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Participants of the Orchestra for the Youth of Sweepfire Speak Up

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Abstract

The Orchestra for the Youth of Sweepfire (OYS), an out-of-school time (OST) program, expressed desire for more data originating from their participants. Interviews were conducted with ten 4th-grade participants of OYS. Their responses will bolster OYS's effectiveness by providing insight into the program's experience as seen through the participants' personal reflections, narratives, and experiences. This research is important to the goals, objectives, and sustainability of the OYS program.

Keywords: *music, OST program, narrative research, interview, El Sistema*

Participants of the Orchestra for the Youth of Sweepfire Speak Up

Paul Lopez is from the small agricultural town of Sweepfire<sup>1</sup>, CA. Paul lives with his father and mother, and as a fifth grader from the east part of Sweepfire, known for its high crime rate and gang activity, Paul's after-school activities include racing home on his bike, staying inside until his parents return home, and doing his homework. The perpetual subject of bullying, low grades, and an empty house to greet him, Paul feels like life is one big circle of pain, boredom, and solidarity.

On an average Tuesday, Paul hears about an after-school program that piques his interest. His teacher recommends a newly formed program for him, called Orchestra for the Youth of Sweepfire (OYS), and sends him home with some of their informational pamphlets. Paul always liked listening to rock bands like Akin To Meatloaf, Intra Garrison, and The Otterz, so he mused, "Hey, I like music, and this is a music program...why not check it out?" With his parents' consent, the following Tuesday finds Paul walking from school to Eucalyptus Hall, the meeting place of OYS. As he nears the door, his ears catch what his mind registers as harmonic sounds – the unmistakable sounds of music. However, these sounds originate from sources of which he is of yet unfamiliar, and of a form that he has not heard...

Exactly one year later, we find Paul continuing his studies with OYS. He has learned to play the violin and the guitar, and he is one of the lead tenors in his choral group. As far as we can see, Paul is doing well in the program, but what about his own personal views of the program? How does he feel about the program and its values and learning strategies? Does he believe that OYS has improved his life, and if so, in what capacities? Are his grades higher than they were before he began the program?

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<sup>1</sup> All names of people, places, and organizations have been replaced with pseudonyms, except those that have given their permission to be identified.

These are the types of questions that OYS would like to have answered. As a not-for-profit program, OYS needs evidence that will confirm their outside observations of positive changes coming from participation in their program. This will also provide evidence that may encourage more donors and community partners to renew or begin to support OYS's mission. This project assists OYS in collecting the aforementioned data. The following is a journey into the participants' side of the story concerning their membership in the OYS program and its impact on their lives.

### **What is the Problem and why is it an Issue?**

The Orchestra for the Youth of Sweepfire, located in Sweepfire, CA, would like to more effectively ensure that the participants of the OYS program are being positively affected. OYS desires qualified researchers to interview youth participants to determine evidence of changes in their lives due to OYS (YOSAL, 2011). Doing so will further help OYS to hone their instruction in ways that will more effectively and positively impact the participants of OYS. This research will also benefit the notoriety of the program as they look to expand the program and generate partnerships for funding.

As a lifelong resident of Sweepfire, CA, this partnership with OYS for this capstone project was a seamless and logical process. With the author's local status, understanding of Sweepfire and its overall "feel," and his contacts within the local music community, this is definitely a local project and a "perfect fit" for him. Many thanks go to the author's Capstone Advisor and Professor Patricia Whang, PhD., for relaying the necessary correspondence messages that eventually led to the formulation of this project when the author had no real direction for his project.

