Brandenburg no.3 in G major. Both ensembles combined into a joint choir and orchestra and performed Gloria from a Haydn Mass, and AMPlify concluded the program with “Happy” by pop star, Pharrell.
 - *Desired outcome:* A mix of challenging, diverse and fun music that can serve as entry points to a wider spectrum of instrumental music. The parents loved seeing their kids perform a wide variety of music, and the routine symphony concertgoers in attendance marveled at the sheer quality of the music-making.
- **Collaboration with similar programs:** Planning an annual or biannual seminar with nearby programs can garner more support for your work throughout your region, and provide more opportunities for peer learning between students, parents and instructors from different backgrounds and experiences. Financial and management responsibility can be also shared along with access to facilities.

- Example: Take A Stand is an El Sistema themed conference hosted by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Bard College, Longy School of Music. Students from núcleos across the country gather, interact, and play music together. One of the highlights of this conference is the student discussion forum. This opportunity allows student leaders to engage and form relationships with peers from other núcleos. For example, student leaders from Austin Soundwaves and MYCincinnati met at this conference, have become good friends, and remain in contact.
- Desired outcome: Not only do núcleo directors have a chance to network and become friends, but their own students have the opportunity to develop relationships as well.
- **Community engagement outside the arts:** The following examples are those we have come across outside ensemble-based music programs:
 - Two generational approach: Crittenton Women’s Union serves women, addressing their economic empowerment. Providing financial management education, job training, support groups, individual mentoring, as well as childcare, early childhood education, and schooling plan whilst these women are receiving their services, the organization also partners with housing projects. This method targets to alleviate both the symptoms and root cause, thereby more effectively sustaining the efforts to break the poverty cycle.
 - Merging potential silos: Alliance for Peacebuilding partnered with numerous organizations and held a conference with media experts, filmmakers, peace building practitioners and researchers to brainstorm on how film and media can be used to elevate awareness of peace building. Even though it was previously uncharted territory, experts from both fields directed their ideas, energies, resources and networks for this unusual, nouveau venture.
 - Ubuntu: I am because you are because we are. At the Slomoff Symposium on Bridging Global Religious Divides, a case study was shared where the programmatic intervention was nullified. In war-torn central Africa, men were fighting over land due to ethnic-religious conflict. The women from opposing groups came together, because they had to share something as simple as cooking pots and fire stoves. It was the wives who stopped their warring husbands because both groups realized they needed life-sustaining resources of which only the other owned.
 - The use of technology: MIT Innovation Lab hosted BuildPeace, a peacebuilding through technology conference. Experts shared how the creative use of technological innovations as well as social media could aid in gaging the public on a daily basis for the efforts of building peaceful communities.

Conclusions

Through practicing the fundamentals of community engagement - leadership, ownership and partnership - we can better align ourselves with the needs of the community. This process requires extensive listening. As Eric Booth states,

Community engagement used to be about ‘teaching’ the public; ironically, it has now become about necessary ‘learning from’ the public.’ In order to keep up with the ever-shifting landscape of community engagement, the right questions need to be asked, and intensely reflected upon. Merely working together does not a partnership

make...The goal for bringing communities in contact with art, artists and art making is a driving, life-long commitment.⁹

Dr. Abreu's colossal efforts to magnify the spirit of El Sistema compel us to pause and reflect, challenge the assumptions of our own efforts, and critically engage with the *raison d'être* of music and music education, for it can no longer exist within the bounds only for certain social categories; but that this quest demands of us the courage to go beyond the comfort of the status quo. We are at a pivotal juncture to consider the wider as well as the holistic ecosystem within which arts, and particularly music education operates.

⁹ Eric Booth, "The Changing Grammar of Community Engagement," Chorus America, accessed April 4th, 2014, <https://www.chorusamerica.org/advocacy-research/changing-grammar-community-engagement>.

III. Organizational Culture

Of the selection of mission statements we collected, most programs identify the students and the effect the program wishes to have on them as their main priority. A few, however, mention their desire to create a more widespread change in the community. For example, Community MusicWorks in Providence, RI seeks to “create a cohesive urban community through music education and performance that transforms the lives of children, families, and musicians”. Even if it is not implicitly included in the mission statements, most programs that we visited had the view that social change does not just happen with the students, but it is part of the entire organizational culture: students, staff, parents and other constituents.

This section of the paper focuses on the following questions:

- A. How does staff culture reflect the social change you want to create?
- B. How do all constituents interact in and with your program?

How does the staff culture reflect the social change you want to create?

To what extent is there collective ownership in your organization?

There should be a collective commitment to the shared mission and vision of your program to create a positive working culture. Sebastian Ruth, founding director of Community MusicWorks, defines creating collective ownership as all staff feeling that their own personal vision and passions are getting fed by being a member of the program. Make sure that the way staff tells the story of the organization also aligns with the mission and vision.

Points to consider:

- **Collective understanding:** Maintain a collective understanding of expectations and objectives, from using team agreements to clear agendas for meetings. In creating staff alignment, Leslie Wu Foley, Dean of the Prep Department of the New England Conservatory, MA, advises to seek for constant feedback and contributions from staff, to more successfully manage tasks, and to give team ownership of the outcome. Facilitate discussions with the intent that all members feel comfortable enough to give their voice and have adequate time to do so.
- **Collective consensus making:** Consider a set of agreed criteria for collective consensus making. Factors could include: does the decision move the organization forward, make financial sense, and make the least impact to the staff's current workload?

How do members of the organization relate to one another and collaborate?

- **Communication:** In many programs with best practices, the staff communication models how the program expects the students to communicate. Having your staff meet together as a team is an important part of creating a positive staff culture. Be sure that these meetings are run smoothly and that staff members speak respectfully to each other and feel welcome to speak up at meetings. An agenda and time facilitator are helpful tools, and ask staff members for input on what goes on the agenda.
- **Modeling expected behavior:** Your organization should be in agreement on the guidelines and expectations of the group's behavior, and there should be space given to reflect on how the group is working. Think about how your staff is aware of signals and procedures to get the attention of students and manage behavior. Many programs hosted at schools, integrate their program culture into the already existing culture of the host school. However, this can only be effective if the host school has specific and consistent procedures in place.
- **Self-awareness:** Allow for reflections on the varying skill-sets, strengths and weaknesses of the group, along with the personal communication and working styles of your team. How well does the organization provide a space to listen to each other, and what is the quality of the listening? Share thoughts about the process of working as a team collectively. For example, you could invite staff to consider sharing their version of the sentence "I am the team and in order to grow I need...."
- **Omni-directional mentorship:** Edward Clapp, doctoral candidate at Harvard University, has introduced the idea of omni-directional mentorship as a staple of positive organizational culture. Many positive staff cultures we have observed have clear leaders, but all staff members (and sometimes students and student leaders) are treated as colleagues and often empowered to come up with their own ideas or projects, with guidance rather than instructions from the leadership of the organization. It

is also important that your staff feel open to “managing up,” or letting the leadership know what they need in order to succeed in their jobs.

What needs to be considered when hiring a new member of staff?

- **Potential criteria:** Some things to think about when bringing new people to your organization are: the strongest skill sets of the individual, how well the candidate identifies with the mission, vision, core values at the outset, and if they identify with the community served. Consider the background and set of experiences you are looking for in a candidate and the relevant compensation required.
- **The process:** The hiring process will shape the kinds of candidates you encounter and what skills you can glean during the process. Many programs have an interview, either with an individual or a panel. Many also require a sample lesson or some way to discern aptitude in a classroom environment. An idea from Eric Booth: gather all your finalists for a position at one time, and have them teach each other and give feedback. This can help you find out which candidates are experienced, but also who can take feedback and how they will be able to work with their coworkers, which is an invaluable part of the staff culture. Whatever your process, be sure that it enables your program to hire staff who are passionate, open-minded and innovative.
- **Staff numbers:** In an orchestral setting, it may be ideal to have at least one instructor for every instrument; however, managing a large staff of people who come for a small number of hours may not be practical. Consider hiring a few people who can teach all the instruments in their instrument family (one brass instructor instead of one trumpet, one horn, one trombone) and employ them for more hours per week. It may be possible to bring in specialists on a less frequent basis for private or group lessons by instrument. Instructors who have more hours at one organization are less likely to have a large number of other responsibilities that may conflict with your program.
- **Orientation process:** Be intentional about the orientation process for new members of your organization, whether staff, student, or volunteer. Raw Artworks in Lynn, MA has an employee handbook with all the rules and important information to know. Even if a handbook does not exist yet for your organization, it is important for your new employees to know the mission and values of your organization, have access to a staff directory with contact information and are aware of causes for dismissal, absence procedures, and what to do in an emergency.