OYS is a chapter of *EL SISTEMA*, an out-of-school time (OST) program of Venezuelan origin, and has garnered praise as a program that has positively affected society and its participants in many aspects of their personal lives. As Felix Briseno, a participant in the *EL SISTEMA* program states, “Music has not just opened doors for me professionally, it has opened my mind to a whole world of possibilities”(O’Keefe, 2007, p. 32). According to the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), “evidence suggests a correlation between frequent attendance in OST activities and positive outcomes, including an increase in academic achievement, school attendance, time spent on homework and extracurricular activities, enjoyment and effort in school, and better student behavior”(American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF), 2006, p. 2). As a U.S. chapter (or “núcleo” as they are called in Venezuela) of *EL SISTEMA*, OYS is looking for research that will confirm the history of positive influences in the lives of its participants (Lamb, 2011). Further evidence of the potential that OYS has is reflected in Eric Booth’s article where he remarked that students “leave [*EL SISTEMA*] with a sense of capability, with strong social skills, with endurance and resilience, owning a confidence about taking on enormous challenges, a deep sense of value and being loved and appreciated, a trust for group process and cooperation, and a feel for excellence in their own hands”(Booth, 2009, p. 79). All of this evidence points to the likelihood of very good things happening in the lives of the participants from OYS; they simply need to be documented. The need for solid research findings creates an authentic problem that needs to be addressed in order to further the notoriety and reputation of OYS.

This research needs to be done fairly soon, seeing as the current economic situation will not give potential funding donors much of a cushion when looking at the state of their finances. Again, OYS needs to have that solid foundation of hard evidence of their program and its positive effects. Earlier this year, the New England Conservatory decided to (in the near future)

sever its partnership with EL SISTEMA U.S.A., showing the urgency that this project possesses. Budgetary concerns were behind the closure of this partnership in that the conservatory felt that the partnership was taking over their other fundraising efforts (Wakin, 2011).

At the tender age of seven, the author began his musical journey by learning the violin. The author's venerable pastor played the violin during worship services, so the author's parents felt that he should learn the instrument that the pastor played. Private lessons from age seven to age twenty were taken, and at age twelve, the author took piano lessons up to age fourteen. The author taught himself the guitar and the drum kit at age fourteen, and at seventeen, the bass guitar. The author is currently enrolled in three vocal classes at CSUMB: Vocal Training, Gospel Choir, and Advanced Vocal Ensemble: *Nuovo Plaisir*. The author has attended music camps, participated in and led quartets and quintets, conducted his peers, won and performed in the By-the-Sea Bach Festival, led worship at his church, and played in fundraisers and rest homes.

The author writes this to show that he is a musician through and through. Music is a part of him – it is who he is. Since he has seen, read, and experienced how powerful, influential and beneficial music is and can be, he wants to contribute to the furthering and advancement of music in society. Music programs are among the first to suffer when money is tight, and the author wishes to assist OYS and furthering music education, benefiting the participants in any and all ways possible. This will bring about the kind of collaborative communal atmosphere that this new type of social change can thrive upon (Price-Mitchell, 2011).

### **Literature Review**

In order to obtain more insight into what has been done to improve the effectiveness of OST programs, some of the research on this subject will be considered. These sources combine

logical steps with solid research to provide a beginning blueprint into improving the quality of OYS's program and dealing with the participants' needs, solutions to problems concerning the physical space and logistics of the meeting place and the community, and solutions to funding problems that so many OST programs face today.

Several articles focus on improving the academic performance of OST participants by centering the program's focus on the participants' needs and what they are (or are not) used to. More specifically, five recommendations to improve the academic learning of their participants include:

- (1) "Make the OST program as similar as possible to the participants' school day;
- (2) Create ways to maximize students' attendance and participation;
- (3) Introduce teaching strategies for instruction that will work best with small groups and/or individualized instruction;
- (4) Provide learning experiences that will keep the students involved, into the lesson, and learning; and
- (5) Assess program performance and use the results to improve the quality of the program"(Beckett et al., 2009, p. 34).

Weisburd (2005) argues against OST programs that are almost identical to the school day and states that OST programs are ideal for "more informal, experiential approaches to learning. Schedules are more flexible, groups are smaller and the atmosphere is more relaxed"(Weisburd, 2005, p. 1). The pros and cons of each approach are interesting concepts to consider, and a good combination of the two (or at least some of both) will garner the best results out of the OST program. For example, a classroom may be situated with the traditional teacher in the front speaking to the class for the first half-hour of a lesson. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> half hour, maybe the students



are given a task and are allowed to complete the task (within parameters) in any logical way they choose. The combination of the two styles may or may not be advantageous for the topic of the day, and thus must be adjusted accordingly. Of course, these two articles see small groups and thus more individualized instruction as beneficial. However, use of these two forms of instruction is often program- and subject-specific, as well as dependent on the content and goals of the OST program. For OYS, the structure and content of the program is definitely a combination of the two. For example, the schedules are in 30-minute rotations (and probably structured much like students' school day in this regard), but are more informal in that the students are learning and practicing the music together as a group with instruction either before, during, or after practice.

Other authors focus on the relationships between the schools and the communities where the students/participants live. Pittman, Irby, Yohalem, and Wilson (2004) argue that these "linkages" must be made, "blurring the lines during the out-of-school hours," and that "out-of-school-time programming [should] complement formal learning (Pittman, Irby, Yohalem, & Wilson-Ahlstrom, 2004, p. 22). Perry, Teague, Frey, and EdSource (2002) also chime in specifically concerning academics, stating, "School and community partnerships are essential in making out-of-school programs effective in raising academic achievement" (Perry, Teague, Frey, & EdSource, 2002, p. 4)

Although indirectly related to OST program effectiveness, the ability to raise, allocate, and maintain consistent funding will affect the effectiveness of the program. The physical needs of basic supplies, soundproof rooms, quality instruments, and payment to the generous teachers of OYS are (among a myriad of others, of course) financial needs that must be met to keep or

increase the effectiveness of the program. Wright, Deich, and the Finance Project (2002) provide six steps to keeping and/or increasing those precious funds vital to any program:

- (1) "Start Local, Think Global: Tap into Community Resources;"
- (2) "Make Out-of-School Time Programs Everyone's Business: Build a Broad Base of Community Support;"
- (3) "Put the Pieces Together: Build a Pot of Flexible Dollars;"
- (4) "Rely on the Generosity of Friends and Neighbors: Expand In-Kind Support;"
- (5) "Capitalize on Success: Tap into Federal and State Funds;" and
- (6) "Always Be on the Lookout for Windows of Opportunity" (Wright, Deich, & Finance Project, 2002, p. iii)

All of the preceding tips will definitely be helpful to any OST program that needs to be successful in their mission, and OYS can definitely benefit from these resources and research.

### **Methods**

The goal of this project was to interview participants of the OYS program, giving the program much-needed definitive data with which to reveal possible ways to improve the program, as well as providing the basis for more long-term data collection and analysis. Positive results will also give OYS a solid foundation with which to appeal to potential donors and community partners.

### **Context**

The OYS program is located at Eucalyptus Hall in the city of Sweepfire, CA, a community whose economy is based primarily on agriculture. The city's population is roughly 150,000. The program itself is located in the mid-northern part of the city in the southern wing of the larger auditorium/concert hall.

In addition to three offices and a foyer, five large rooms are allocated for OYS' use for instruction: four are on the second floor for music instruction and one is on the ground floor for homework time. Several small offices are also included on the ground floor near the foyer. It was in one of these small offices that the interviews were conducted. The room is small, with a desk, two chairs, several filing cabinets, and a desktop computer resting on the desk. A printer is also in the room.

The participants are mainly from Spanish-speaking families, and are pulled from the Lasila Union and Sweepfire Elementary School Districts.

### **Participants and Participant Selection**

The participants of this research include ten participants of the OYS program. They were selected on the basis of three criteria:

1. Grade Level: all of the interviewees would be 4<sup>th</sup> graders, giving the best (and perhaps longest) time for possible tracking/further data collection, while aiming for the most coherent analyzable data;
2. Gender: five boys and five girls would be selected totaling ten, per the cap on total interviewees suggested by the capstone advisor; and
3. Length in the program: the participants in the interviews would have a wide range of participation times in the OYS program.

The mean age of the participants is unknown, as this was not a part of the criteria listed. Many of the interviewees were from Spanish-speaking families. Any other information concerning their ethnicities would be purely conjectural. The time spent in the program varied from participant to participant.

Jane Doe 1. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic female. Enrolled 2/22/11. Nine months in

program.

Jane Doe 2. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic female. Enrolled 11/9/10. One year in program.

Jane Doe 3. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic female. Enrolled 12/15/10. Eleven months in program.

Jane Doe 4. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic female. Enrolled 12/2/10. Eleven months in program.

Jane Doe 5. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic female. Enrolled 8/10/10. One year, three months in program.