How can your program support professional development and the spirit of lifelong enquiry?

- **Lifelong learning:** Our culture, and especially the world of music education, perpetuates the idea that learning ends once you have graduated. The result is that trained musicians often find themselves without continuing professional development opportunities, which could provide them with the tools to tackle the ever-changing landscape of community engagement and music education. For many musicians, the process of finding themselves ‘de-skilled’ and without proper preparation for their challenging role in the program causes considerable stress, and leads to a risk of ‘burn-out’ and high staff turnover.
- **Reflection and collaboration:** Social development theory also states that those in the field of social change require an ever-increasing awareness of social issues. This awareness will influence the role of pioneering individuals and those who imitate them, resulting in the creation of new activities, which in turn facilitates new advance. The interaction of these new and different concepts perpetuates further understanding. Therefore, programs should offer opportunities for colleagues to reflect on and research the issues of their community, to share new ideas and collaborate on their delivery. Opportunities could

be regular workshops or forums amongst staff, or even using Google docs where staff can easily record and share ideas.

How do you support the teaching of your staff?

- **Supporting classroom management:** If you have staff members who have less classroom teaching experience, it is important to prepare them for the classroom before they enter. This can be in the form of team teaching with a colleague, an orientation where classroom management and expectations for classroom behavior are discussed or other opportunities provided by the organization. Lorrie Heagy, at Juneau Alaska Music Matters scaffolds the amount of support she gives new instructors: first she has new instructors observe while she works with students, next team teaches with them, then observes while the new instructor handles the classroom, and finally leaves the instructor to teach unaided.
- **Constructive feedback:** Another way to support teaching is to provide feedback on a regular basis in order to give instructors the opportunity to reflect on their work, and also for the organization to evaluate their staff. This can be through colleague observations, or simply recording lessons and having instructors watch the recordings.
- **Planning time:** Work planning time for instructors into your budget, and ask for reports on lesson plans. These do not have to be in any particular structure, but by reporting on plans for the week or month or unit, it gives instructors the space to imagine where they want students to be. Be sure that social outcomes are included in these plans.
- **Sharing best practice:** Create opportunities for your staff to get together and share teaching strategies. This can be through professional development days facilitated by outside contributors, or by taking a staff meeting once a month and utilizing that time for sharing strategies.

How do you support the artistry of your staff?

- **Create art together:** Community MusicWorks as a model performs as a string quartet. Raw ArtWorks has designated projects where staff members create art pieces together. Chamber groups, staff orchestra or even reading through potential student repertoire as a staff could all be ways of making music together.
- **Performing opportunities:** This can be in the form of weekly concerts, jam sessions with staff members and students, or simply allowing for practice space or time when programming is not happening. The People's Music School Youth Orchestras held a concert series that doubled as performing opportunities for staff members and fundraising events for the organization. The People's Music School also allows staff members to use the space at the Uptown Academy for rehearsals and practice space during off hours.
- **Maximize learning opportunities:** Do you have a great conductor coming to do a concert with your students? Ask the conductor to do a conducting class with your staff. Having a masterclass with a local violin professor? Allow for time with staff members for a lesson or masterclass. Taking your students to a symphony concert? Make sure your staff members feel welcome to join even if they are not chaperoning the trip.

How do all constituents interact in and with your program?

How does your program integrate the ideas of students into its fabric?

- **Meetings with students:** Some programs have one-on-one meetings with students, so that each student's concerns and needs are met throughout the year. If your program has a large number of students, it may be more feasible to have staff do these meetings with their smaller subset of students. Even a five-minute chat with each student by the program director can make each student feel more invested in the program, and a larger part of the organization.
- **Meetings about students:** At several organizations, staff members take the time to discuss their students with all the staff present. At Bridge Boston, the staff literally discusses every single student, their achievements and needs for improvement, and any other challenges the student may be facing in their personal lives.
- **Listening to student voices:** Community MusicWorks reserves two seats on its board for students, so that the student voice is always present when the organization is making decisions, and so that the students have a better understanding of how the organization as a whole works. Boston Children's Chorus has a leadership council of students who contribute to thematic social concerns for the year and provide feedback to the artistic leadership on the state of the chorus. The rehearsals are run democratically, where students are asked for input on artistic interpretation.

How can interpersonal relationships be strengthened among all members of the program?

- **Food:** Shared meals can be effective in a variety of ways. For example, Boston Children's Chorus began having potluck dinners at pickup time to gather parents together. At Raw ArtWorks in Lynn, MA, weekly staff meetings are always during lunch, and the staff members take turns making the food for the meeting.
- **Celebrations:** Find ways to celebrate your participants; it may be birthdays, particular staff achievements, or other ways to put spotlight on all those involved in your program. At HOLA, each meeting ends with acknowledgements of staff achievements, and any staff member in the meeting can acknowledge anyone else. Even the smallest things celebrated can increase the sense of community in your organization.
- **Socializing:** Find ways to socialize outside of programming and meetings. This may be sporting events, informal jam sessions, or rotating get-togethers at staff member homes. At The People's Music School, many holidays and birthdays are celebrated in the form of small parties at homes, where people are able to get to know each other outside of the work place. Find what is appropriate and unique to your organization, and make sure your staff feels comfortable in these situations.

How do you collaborate with organizations doing similar work?

- **Professional development:** Exchange an instructor or staff member for a day with a nearby program. Each program can gain new insight and fresh eyes to the everyday programming, but without causing further financial burden.
- **Collaboration:** Planning an annual or biannual seminar with nearby programs can garner more support for your work throughout your region, and provide more opportunities for peer learning between students, parents and instructors from different backgrounds and experiences. Financial and management responsibility can be also shared along with access to facilities.

- **Sharing:** Sharing repertoire, resources, pedagogical practices and other strategies for improving your program are important to support other programs. This should result in easier access to these resources and prevents duplication of research and legwork, saving your organization valuable time to devote to other aspects of the organization.

How do you collaborate with community partners doing different work?

Consider your program becoming a part of the community landscape of social programs and interventions. A staff member of the Dreamyard Project in the Bronx, NY remarked that their programming was effective in causing social change by facilitating community links, so that those who needed help would find access to social services and community support.

Think about the following:

- **Involve other community members:** Inputs from experts in other fields in the community may also enrich your program and the community. At Community MusicWorks a chef volunteers to cook the dinner they share on Friday evenings, and also speaks with the students about nutrition. Many other programs have similar partnerships, where parents or students can get additional aspects of their overall health addressed while waiting to pick up students or attending recruitment events.
- **Other community contexts:** Whilst many programs work in-school or have their own facility, there are many organizations that work in other many other settings including prisons, hospitals and homeless shelters.

Conclusions

Visitors to El Sistema in Venezuela are often struck by the extent to which all participants of a program are able to articulate the mission and vision of the organization and the social change that it has created in the community. El Sistema is one example of excellence where the founder Dr. Abreu has been intentional about organizational culture. From our experiences this year, it seems that creating a positive organizational culture involves:

- Fostering alignment in your organization
- Establishing unified processes and ways of communication
- Encouraging an awareness of how the team works together
- Facilitating omni-directional mentorship
- Supporting lifelong enquiry into community music interventions
- Providing opportunities for the development of teaching and artistic potential

IV. Artistic and Educational Practices

As initiatives whose key purpose is centered on youth development, most El Sistema-inspired programs would agree that their educational and artistic practices are at the heart of what they do. The daily activities that occur in the classroom, the rehearsal room and the performance hall help shape our students both musically and socially.