John Doe 1. An Indian male. In advanced group. Enrolled 8/17/11. Three months in program.

John Doe 2. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic male. Enrolled 8/16/10. One year, three months in program.

John Doe 3. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic male. Enrolled 8/10/10. One year, three months in program.

John Doe 4. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic male. Enrolled 8/10/10. One year, three months in program.

John Doe 5. A Mexican/Latino/Hispanic male. Enrolled 8/22/10. One year, three months in program.

### **Researcher**

As formerly stated, the author has played instruments and been involved in musical "practices" since he was seven years old. He studied the violin from 1<sup>st</sup> grade up to his junior year of college, and has learned the piano, guitar, drum kit, and bass guitar up to this point in time. He has taught violin and guitar for three years, and has conducted his peers in several

performances for the general public. He won the young artists competition of and played in the By-the-Sea Bach Festival. He has been involved with Sweepfire High School in aiding their orchestra and strings program for the past five years. He currently leads worship at his church by singing and playing the guitar, bass guitar, and piano. Therefore, this project is “right up his alley” in terms of geographic location, content, and goals.

### **Semi-Structured Interview/or Survey Questions**

The following questions were asked to OYS Student Participants.

1. DESCRIBE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH THE OYS PROGRAM.
2. TELL ME A STORY THAT WILL HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IT'S BEEN LIKE TO BE A PART OF OYS.
3. WHAT PARTS HAVE YOU LIKED BEST? WHY? WHAT DO YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT OYS?
4. TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM/OF OYS. WHAT WAS IT LIKE? TELL ME ABOUT YOUR WORST EXPERIENCE.
5. (IF YOU WERE IN CHARGE OF THE PROGRAM,) WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE ABOUT THE PROGRAM? WHY?
6. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A FRIEND WHO IS THINKING ABOUT JOINING OYS?
7. WHAT DOES THIS PROGRAM MEAN TO YOU?
8. HOW DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE CHANGED AS A RESULT OF BEING IN OYS?
9. DO YOU FIND YOU WANT TO ATTEND OR “LIKE” SCHOOL MORE AS A RESULT OF ATTENDING OYS?

10. IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SAY ABOUT OYS OR  
YOUR EXPERIENCES IN IT?

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited using the criteria listed above. The method of choosing the participants was as follows: All 4<sup>th</sup>-grade participants of the OYS program were placed in a hat. The first five boys and five girls selected randomly were the interviewees. However, three of the boys chosen were absent during the days the researcher was present, and consequently, three other boys of the fourth grade were chosen alphabetically.

The participants were not compensated for any of the interviews. The proper consent forms were translated (if needed), signed, and returned, although members of CSUMB's institutional review board (IRB) deemed the forms unnecessary. The author and his advisors felt it advantageous to have the forms signed and returned for safeguarding purposes. The participants were asked nothing more than to respond to the questions in an honest manner. The interviewees were interviewed on a one-on-one basis in the room described in former pages.

The author videotaped the interviews, but placed the camera close to the interviewee (for maximum audio clarity) and zoomed all the way in, thus eliminating the factor that the interviewee's face might be in the video. The audio was then lifted from the video using video editing software.

**Data Analysis**

The transcribed data was analyzed for emergent themes.

**Results**

After analyzing the interviews, several common threads have emerged from the responses. The participants indicated some anticipated (and also unanticipated) themes to the

prompted questions. These themes included (but are certainly not limited to) the environment of the program, the program's effects on the participants' grades, and the experiences and feelings the participants have seen in themselves and in those around them.

Most participants expressed satisfaction with the program, how it is run, the activities, and the instructors and staff involved. For example, one participant stated, "I wouldn't change anything. I like pretty much everything." Said another participant, "I have lots of fun here. It's really good. I get lots of friends. The teachers are very well trained."