While a variety of artistic programming exists throughout the many US programs, we also recognize our organizations' shared mission to attain certain social outcomes (including, but not limited to, resiliency, self-efficacy, community, and critical thinking) - a goal that, in turn, helps shape our pedagogical practices. We propose here that, if we truly intend to create social change, our programming and activities should likewise reflect that mission.

In this section, we ask questions about certain programmatic choices and, as possible answers to these questions, we share and examine best practices we have observed throughout this year. These examples are certainly not comprehensive, and they have not been evaluated for effectiveness. We list them only as a way to help instructors and program administrators gain different perspectives on how they might improve their educational offerings, hoping to provoke a more intentional, socially minded pedagogy. As such, we address the following major questions in this section:

- A. How does one create a positive classroom culture?
- B. How can one support the development of social skills within the classroom, rehearsals and performances?
- C. How does a program's choice of repertoire influence its social impact?
- D. How might one incorporate creative music making, and why?

How does one create a positive classroom culture?

Without a doubt, most El Sistema-inspired instructors desire to cultivate a classroom environment that primes students to be their best – intrinsically motivated focused, creative, and empathetic. Yet, how does one really create this learning climate? What are the components of a daily culture primed to generate high-achieving, socially minded citizens?

Obviously, with each program possessing its own unique characteristics and demands, there can be no hard-and-fast rules as to how to create a positive classroom culture. Considering such, this section simply strives to do two things: (1) to challenge instructors to reflect on various aspects of their practice and (2) to share classroom management tools that have been effective for others in the field. Again, with no hard-set way to create a prime teaching environment, these tools are simply meant to be “food for thought” for educators.

Should one implement rules and, if so, how?

When learning how to manage the classroom, most instructors are taught to establish clear expectations of their students. In many cases, instructors respond by creating long lists of what they’re looking to see in their pupils – rules of governance that are essentially dictated by the instructor and that follow strict punishment procedures in the case of infractions.

Yet, if El Sistema-inspired programs truly strive to instill in their students a sense of ownership in their learning, are they contradicting themselves by implementing rules in such a way? Perhaps there might be another way for initiatives to empower students to create their own classroom culture or to at least feel more invested in creating a safe environment?

Ideas to Consider:

- **Principles-Based Approach:** In his book *Love and Logic* author Jim Fay suggests that educators develop a “principles-based” approach to classroom management. In contrast to a “systems-based” approach that establishes clear rules for students and, accordingly, consequences for misbehavior, a principles approach creates a set of *values* to be shared by students and instructors. With these core beliefs as a guide, instructors then have the flexibility to develop consequences that are individualized to each situation in the case of student misbehavior. [See “Consequences with Empathy” below.] Free of a prescribed list of rules and corresponding external punishments, Fay contends that students develop an internalized sense of responsibility for their actions based on these common values.¹⁰
- **Student-Developed Rules:** Patty Chilsen of NYC’s Community-Word Project suggests that instructors and students together develop a set of rules to which they all agree to adhere. By creating the classroom guidelines with the instructor, Chilsen suggests that students feel that their voices are heard and, thus, are more invested in developing a culture of mutual respect.

¹⁰ Jim Fay and David Funk, *Teaching with Love and Logic: Taking Control of the Classroom* (Golden, CO: Love and Logic Press, 1995), 258.

How does an instructor's use of language impact the classroom environment?

Struggling with behavior problems, many instructors follow the natural human inclination to correct students through the use of negative language. Phrases such as “don't play while I'm talking,” or “stop calling out,” can frequently be heard in EI Sistema-inspired programs. However, if we are truly trying to model the behavior we hope to see in our students, are we being most effective by using such aggressive language?

Instead of using directives describing what she doesn't want to see, Lorrie Heagy, founder of Juneau Alaska Music Matters, frames her language in the affirmative. Some of the **positive language techniques** Lorrie utilizes are developed from the book “Love and Logic” and include:

- **Consequences with Empathy:** Instead of having a list of predetermined consequences that correspond with set rules, “Love and Logic” suggests that instructors develop consequences to fit a particular situation in which a class *value* (not rule) is violated. When communicating these consequences, instructors should keep them simple and remove any judgment or anger from the delivery. Instead, instructors should express sadness in having to implement the consequence, allowing the student to feel the weight of his actions. One example might be, “I am so sorry that you were having trouble keeping your body in control, Ben. It makes me sad, but I'm going to have to put your violin in time out until you can show that you've been able to regain control.”
- **Enforceable Statements:** Enforceable statements are direct statements that allow instructors to tell students what is expected instead of asking students to do something. In short, these enforceable limits put the instructor in control by describing how he/she will be acting, reducing the likelihood of power struggles between instructor and student. Examples of such a statement might be, “I will talk when all playing has stopped,” or “I will accept permission slips that are signed and turned in on time.”

How does an instructor's demeanor affect his/her ability to have a positive effect on the classroom?

As instructors, we have to strike a difficult balance between maintaining order in the classroom and appealing to our students on a personal level. In order to become mentors, it's important that we are open, friendly and take time to develop relationships with our students. However, we must also cultivate the respect of our students in order to maintain control of the classroom. One thus begins to wonder: how can we simultaneously practice both of these aspects of classroom management?

Lynn Williams, an expert on Grinder classroom management, maintains that instructors must find a balance between both “approachable” and “credible” demeanors in the classroom in order to be most effective. Equally important to one another, both presences have times in which they are most appropriate, as described below.

- **Approachable Demeanor:** This more relaxed style of teaching allows students to get to know their instructors in a more personal way and ensures that students care deeply about their instructors. It can be used when instructors are explaining/teaching a lesson, in downtime, or prior to the start of class. In terms of body stance, instructors in an approachable mode have a relaxed body posture, move about the room, talk in longer sentences and allow their voices to cadence upward in pitch.
- **Credible Demeanor:** This style of teaching is extremely appropriate for more powerful moments – when directions are being given, when disciplining, or when any type of control is needed. Credible body includes a strong, still posture; weight on both feet; the head moving only on the axis (not up or down); unbroken wrists; short statements; and a flat voice with statements ending on a down note. Lynn also suggests that instructors choose teaching locations within the classroom that are used for specific credible-type purposes (e.g. an attention-getting spot and/or a disciplining-spot).

How can the structure and pacing of lessons positively impact student learning?

Like a good piece of music, successful lessons are skillfully paced and timed, conducted with an ebb and flow that allows the instructor to both engage with and react to the students. Masterful instructors use many different techniques to keep students interested and to develop their innate curiosity.

Below are a few structural components to consider when developing lessons:

- **Hook students:** In his book, “Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School,” John Medina suggests that instructors include “hooks” in order to create relevance or purpose for children – essentially, framing the class so that students are engaged and excited to learn. These hooks might be stories, lesson highlights, or background information. Medina suggests that instructors implement “hooks” 2 minutes into a class and then again 10 minutes into a class.¹¹
- **Balance taking in information with kinesthetic release:** Lorrie Heagy, the founder of Juneau Alaska Music Matters, strategically balances the Waldorf concepts of “breathing in” (i.e. the process of taking in knowledge) and “breathing out” (physical activities) during classes. By consciously sensing in what state of mind her students are, Ms. Heagy is able to keep the lesson flowing smoothly and her students’ learning most productive and positive. She makes several notes about these two modes of engagement:
 - *Breathing In:* As students absorb information, Heagy tries to always balance doing something new with something old. This practice might involve balancing either new information with an old process OR old information with a new process. She also cites Eric Jensen’s brain rule that students can only take in information for as many minutes as they are old (e.g. 5 minutes for a 5-year-old).
 - *Breathing Out:* Heagy believes that instructors can use these more experiential activities for one of two purposes: either to reinforce information or to propel the lesson to the next activity. A breathe-out exercise might include adding physical motions to a song.