Eight of the ten participants interviewed indicated at least one change or improvement they felt was needed. The responses varied, ranging from the cleanliness of the building, some of the teachers, what is and is not allowed in the bus, OYS program, and outside of the building, and length of rotations. The last improvement listed was a similar thread from two of the participants, as they both felt the time for each rotation was not enough for them and the teachers to accomplish their respective goals. In addition, both of the participants also stated that longer rotations meant more time to finish their homework. Here is one response to a question asking what she would change in the program: "...sometimes in homework rotation you don't really finish all your homework and then sometimes when you're in your music rotations you don't really get to learn new music; you...you do learn new music, but sometimes like the teachers say like, 'oh we wanted to learn this, but it's rotation time.'" When talking to one of the instructors, I mentioned this to him and he stated that this was one of the things they were aware of and would talk about in a later board meeting.

Most of the participants surveyed indicated a better atmosphere concerning their fellow students in OYS' environment when compared to their own school's environment. However, one participant has had a particularly negative experience in this area, as she

was the subject of bullying, both physically and emotionally. When asked whether this program has made her life a lot better or a lot worse, she responded,

“[This program] made my life a lot worse because I keep falling in music like in the bus and people are pushing me in the bus. Like people are pushing me...I don't like that people are pushing me and I get hurt. Like it's my body...they hurt both of them [feelings and body]. Sometimes in here [in the OYS building] and in the bus. [It happens walking] section to section.”

When asked what she would change if she were in charge, she stated, “[I would make] people be more nicer, and people don't be mean [and disrespectful] to the teachers.” This indicates that every program cannot be perfect, but as the program grows and changes, it must address certain issues that arise to provide a safe, secure environment that is the most conducive to learning. The author is confident that once OYS is aware of this behavior, they will address their student body and inform their instructors and staff of corrective action.

Six of the participants indicated that they felt they were a “better person” from attending the OYS program. Their perceptions of what encompass being a “better person” varied with responses including “I get/know another talent” and “...they tell us sometimes to do better choices and like learn lots and learn more,” but overall the participants who indicated being a better person specified that the program as a whole has helped them become a better person.

Although not indicated by a large number, several participants remarked that they were having better success in school as reflected through their grades and their perceptions of learning at the OYS program. (No specific question concerning grades was asked to all of the participants.) The helpful instruction in English and the abilities of their tutors were cited as the reasons for their higher grades. One participant remarked that, “OYS like, helped me like get my



grades better and they help us here...I got help and friends help me and they showed me like tricks to do math. . .No, [my mom and dad can't help me at home;] they like work all day.”

Another participant stated, “Instead of doing our homework at home we get to do it here and if our parents don't even speak...[and] read in English we could just come here and get help from the people who work here.” (The author is confident that improved academic performance is one of the common themes among the participants, and regrets that a question specifically regarding grades was not included.)

All of the participants said that they would give a positive recommendation to their friends of the OYS program. Also, all of them also indicated pleasure and satisfaction from learning or playing an instrument.

Two quotes the author loves and readily identifies with regard music's powerful and often indescribable ability to change or reflect a particular emotion, either from the composer or to the listener (and oftentimes both), are: “[I think being able to play instruments makes me a better person] because sometimes I feel really sad and when I play and I hear the music and I'm like, “This music is really pretty; it makes me really happy;”” and “The best thing I was...I impressed myself is when we had a concert of Christmas caroling songs and everybody was so happy they were even crying or something and that made me really happy thinking that we were really great. [The people in the audience were] crying and happy at the same time.” These beautiful stories reflect the intangibles, the difficult-to-measure and hard-to-quantify effects of being a part of OYS and playing an instrument both alone, with, and for a group. This is evidence of the far-reaching effects of music on the entire person. The author is proud to be a part of this process and the success of improving and sustaining this program.

While no clear response has indicated that, “Yes, we can see that the OYS program is getting the job done,” the given responses have certainly shined light on the positive aspects of the OYS program. As seen above and based on my time spent within the program’s walls, the OYS instructors [and (the author believes) all of the staff and administration] are open and willing to identify, address, and resolve all conflicts that they become aware of. This openness to change and “fixes,” and really their dedication to improving the effectiveness of their program is one of the commendable characteristics that will allow this program to expand and flourish. Those looking from the outside in will see this program as one dedicated to making positive changes in the community. A breakdown of the common themes gleaned from the participants’ responses can be viewed in Table 1.

### **Description and Justification of Action**

The target audience of this project is essentially everyone who comes in contact with the OYS program, current and future. Parents of OYS participants, the board members, staff, instructors, and administration of OYS, (potential) donors and/or partners, and even the OYS participants themselves are all part of the target audience.

The target audience was chosen through contact with Marilyn Price-Mitchell, PhD. Dr. Price-Mitchell is the Research Advisor providing pro bono services for OYS. Close communication between Dr. Price-Mitchell and Capstone Advisor Dr. Whang provided the formulation for the scope this project entails. Together, we identified the needs of the OYS program and laid the foundation for this project.

The author hopes to inspire, inform, and involve all who can contribute in their own way to this program, be it monetary, the gift of time, donation of instruments, or even helping in the rehearsal and homework rooms. OYS has inspired the author to help bring music education back

into our schools and society, and he hopes that all who read this and/or come into contact with OYS are inspired to push for the same.

This paper, all recordings, and all documentation submitted with this project will be at the disposal of the OYS program. Since the program has been the driving force behind the program, these documents and recordings will be a great help for the program now and for the future.

During the course of this project, the author became aware of the CSUMB Alumni Association's Capstone Grant. This grant was formed by the Alumni Association to provide financial help for a graduating senior's Capstone Project, and while the author applied, he unfortunately has been informed that he did not receive the grant. The outline for this grant included supplies for the strings department of OYS, such as rosin, shoulder rests, and strings. While the author did not receive the grant, he is thankful for the opportunity to potentially improve the program through the grant.

During the time spent in observing and collaborating in the OYS building, the author was offered a position as one of the strings instructors. Since then he has been accepted into the CSUMB credential program and thus cannot make the times the participants meet for the program. However, he is honored by the offer from OYS, and certainly has not stepped across the program's threshold for the last time.

The final stage of the action of this project will not be made manifest for several years. The author has been (affectionately) called the "guinea pig," as he is laying the groundwork for future students' capstones to follow in conjunction with OYS. OYS has expressed the desire for a "Strategic Research Partnership," one where "In the short-term, we hope to develop a partnership with CSUMB where one or several students under the supervision of a faculty member in Education, Psychology, or Social Work could coordinate the collection and reporting

of current data” (YOSAL, 2011, p. 5). They later assert that either with a partnership with CSUMB or other institutions, they wish to create a project leading to being published in a peer-reviewed journal (YOSAL, 2011). The author is proud to be the first of a line of researchers aimed at giving the OYS program its due notoriety and props.

All of these actions are legitimate in that they have relevance to help sustain and improve the effectiveness of the OYS program. All of the actions listed include providing a resource(s) to OYS that will assist them in their mission. The data collected and given, the CSUMB Alumni Grant, the author’s possible employment, and the groundwork laid for future CSUMB students to follow are all aimed at helping the OYS program improve financially and intrinsically into the future.

### **Action Documentation**

The previous section has reviewed the author’s action, and the only feedback the author can speak of up to this point concerns the CSUMB Alumni Association’s Capstone Grant. As stated before, he has been informed that he did not receive the grant.

All of the documents have yet to be given to OYS, as the author is still in the process of condensing everything. Although the author does not know of anyone at the moment, he is confident that his Capstone Advisor, Dr. Whang, will be able to help someone (as she did the author) in his or her quest, in collaboration with OYS and Dr. Price-Mitchell, to provide the data and research needed to keep OYS growing and healthy.

### **Critical Reflection**

The strengths of the action that the author has taken reflect the desires of him, the OYS program, and those associated with the furtherance of this program. By providing all of the documents, recordings, and data to the OYS program, the program will be bettered through

catching a glimpse into the perspectives of their participants and seeing what is working, what is not, the changes needed, and how the participants suggest they be changed. While the Capstone Grant Application was denied, it was advantageous to apply, as the benefits would have been well documented.

The strength of the author's job offer is purely subjective, but if the author accepted the offer, he feels the program would be bettered in several areas. First, the author lives in Sweepfire, and thus would be able to make all of the sessions, giving the students a consistent source of encouragement and correction that they might not enjoy at this moment. Second, another strings instructor would diminish class size, increasing the likelihood for the advancement of the participants' learning when compared with the alternate. Finally, the author brings a lifetime of musical skill not limited to the realms of stringed instruments, and would thus be able to substitute and/or double on some of the rotations.