How do you use transitions during lessons?

Notorious times for behavior issues, transitions are moments when one needs to switch from one activity to the next, either during one class or between two different classes. However, if one were to really reflect on his teaching practice, he might consider if he himself might be better able to instill positive social skills in students during these difficult times. Indeed, by being more thoughtful about how transitions are handled, instructors can use these times to help students learn the social concepts such as self-control.

A few ideas to consider:

- **Handle transitions musically:** As it can be very challenging for students to transition silently, you might instead ask them to sing a song or have a recording of a piece playing in the background during these times. Music helps keep students actively engaged and can even be used to place a time limit on the transition period.
- **Prime students:** Many times students are more successful when we are able to prepare them for the next part of the lesson – how we expect them to act, how long the transition will be, etc. For example, you might try using an egg shaker to remind them that the transition will be ending in “x minutes.” You might also give them very specific, guided instructions on how to open their instrument cases (e.g. “when I snap my fingers, you may open the zipper...”). Or, you could describe how you expect their

¹¹ John Medina, *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School* (Seattle, WA: Pear Press, 2008), Kindle edition.

bodies to be positioned before the next activity and then silently point to students one-by-one who are modeling this behavior.

Does your classroom allow space for student input?

Although some music educators might swear by their tried-and-true pedagogical methods to teaching standard repertoire, these rather rigid ways of instruction do not leave much room for student input. If we are indeed attempting to develop confident students who take ownership in their learning, is it in our best interest to deprive them of having choice in the classroom?

Education scholar Dr. Paula Denton instead purports that choice provides students an increased sense of purpose and autonomy encourages children to learn from each other and draws on students' individual strengths and interests.¹² Opportunities for choice might range from something as simple as allowing students to choose their partner in a game, to giving them the chance to pick a keyboard backbeat in a violin class, to allowing them to decide how they want to scaffold learning to a new piece (e.g. bow-only first, pizzicato second, etc.). The possibilities for student choice are endless and, if needed, can always be harnessed through enabling constraints (i.e. limited choices provided by the instructor).

How can one support development of social skills within the classroom, rehearsals and performances?

Traditional music education philosophy often promotes an instructor-centered model, through which the instructor is charged with directing and leading student learning. Although this concept might prove more time-efficient initially, it doesn't necessarily foster the growth of social skills in students when thinking long-term. Indeed, if we truly aim to develop life skills in our youth, we need to be intentional about the artistic and pedagogical practices we incorporate into our rehearsals, classrooms and performances. In this section, we hope to provide you with some ideas on how you might broaden your perspective and methods in these settings.

How does peer-to-peer teaching support social outcomes?

Peer teaching, in its essence, is a form of mentorship between two or more students. It is a student-centered approach that challenges the traditional model of information transfer from instructor-to-student. Although we can find and cultivate informal peer teaching often (i.e. students helping each other with a particular task spontaneously), we have observed that a number of El Sistema-inspired programs employ several ways of formal, intentional peer teaching. In these programs, peer teaching happens explicitly in an effort to create an impactful atmosphere of peer learning. The students involved can be equal or different in age. One student does not have to be more "expert" than the other.

- **Intentional pairing:** Two or more students work together outside of the classroom.
 - *Example:* At Bridge Boston Charter School, Julie Davis divides her students into pairs as "practice partners." They work on a certain part of the piece for about ten minutes, switching roles at the five-minute mark. One Sistema Fellow observed a notable instance of peer teaching at Bridge Boston: Student 1 was teaching Student 2. Student 1 had a better grasp of the material than Student 2, taking a leadership role in the situation. As she gave critiques, she learned when to intervene and

¹² Paula Denton, *Learning Through Academic Choice* (Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, 2005).

step back, exercising patience, respect and total focus. When student 1 recognized that Student 2 was playing the incorrect piece, but she responded with encouragement and playfulness. Perhaps what was most interesting, however, was that she intrinsically knew how to scaffold and break down new skills in the piece.

- *Desired Social Impact:* Students learn how to communicate respectfully, clearly, and strategically with other students. These communication skills enable them to both give and receive as they work to improve their playing in a very focused manner.
- **Intentional seating:** Instructor strategically pairs strong students with weak to facilitate team learning and socialization.
 - *Example:* At the People’s Music School Youth Orchestras, intentional seating is commonly used during rehearsals.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* This process of intentional seating allows for stronger students to practice leadership skills as well as for weaker students to develop intrinsic motivation as they strive to keep up with their peers and contribute to the larger ensemble.
- **Same-level teaching:** Students prepare and lead a rehearsal or warm-up.
 - *Example:* At the Professional Development Day of the Boston Children’s Chorus in March 2014, Rollo Dilworth, choir conductor from Philadelphia, presented his practice of rehearsal preparation teams. He asks 4-6 students to develop a lesson plan together. He assigns different roles (one student thinks of a breath exercise, another develops a humming exercise, etc.). After they have come up with some ideas, Dilworth meets with the team and gives them feedback. The students decide who leads which part of the rehearsal. After the rehearsal, the instructor provides feedback again.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* Students think strategically and reflectively about the rehearsal process. Other students feel more comfortable and are more engaged when their peers lead the rehearsal. The group develops their own rehearsal methods.
- **Cross-level teaching:** A student teaching assistant works with a group of lower level students.
 - *Example:* At the Corona Music Project in New York City, one or two students are chosen as “teaching assistants.” They walk around during full ensemble rehearsal to check in with lower level students and address common issues, such as fingerings, bow hold, etc.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* Students feel a sense of ownership about their role as a mentor, learning to take initiative and pay close attention to technical issues.
- **Modeling:** Students get chosen to model for their classmates.
 - *Example:* At the Conservatory Lab Charter School, kindergarten students demonstrating focus are selected by the instructor to be “leaders” and model singing/playing/dancing for their classmates. After they demonstrate, they are asked to choose other student leaders. Normally, most – if not all of the students – get the chance to model something for their classmates within one class.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* Students reflect on the behavior of themselves and of the other students. Furthermore, all students – not only the most advanced – have the opportunity to be a leader because they are selected on the basis of focus.

What other student-centered rehearsal practices support social outcomes?

There are many other student-centered rehearsal practices that support the development of social skills. Although some research already exists that documents such constructivist practices within orchestral settings,¹³ this research does not fully encompass the range of student engagement that we observed in some programs this year. The following student-centered activities are examples of these observations, and are being included simply as a way to provoke the field to think more broadly about how it can promote social change.

- **Sectionals with chamber music sized formations:** The ensemble divides itself into several mini ensembles. The students rehearse on their own.
 - *Example:* At Arpeggio Perú, the orchestra rehearses not only all together and in sectionals (e.g. violins, violas, woodwinds, etc.), but it also works in chamber music-sized formations. Depending on the piece, the instructors divide the orchestra into double-string quartets and wind quintets or mixed ensembles with strings and winds. There is generally no one member in charge; the ensemble members instead lead the rehearsal collectively.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* Instead of being able to hide in the big group of their section, students have to take responsibility for their own part and the rehearsal process. They hear other parts of the orchestra better than they would in a tutti rehearsal and can connect better with other players.
- **Rotating seating order in the orchestra:** All students get to play at all different positions of their section.
 - *Example:* At Josiah Quincy School, Avi Mehta rotates the seating order for different pieces so that different students get to play on the first/second/last stand. The violin players are not strictly divided into two groups; instead they switch between first and second violin.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* There is no ranking between the different players. Everybody has to take a leader role from time to time. The students learn that every single member of the orchestra is equally important and responsible. They advance more homogenously.
- **Conductor-less ensembles: Instead of conducting, the instructor** either helps with the rehearsal process or steps back entirely for part of the rehearsal and lets students practice on their own.
 - *Example 1:* The advanced Youth String Orchestra in Mérida, Venezuela plays without having someone conducting. Although their instructor, Yuri Rodríguez, is always present, the orchestra members are expected and encouraged to contribute their ideas. The principal players lead their sections and give the cues.
 - *Example 2:* Conductor Jonathan Govias shared with us that, while in Batuta, Colombia, he asked a struggling horn trio to play without him while standing back-to-back and without counting or talking. Eventually, the students started listening in a much more refined manner, improving their intonation and realizing that they could play together by simply breathing before they started.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* Both examples require that the ensemble members listen very carefully to each other, as well as provide increased opportunities for members to contribute their ideas.
- **Students conduct:** Students without conducting experience stand in front of the ensemble and conduct a scale/short passage of a piece.