Finally, the groundwork that the author is laying is encouraging and advantageous to both the OYS program and all future researchers. This project is one model of research that the following researchers can choose to follow, and may pull from elements of this project in the future. Again, the author is privileged to be the "guinea pig" researcher – the first for the OYS program.

The weaknesses of the author's action are somewhat difficult to articulate. The author muses that he could have made a better use of the resources on the Capstone Grant Application, but believes that they were legitimate needs and estimations of cost. The objectives of this project were accomplished in the time allotted.

Pacing was one thing the author would change. The way Dr. Whang set this class was highly advantageous, but the author never took full advantage of those aspects of the project. The

interviews could also have been started earlier, giving more time for analysis, reflection, and coding.

The author learned that he needs to find a better rhythm with the assignments, and that he should be confident in his skills to get the job done. The author found that action does not need to be a huge event, but can help with even the smallest of actions. Change can come about with a small seed.

The author has also reinforced his love for teaching, as this project placed him in a setting not unlike the public school classroom. Interacting with, facilitating the learning of, and watching students learn is one of the joys that the author has and still loves to experience.

The themes of the Liberal Studies department have shaped the author's education in many ways. The author feels "well-educated," in that he thinks he has acquired knowledge in a wide enough variety of fields where he has had a taste of a little bit of everything. He knows that as he teaches, he is also learning along with and from the students whom he interacts with, and he feels well prepared to be in the field.

He also feels that he has had a "healthy" dose of multiculturalism, as many of his classes have focused on this broad term. Through these classes he feels confident that he can interact in the world with a clear and open understanding of the cultures, histories, and families wherever his feet trod.

The concept of Human Development influenced and informed this project when selecting the participants of the interviews. The author recognized that certain age groups might not be able to clearly articulate their feelings, and that their introspection abilities might be limited by developmental factors. Thus, fourth graders were selected as opposed to second or third graders.

Critical communication in English influenced the author's understanding and perception of the English Language Learners within the interviewees. His understanding of their abilities helped smooth the interviews from the verbal and communication point of view.

Most importantly, the author's Music Emphasis in the major heavily influenced this project. Having the music emphasis (and the wide musical background) only increased the ability of the author to easily understand, document responses, and converse with the participants. The knowledge and experience were an integral part of this paper's direction and completion. He has taken "Teaching Music for Children" for the emphasis requirement, and feels that this class (coupled with his other emphasis classes) have combined to help bring this project to pass.

Thus this paper regarding the OYS program comes to a close. The author sincerely hopes that this project not only inspires the intended audience, but also encourages them to seek out OST music programs in their own communities, and if none exist, to collaborate with *El Sistema* and/or OYS in order to bring greater positive change to our communities. The OYS program has had great beginnings, and as the funding, recognition, accolades, and results pile up, the OYS program will continue to have a greater influence in our communities, influencing children's lives, and bringing classical music back into our society.

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Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> All names of people, places, and organizations have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Table 1

THEMES:		/10
-Pride/satisfaction in being in the advanced group	-4	
-Getting to learn music/play an instrument	-10	
-Meeting/making new friends	-5	
-For audition (to get in advanced group) didn't do as well as could've/hoped	-2	
-Better cleaning: bugs around window, food on the floor	-1	
-Special places for instruments to prevent damage	-1	
-Would make positive recommendation of OYS to friend	-10	
-Pride/Satisfaction from playing/practicing/performing instrument)	-9	
-Satisfaction with teachers:	-4	
-Dissatisfaction with teachers :	-1	
-Better person because of being in the program	-6	
-People are bullying me (pushing, verbally, etc.)	-1	
-Enjoyment from looking at/learning about new instruments	-2	
-Express desire for longer rotations	-2	
-Proponent of eating, drinking, and doing homework in bus	-1	
-Would not change anything if in charge	-2	
-Would have OYS buy more instruments/better equipment (e.g. computers)	-3	
-Like to attend school more	-1	
-Satisfaction in having homework time/having tutors/better grades	-2	
-Expresses dissatisfaction with present building <i>opposed to</i> Rancho Cielo	-1	
-Satisfaction from choosing <i>own</i> instrument to learn	-1	