¹³ Bernadette Scruggs, "Constructivist Practices to Increase Student Engagement in the Orchestra Classroom," *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (2009): 53-59.

- *Example:* At Arpeggio Perú, Paul Bazalar Moncada asks players to conduct scales or other simple melodies, giving them the flexibility to decide the dynamics, tempo, etc. The orchestra is then asked to give feedback and reflect on how the conductor’s physical movements communicate different sounds to the players.
- *Desired Social Impact:* The students understand what it means to be the conductor. They become aware of the connection between movements of the conductor and sound of the orchestra. They bring in their own ideas of interpretation.
- **Collaborative Interpretation:** Many ensemble members contribute their interpretive ideas.
 - *Example 1:* At the Boston Children’s Chorus, the eldest choir members play an active and integral role in making musical decisions. Throughout the process, musicians are given the space to discuss the music’s meaning and how that affects their musical choices. As they discuss the music, they also explore relevant social issues and the impact those have on their lives.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* The students experience increased ownership of their musical experience, and they also have the opportunity to discuss social issues that are important to them.
 - *Example 2:* Conductor, instructor and author Benjamin Zander initiated a practice during orchestra rehearsal in which he puts down “a blank sheet of paper on every stand in the rehearsal. The players are invited to write down any observation or coaching for me that might enable me to empower them to play the music more beautifully.”¹⁵
 - *Desired Social Impact:* All players have the chance to contribute to the musical interpretation.

How do performance settings support social outcomes?

The students’ participation in a performance can go far beyond the actual playing. Indeed, although we typically only ask our students to contribute to concerts by playing in them, we can also explore how to engage them in performance aspects including planning and organization, concert moderation, and audience interaction.

Eric Booth, an expert on teaching artistry, claims that there is big gap between society’s elite “arts club”(i.e. the “7%”) and the rest of the US population (the “93%”). He stresses the importance of delivering concerts in a way that makes them relevant to the audience. In essence, he challenges performers to engage their listeners so that they are not just passive consumers of the music, but are also active participants in the performance.

- **Engagement before Information:** Booth claims that you need to awaken the interest of the audience before presenting them with information. He challenges performers to consider how they can engage the audience in ways besides information-heavy pre-concert lectures or program notes.
- **Find an Entry Point:** Booth proposes that performers choose one aspect of the piece that is particularly relevant to the audience (e.g. the structure, an emotional connection to the piece, etc.) and use that as a way to initially engage the audience.
- **Law of 80%:** According to this theory, 80% of what you teach is who you are. Even more important than the content of your presentation is the way in which you present yourself and the personal connection you make with the audience will have a bigger impact on your listeners.

¹⁵ Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander, *The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 2000): 70-71.

Applicable to any type of concert, these principles could give students an opportunity to engage with their audiences in a new way. Below are listed some examples of how you might apply these ideas in an ensemble-based music program:

- **Students moderate the concert**
 - *Example:* The Boston Children's Chorus often presents a musical program that addresses social issues. At their 2014 Martin Luther King Day performance, two or three ensemble members spoke to the audience before every song. They made personal connections to the song and reflected on the Civil Rights Movement and current issues of inequality as addressed in the lyrics of the songs. Some of them included self-written poems and short stories.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* The students gain valuable skills in public speaking as they express their own thoughts and ideas. The audience is also guided towards the socially relevant issues as referenced in the songs.
- **Students lead interaction with audience**
 - *Example:* During a pre-concert student performance of the Education Department of the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg in Germany, students invited the audience to clap the different rhythms of the Turangalila-Symphony by Messiaen. They scaffolded it by introducing different time signatures with call and response and then clapping and stomping more complex rhythms together.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* The audience actively takes part in the performance, creating more opportunity for engaged listeners who connect better with the piece.
- **Students write program notes**
 - *Example:* During our Fellowship, we haven't seen a program with notes written by students. However, you could have youth design program notes using the same principles as you would use with audience interaction: make it personal, relevant and have a good entry point.
 - *Desired Social Impact:* The students reflect more in-depth about the background of the piece and their experience with it. Students also practice their writing skills for a wider audience, giving them the feeling that what they do is relevant and that it is not just for their own sake.

What are the possible benefits of incorporating non-musical programming?

Although our intensive, musical programs strive to create a community of socially minded youth, one begins to wonder if these musical activities are adequate in harnessing the life skills we hope to develop in our students. What if we also programmed a space in which students felt safe to explicitly address relevant social issues? We have observed several community arts organizations outside the El Sistema-inspired field that do incorporate such non-musical programming - established, routinely held sessions in which the students can explore issues such as identity, leadership and violence. In this section, we identify types of non-musical programming and give examples of organizations that have incorporated them.

- **Weekly dinner and discussion**
 - *Example:* A group of CMW teenagers, whose eligibility was determined by age and experience on his/her instrument, began to meet every Friday in "Phase II" to rehearse in their string ensemble, have dinner together and then participate in a discussion on an array of topics, from leadership to social identity. Their dinners are also a platform for health education, as they discuss the nutritious benefits of each component before they begin eating. Their discussions are respectful, lively and thoughtful. At the end of the year, Phase II students autonomously organize a Salon Evening, where

they produce an event that incorporates music and centers around a particular social issue they found compelling as a group.

- *Possible Social Impact:* Students find a positive peer group, where a sense of belonging is cultivated. They are given the space and opportunity to discuss social issues in a safe environment and to think about the role of a musician in the 21st century.

- **Discussions in rehearsals**

- *Example:* Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) is in an exploratory phase of incorporating non-musical programming. In any given rehearsal, the instructor might throw out a non-musical topic and give children time to think about it; afterwards, the children discuss the topic with another student they don't know very well. On other occasions, the children write down non-musical questions onto pieces of paper, and in the middle of rehearsal, the instructor chooses one piece of paper out and facilitates a short discussion on the question asked.
- *Possible Social Impact:* The student-student discussions foster relationship development and awareness of diverse perspectives. Also, students are exposed to various concepts related to social change that their peers are also considering.

- **Student-centered workshop during Seminarios or Conferences**

- *Example:* At the Take a Stand Conference in Los Angeles, there was a multi-day workshop solely focused on bringing together students from different El Sistema-inspired programs. During this workshop, the students met with other students and reflected on their experiences as musician-leaders in their respective organizations. At the end of the conference, in front of a large audience made up of Take a Stand participants, each student presented a particular characteristic that described what it meant to be a leader in an El Sistema-inspired program.
- *Possible Social Impact:* Students develop a wide network of peers who are engaged in similar experiences and begin to understand that this work is connected on a large scale. Students are able to articulate an informed reflection on leadership in an El Sistema-inspired program.

How does a program's choice of repertoire influence its social impact?

El Sistema-inspired programs vary greatly in their selection and focus of repertoire. While some feel that it is important to play only western classical music, others strive to integrate popular music in an effort to remain relevant to their students. Obviously, an organization's choice of repertoire is significant and can play an important role in cultivating the desired social impact on students.

Throughout this section, we simply try to pose questions to consider when programming repertoire. Instead of trying to answer how one should balance playing classical and popular music, we hope to provoke practitioners to examine how both the cultural context of their program and the experience and comfort zone of those working in it can influence repertoire.

What role does familiarity of the music to the community play for your repertoire choice?

Using traditional and folk songs provides a platform for the community to celebrate its identity and heritage, using music from other countries as an expression of appreciation and open-mindedness.

- **Familiarity vs. unfamiliarity:** Both familiarity and unfamiliarity have certain benefits and disadvantages:

- If you choose music that is familiar to your community, they will more easily relate to it and will feel that they are taken seriously. On the other hand, they will not be exposed to new genres and ideas if they are only presented with the familiar.
- If you choose music that is unfamiliar to your community, they might be skeptical at first and react defensively. On the other hand, they might get curious and excited to learn something new, thus opening a whole new world to them.
- **Musical background:** Get to know the musical experiences and backgrounds of your students. Do they identify themselves with a particular genre of music? If so, you might want to consider the ways in which students have engaged with music previously and use this as an entry point.
- **Venezuelan approach:** Dr. Abreu decided to focus on classical music when he founded El Sistema forty years ago, despite the fact that this genre was relatively unfamiliar to the Venezuelan population at that time. During the last four decades, classical music has gained huge popularity in Venezuela, becoming an important part of the country's culture. However, the program's offerings now also include a range of musical types, including Venezuelan folk music (through their Alma Llanera program), Jazz, Rock (e.g. Beatles cover bands) and crossover ensembles (e.g. the 7/4 Ensemble, which mixes Jazz and Latin American music).

How is your pedagogy shaped by repertoire choice?

Pedagogies vary widely depending on the musical genre being taught, making repertoire selection a strong influence on our teaching methods. For example, classical music is still predominantly taught through the instructor-centered, maestro/orchestra model (although many are investigating different approaches), while contemporary music generally involves more student-centered, 'informal' teaching¹⁷ methods such as leader facilitation sessions.

- **Classical instruments and folk genres:** Many agree that classical training on classical instruments is still a good basis to learn technique; you can build on this and play many different styles. Two very experienced practitioners in the field of community music run Sistema Norwich in the U.K. The Director and Samba Band specialist, Marcus Patteson, mentioned that one of their challenges is to find the meeting point between classical and folk music pedagogies. Similarly, Andrea Landin of New West Symphony Harmony Project spoke to us of the need to teach her students technical skills in a non-traditional sequence in order to prepare them to collaborate with Mariachi players from their community.
- **Emotional learning:** In addition to shaping students' technical learning of the instrument, your repertoire also has the ability to resonate with youth on an emotional level. For example, a specific piece could reflect the mindset of your group or enable them to tap into a deeper, more mature emotional space. Likewise, the lyrics of a piece could allow students to positively engage with and develop the socio-emotional outcomes you are seeking. At the Boston Children's Chorus, the most senior choirs have a social theme with which they engage throughout the year, often by going far beyond the musical learning experience: discussions during rehearsals, organizing fundraising initiatives, and partnering with other community organizations.
- **Authenticity:** With many programs staffed by instructors who are predominantly classically trained, it can be a true challenge to have the flexibility and resources to teach different musical genres at an excellent level. One hand, you may worry that your efforts won't prove authentic to a particular style. On

¹⁷ Lucy Green, *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Inc., 2008), Kindle edition.

the other hand, efforts to expand offerings and scope could result in a greater connection with your community. Indeed, the balance of authenticity and courage in trying new repertoire styles can prove to be difficult, but it is an issue that needs to be addressed.

How does your repertoire choice affect how you can engage and collaborate with other musical programs and guest instructors?

- **Symphonic Repertoire:** You might want to focus on playing symphonic works that can easily be played side-by-side with other orchestras, but you may also wish to consider the tools your students might need if they look to collaborate with peers who are playing more contemporary music.
- **Cosmopolitanism:** You may wish to cultivate a strong sense of community identity through your program by facilitating interaction between existing styles of music to create a new style. This process is called Cosmopolitanism: “It takes a musical cosmopolitan, in other words, to develop a musical nationalism, to successfully assert its authenticity in a sea of competing nationalisms and authenticities.”¹⁸ For example, Vaughan Williams and Béla Bartók combined folk and classical music to create new national repertoire, while projects such as the Creative Connections workshop at OrchKids in Baltimore combined musical material to create something unique to the community.
- **World Music:** In the 1980s, the concept of “World Music Pedagogy” was developed to respond to the multicultural backgrounds of communities and the growing globalization of our society. Unfortunately, music educators are still not being prepared well enough to facilitate student engagement with different world music traditions.

To emphasize the special status of classical music unsuits the modern world. As Tanya Kalmanovitch, New England Conservatory faculty member, pointed out in an email message to Tatjana Merzyn on May 3, 2014, “...there is not one culture of classical music (imagine the difference between studying piano in China, versus Lebanon, versus Russia, versus Canada; imagine the communities of Broadway musicians versus early music performers versus ‘New Music’ performers in NYC) but we speak of classical music as though there were only one classical music culture.” Moreover, the borders between classical music and other genres become blurred more and more. There are so many ways how to connect different styles and genres that we would like to encourage you to explore the possibilities in and with your community!

How might one incorporate creative music making, and why?

Creative music-making is a tool that students and instructors can use to maximize imagination, critical thinking and group learning. Not only does the process allow for the integration of musical foundational knowledge, but it also creates space for community-building, intrinsic motivation, and personal agency. Peter Renshaw articulates several of the enriching social benefits of creative music-making in his article *Working Together*.²⁰ For the purposes of this paper, we focus on the categories of improvisation and composition to discuss creative music making.

For some, the idea of integrating improvisation and composition into a classroom might be intimidating and foreign. What if instructors, however, challenged the belief that they don’t already have many of the tools

¹⁸ Martin Stokes, “On Musical Cosmopolitanism,” *The Macalester International Roundtable* Vol. 21, Article 8 (2008): 6.

²⁰ Peter Renshaw, “Working Together: An enquiry into creative collaborative learning across the Barbican-Guildhall Campus” (Research and Development Project, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Sept 2011).

necessary to practice creative music making? Tanya Kalmanovitch encourages musicians to step into the improvisation process by starting small, building from what they know, and continually reflecting on the experience as you develop so that you have a better understanding of how to guide students. While not exhaustive, the following exploration seeks to create an entry point for instructors who are interested in incorporating student-created activities.

What are the musical and social benefits of incorporating improvisation into ensemble-based classrooms, and how does one go about integrating the skill?

Improvisation can be utilized within the musical ensemble-based learning environment in order to achieve a variety of musical skills and social values. This type of creative music making has a particular ability to cultivate listening skills, self-expression, responsiveness and the promotion of positive social interactions.

For the benefit of instructors and students, one can scaffold improvisation into the classroom through standard musical elements. In his book The Music Lesson²², bassist and educator Victor Wooten identifies those elements as the following:

1. Notes
2. Dynamics
3. Rhythm/Tempo
4. Technique
5. Phrasing
6. Tone
7. Articulation
8. Space
9. Feel/Emotion
10. Listening

You might notice that none of these elements feature melody or notes – concepts that might prove intimidating to a novice of improvisation. Indeed, even without notes, one can still exercise an immense amount of compositional ownership and freedom.

The following examples of improvisational techniques are particularly applicable to smaller group settings and can be used with students of any age:

- **Word Music:** This activity focuses on correlating words with specific rhythms (e.g. two sets of eighth notes could be “apple apple”). Encouraging group work, creativity and active listening, it also provides both an entry point to improvisation for novices as well as a challenge for musicians who may already be familiar.
 - Find a nursery rhyme, story or speech that has no steady pulse or melody, but that all participants know (e.g. the Pledge of Allegiance).
 - First have everyone speak the rhyme/story together, noticing the breath breaks and inflections. Make sure that students are successful in speaking it in unison before continuing. This allows for development of rhythm skills without needing to write the rhyme down on paper.

²² Victor Wooten, *The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search for Growth Through Music* (New York: Penguin, 2006), Kindle edition.

- Within an appropriate piece of music that students have already learned, create or find a solo section where the music can stop and improvisation can occur. Decide if it will be an individual, small group, or large group solo.
- Within the solo section, have the student(s) play any pitches they choose that correlate to the rhyme they are saying in their head. Initially, this could be as simple as a repeated open string or 3 notes that they choose.
- Encourage students to use their ears and body language to stay together, and point out that if anyone is too fast or slow, it will ruin the effect. It will most likely sound like a coordinated tone cluster.
- As students get more comfortable with the activity, you can encourage them to manipulate more of the musical elements, except for the rhythm of the rhyme they have in their head.
- **Musical Monologue:** Giving students space to solo in a monologue-fashion, this activity allows every student to find his voice (both literally and metaphorically). It also establishes a respectful and creative classroom culture, encouraging a supportive and accepting environment.
 - Allow time for participants to consider the following questions: What do you want people to know about you? What is important to you? If you had to describe your life or self in one minute, what would it sound like? Consider how you might use your instrument(s), including voice, to express those thoughts.
 - Emphasize that each musician has a voice or melody like no other.
 - Set up a respectful and supportive atmosphere, and be sensitive to comfort zones.
 - Establish the order of performers before you start so that people are not caught off guard.
 - With no speaking for the duration of the activity, have each person perform a solo. Time the performance for fairness, and hold applause until all performers have completed their “monologue.”
 - Do not allow for discussion about what people played following the activity.
 - Create a private self-reflection activity that explores the experience musically and personally.

What are the musical and social benefits of incorporating composition into ensemble-based classrooms? And how does one go about integrating the skill?

Perhaps the most obvious tool for originality, composition allows students to express their own voice, work collaboratively and integrate music theory knowledge with self-expression. During the 2014 Take A Stand Symposium, Kathleen Turner (Director of Education and Community Outreach of the Irish Chamber Orchestra) provided a workshop on student songwriting. Her activities introduce arranging, composition, and conducting in an accessible way. Providing a foundation for more advanced composition activities, these games also promote youth leadership and creativity. Below we highlight a few of the ideas shared by Turner:

- **The Conducting Clock**
 - Choose a leader to establish the ticking of the clock (the pulse) with his/her feet.
 - Standing at the center of the circle, the leader then points to different students, who say their name to the accompanying steady pulse.
 - A good way to start may be to go in order from “1 o’clock” to the last student, and then go in reverse order.

- Variations can include tempo, skipping “times,” switching leaders, and using vocal or instrumental sounds instead of names.
- **The Job Song:** Encourage students to come up with a job-related phrase that has motions and relevant sounds that are completed within 8 beats. For example:
 - Carpenter – Twooo by foouur and nail it to the floor, BANG!
 - Lifeguard – SHARK! SHARK! Get out of the water!
 - Hairdresser – Cut and chop and cut and chop and cut and chop and WOW!
 - After the phrases have been established, the instructor or student leader can begin layering or arranging the various spoken rhythms with each other.
 - Dynamics, tempo and small group work can be incorporated as the students feel more comfortable.
- **Conducting composer:** Ayriole Frost, 2014 Sistema Fellow, completed a workshop with El Sistema-inspired iCAN program viola students in which she had them compose, arrange, and conduct their own music. This activity encourages imagination and student choice, and it develops listening skills, respectful rehearsal practices and leadership ability. The following process helps students reach their full potential:
 - How many notes do you want to have in your composition? (in reference to pitches used)
 - Which notes?
 - Play one or two bar phrases with just these notes. Have the rest of the group repeat it back.
 - Following that, other students or instructors invent phrases with the same material. Everyone else repeats it back.
 - Many composers also conduct – “You get to tell us when we come in, how long we should play, what dynamics to use, or what sort of character you would like us to portray.”

What roles do creativity and originality play in shaping artists and citizens of the future?

The culture of leadership, engagement and connectivity inherent to El Sistema methodology can be nurtured in an organic way through both composition and improvisation. One of the advantages of creative liberty in music-making is that it does not need to be limited to specific populations of students and can thus bring diverse groups of people together. Perhaps most importantly, it allows students to express their own voices and develop communication skills that ripple into the world outside of their classroom. Below we numerate some of the ways in which creative music making impacts students both individually and as a group.

- **Group flow:** As a leader in the El Sistema-inspired and teaching artist fields, Eric Booth has often talked about the state of flow, in which artists or students are able to maintain maximum creativity, engagement and ease. It is a natural extension to then consider the idea of “group flow,” in which an ensemble is able to reach a peak experience or collective state of mind. In *Working Together*, Keith Sawyer suggests that creative music-making allows groups to reach these flow states if they meet the following ten conditions:²⁴
 1. The group’s goals
 2. Close listening

²⁴ Peter Renshaw, “Working Together.”

3. Complete concentration
4. Being in control
5. Blending egos
6. Equal participation
7. Familiarity
8. Communication
9. Moving it forward
10. The potential for failure

Indeed, by meeting these conditions to obtaining “group flow,” programs also foster a community in which social goals such as community and mutual respect are valued. How do you have a respectful conversation where all voices are heard? How do balance prioritizing your own ideas with the shared group product? What happens when you fail? In answering some of these questions, students learn how to create a safe conversational space that is non-judgmental and empathetic .

- **Changing behaviors:** The idea of changing behaviors or trajectories through music has been researched for years. Specific to improvisation, the Society for Neuroscience published an article by Ana Pinho²⁵ that indicates that “brain circuits involved in musical improvisation are shaped by systematic training, leading to less reliance on working memory and more extensive connectivity within the brain.” Thus, through improvisation, students’ brains are literally rewired as they connect ideas and concepts, helping them in future endeavors.
- **Audience response:** In addition to changing the way students think or respond, there is research to suggest that improvisation can also affect the thinking and response of audience members. A joint study²⁶ between researchers at the Guildhall School and Imperial College London found that listeners engage with classical music more when musicians improvise. This has far-reaching implications for how the musicians we train can interact with their community, how to keep audiences engaged as well as how audience members then view musicians.

Although our programs vary some in mission, they all retain the same motivation to provide programming that will help students to thrive and experience a way of moving in the world that will benefit themselves and others. If we can encourage innate creativity in our youth through our programming, we are setting up the next generation to be successful innovators in a constantly evolving world.

Conclusions

Throughout this section, we hope to highlight some of the artistic and educational approaches we have observed that strive to foster social change in students. These approaches include the following: tools to create a positive classroom culture; socially minded rehearsal and performance activities; creative music-making techniques; repertoire choice and non-musical programming.

²⁵ Ana Pinho, “Musical Training Shapes Brain Anatomy and Affects Function,” *Society for Neuroscience* 122.13 (2013).

²⁶ David Dolan et al., “The Improvisatory Approach to Classical Music Performance: An Empirical Investigation into its Characteristics and Impact,” *Music Performance Research* Vol. 6 (Nov/Dec 2013).

One might notice that the classroom culture techniques lack the constructivist qualities of the other practices discussed. Indeed, it is clear that educators must first exhibit a command over student behavior in order to create a safe, nurturing space for youth. Once this positive classroom culture has been established, educators are primed to implement the student-driven learning methods listed (e.g. improvisation, composition, rehearsal activities, etc.). These student-centered practices then enable students to construct their own knowledge, challenging them to take responsibility for their own learning and become more independent thinkers. The social outcomes we listed in the beginning of this section (i.e. resiliency, self-efficacy, community, and critical thinking) are clearly fostered through an intentionally student-centered pedagogy.

By presenting these approaches and observations, we simply hope to challenge the field to think more deeply about its current practices. There are certainly many instructors who are accomplishing great work of the type already. However, we believe that another level of reflective practice would help initiatives to develop truly intentional, socially oriented programming. For if we hope to use music as a vehicle for social change, shouldn't our artistic and educational practices similarly reflect such aspirations?

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, we have posed several questions, examples and ideas regarding intentional social change through ensemble-based music programs. From the culture of your organization to pedagogical practices, community involvement to social impact, a clear message has been formed: decide the impact you want to ignite, and make every aspect of your organization representative of it. Rather than propose very specific practices that may or may not apply to your program, we have suggested "habits of mind" to carry with you throughout your work, punctuated with examples of how these habits manifest in certain situations.

It is our goal that through engaging with this paper, we have invited you to adopt some of these habits, and provided you with paths to some of the resources that may help you to realize them in the most appropriate ways for your communities. We hope that we have adequately captured some of the impactful work we have encountered, and that many of the organizations we have cited will continue to serve as resources for and collaborators with other organizations. We would also like to perpetuate this dialogue through our continued engagement with those who are interested in this work, and to challenge ourselves to adopt these modes of thinking and reflecting. Though it may prove difficult, we invite everyone, including ourselves, to embody the spirit of inquiry we have developed through this fellowship in our everyday work in this field. We hope that this paper can serve as a constant reminder to reflect, evaluate, challenge, collaborate and improve.

References

- Booth, Eric. "The Changing Grammar of Community Engagement." Chorus America. Accessed April 4th, 2014. <https://www.chorusamerica.org/advocacy-research/changing-grammar-community-engagement>.
- Denton, Paula. *Learning Through Academic Choice*. Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, 2005.
- Dolan, David, John Sloboda, Henrik Jeldtoft Jensen, Björn Crüts and Eugene Feygelson. "The Improvisatory Approach to Classical Music Performance: An Empirical Investigation into its Characteristics and Impact." *Music Performance Research* 6 no. 6 (2013).
- Fay, Jim and David Funk. *Teaching with Love and Logic: Taking Control of the Classroom*. Golden, CO: Love and Logic Press, 1995.
- Green, Lucy. *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy*. Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Inc., 2008. Kindle edition.
- Guetzkow, Joshua. "How the Arts Impact Communities: An introduction to the literature on arts impact studies." Paper presented at the Taking the Measure of Culture Conference, Princeton, New Jersey, June 7-8, 2002.
- Medina, John. *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School*. Seattle, WA: Pear Press, 2008. Kindle edition.
- Pinho, Ana. "Musical Training Shapes Brain Anatomy and Affects Function." *Society for Neuroscience* 122, no. 13 (2013).
- Renshaw, Peter. "Working Together: An enquiry into creative collaborative learning across the Barbican-Guildhall Campus." Research and Development Project, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Sept 2011.
- Scruggs, Bernadette. "Constructivist Practices to Increase Student Engagement in the Orchestra Classroom." *Music Educators Journal* 95, no. 4 (2009): 53-59.
- Seidel, Stephen, Meredith Eppel and Maria Martiniello. *Arts Survive: A Study of Sustainability in Arts Education Partnerships*. Cambridge: Harvard University Project Zero, 2001.
- "Social Capital." Civic Practices Network. Last modified May 11, 2014. <http://www.cpn.org/tools/dictionary/capital.html>
- Stokes, Martin. "On Musical Cosmopolitanism." *The Macalester International Roundtable* 21. no. 8 (2008): Wooten, Victor. *The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search for Growth Through Music*. New York: Penguin, 2006. Kindle edition.
- "Webinar: From outreach to community engagement." YouTube video, 1:04:40. Posted by "AssocCASymph," April 16, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8xXfHHJaQ&app=desktop>.
- "Wish Fulfilled: A Sistema Fellows Program Interim Report." (Boston, 2013).
- Zander, Rosamund Stone and Benjamin Zander. *The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life*. Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 2000.

Appendix

Mission statements of various arts organizations working toward social change

The following mission statements are grouped by organization type: El Sistema and the programs it has inspired in the United States, El Sistema-inspired programs outside the United States, and other arts organizations with commitments to social change who do not claim any particular association with El Sistema.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Mission Statement</u>
El Sistema in Venezuela and the United States	
El Sistema Venezuela	La Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar constituye una obra social del Estado Venezolano consagrada al rescate pedagógico, ocupacional y ético de la infancia y la juventud, mediante la instrucción y la práctica colectiva de la música, dedicada a la capacitación, prevención y recuperación de los grupos más vulnerables del país, tanto por sus características etárias como por su situación socioeconómica.
Play On Philly!	The mission of Play On, Philly! is to foster generational change, develop critical executive functioning skills, provide an environment of opportunities, and increase achievement by providing daily musical training for children and adolescents living in challenging economic and social conditions
OrchKids Baltimore	Use music as a vehicle to provide Baltimore City children with mentoring, encouragement and vision for a promising future.
YOLA	Through Gustavo Dudamel's Youth Orchestra LA (YOLA) program – inspired by Venezuela's revolutionary El Sistema – the LA Phil and its community partners provide free instruments, intensive music training, and academic support to students from underserved neighborhoods, enabling every child to contribute using their full potential.
El Sistema Somerville	El Sistema Somerville is a daily, intensive, after school program that promotes the academic achievement and character development of Somerville youth by providing equitable opportunities to pursue musical excellence.
Atlanta Music Project	“To inspire social change by providing Atlanta’s underserved youth the opportunity to learn and perform music in orchestras and choirs.”
Revolution of Hope	The central mission of the El Sistema-inspired ROH is to strengthen individual youth competencies that promote pro-social, anti-aggressive, and civically minded behaviors.
Harmony Program	We believe that music should be an integral part of every child’s education and that great expectations lead to even greater achievement. By training young musicians and building youth orchestras in underserved neighborhoods, we work not only to shape the lives of our children but also to engage and inspire their parents and their broader communities.
El Sistema outside the United States and Venezuela	
Sistema England	To transform the lives of children, young people and their communities through the power of music making, as part of the international El Sistema movement.

Arpeggio Peru	Arpeggio's mission is to provide quality music education, focusing on ensemble work, for children and young adults, predominantly from underserved communities in Northern Peru. Arpeggio's objective is to help the young musicians to acquire values that favor their personal growth and have a positive impact on their social environment.
NEOJIBA	NEOJIBA represents an opportunity for change in the lives of children and young people, who, via the collective practice of music, acquire essential tools for the full development of their capabilities.
Other arts organizations who work toward social change	
Community MusicWorks	To create a cohesive urban community through music education and performance that transforms the lives of children, families, and musicians. Our model is centered around the teaching, mentoring, program design, and performance activities of our musicians-in-residence, the Community MusicWorks Players.
Playing for Change	Our mission is to create positive change through music and arts education.
Raw Art Works	RAW's mission is to ignite the desire to create and the confidence to succeed in underserved youth.
Boston Children's Chorus	The Boston Children's Chorus (BCC) harnesses the power and joy of music to unite our city's diverse communities and inspire social change. Our singers transcend social barriers in a celebration of shared humanity and love of music. Through intensive choral training and high-profile public performance experience (locally, throughout the U.S. and around the world), they learn discipline, develop leadership skills, and proudly represent the city of Boston as ambassadors of harmony.
Zumix	The mission of ZUMIX is empowered youth who use music to make strong positive change in their lives, their communities, and the world. Located in East Boston, we provide top-quality cultural programming as an alternative way for young people to deal with frustration, anger and fear, and as a method of building cultural understanding and acceptance.
The People's Music School	Our mission is to cultivate access to free, quality music education. Through intensive instruction and performance our students learn more than music. They grow socially, emotionally and intellectually, and develop a foundation of responsibility, self-esteem and purpose.
Dreamyard	DreamYard is committed to helping transform Bronx schools and communities through the power of innovative, project based arts education. Our schools and students are based in the nation's poorest urban county, with one-third of the Bronx's residents living below the poverty line. In response, DreamYard programs are designed to challenge the cyclical systems of inequality and poverty by empowering youth to discover and develop their best possible selves and to locate meaningful paths and ways to engage with their fellow students, schools, families, and communities.
iCAN	The mission of the Incredible Children's Art Network (iCAN) is to bring high quality arts programs to children in Santa Barbara County, particularly those least likely to receive them. Through sustained creative learning opportunities that emphasize both artistic excellence and access, iCAN seeks to affect positive social change in the communities it serves.