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Evaluation of Monterey Jazz Festival's Clinicians in the Schools Program

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Abstract

In recent years arts education programs in schools have been drastically reduced or eliminated due to economic challenges. Underfunded schools are forced to focus on the mandated curriculum. Though it is proven that arts education increases a student's academic performance it is not funded at the same level components of academia. The Monterey Jazz Festival (MJF) assists schools in Monterey County that are suffering from the absence of art education. MJF partners with local schools by providing the necessary resources to ensure the continuance of arts education. This capstone consisted of an evaluation of MJF's Clinicians in the Schools program hires professional musicians to teach music in the classrooms. The findings suggest that an overwhelming amount of students are satisfied with the Clinicians in the Schools program. Additionally, this evaluation revealed specific correlations between students expressed needs and how it related to their satisfaction of the program.

Keywords: Music, Education, Program Evaluation, Schools

I. Agency Information and Communities Served

For over half a century Monterey Jazz Festival (MJF) has been changing lives of students in Monterey County through jazz education. MJF provides innovative year-round Jazz Education Programs that serve approximately 3 thousand students annually. The United States Census Bureau (2018) reported that in 2017 there were approximately 83 thousand grade school students in Monterey County and more specifically 79 thousand of those students were enrolled in public schools. The remaining 4 thousand reported attending private schools. Although MJF currently partners with private schools it is important to mention that a majority of the services they provide are to students enrolled in Monterey County's public schools system. As previously

mentioned MJF currently serves 3 thousand students annually. When compared to the total population of 83 thousand students, MJF roughly supports only 3.5 percent of the target population. Though this number may appear insignificant it illustrates the County's failure to provide arts education to its students. Stanford Children's Health (n.d.) reports that both music and sports programs offer many benefits and help to prepare children for future success.

Children need more than just the basics to be successful. For students to achieve full and productive lives they must acquire social skills, discipline, cooperation, and creative thinking, which are all obtained through the education of music and sports programs. According to the California Department of Education (2016) there are approximately 1.4 million K through 12 students participating in arts education in California. The California Interscholastic Federation (2017) reported that nearly 1 million high school students alone in California are participating in education-based athletic programs. If both arts and athletic departments in schools are viewed as key components of academia, why are athletic programs thriving while arts programs are vanishing? MJF's commitment to addressing the challenges Monterey County schools face with the scarcity of arts education programs has without a doubt positively impacted the community. MJF would unquestionably find great pleasure in having every student experience its music education programs, but it is unlikely that every student would desire to participate.

Nevertheless, these types of organizations continue to seek new ways in which to expand and improve the quality of services. MJF's educational programs provide aid to all Monterey County school districts that are suffering from the absence of art education. MJF's (2017) mission is to celebrate the legacy of jazz, expand its boundaries, and provide opportunities to experience jazz through the creative production of performances and educational programs.

II. Problem description

Current budget restrictions prohibit public schools from offering music education opportunities to their students. With political pressures that emphasize higher standardized test scores, schools have shifted their focus on preparing students for the test instead of producing a well-educated child (Arostegui, 2016). This over emphasis to produce high test scores leads to an enormous amount of time spent solely on test curriculum. This drastically reduces the amount of time students can participate in elective music programs, which have been proven to increase academic performance in those specific areas (Pergola, 2014). MJF offers a variety of music programs to Monterey County students to aid schools that lack funding or have exhausted their resources in areas that are mandated by the Board of Education. Unfortunately, these budget cuts tend to occur in those school districts that are already under-resourced, further reducing their students' ability to be exposed to, or study music. Cutting music programs disproportionately impacts children from low-income families because these families often lack the financial resources to purchase an instrument or pay for private lessons. The California Alliance for Arts Education (2010) reported that in 2000, more than 1 million students were enrolled in school music programs. However, by 2008 that number had dropped by 57 percent to 470 thousand and the Arts Council for Monterey County stated that the children from low-income backgrounds were impacted most because they have the least access to resources outside of the classroom. It was reported by Children Trends (2014) that elementary school students participating in higher quality music education programs scored 20 percent higher on standardized tests in English and Math. Student involvement in the arts is linked to higher academic performance, increased standardized test scores, greater involvement in community service and lower dropout rates.

MJF offers numerous services to address the educational needs of Monterey County students, however one particular service is important to mention because it is the gateway to all that MJF has to offer. The Instrument Bank program lends top quality instruments to local students throughout the school year, free of charge. Students lacking the financial resources to purchase instruments are prohibited from partaking in music education and more specifically all the wonderful services that MJF offers. Loaning these instruments to underfunded music programs within the public-school system allows children from lower economic backgrounds the opportunity to experience the joy of learning to play an instrument and grants them access to the educational benefits of the Clinicians in Schools Program. Table 1 presents a summary of the community and agency.

Table 1: Problem Model

CAUSES/RISK FACTORS TO BROADER HEALTH PROBLEM	AGENCY-SPECIFIC “MICRO-LEVEL” PROBLEM ADDRESSED BY PROJECT	CONSEQUENCES TO SOCIETY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Households lack the financial resources to provide arts education to their children • Reduced school funding • Inadequate info on importance of arts education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating student satisfaction with services to measure program’s effectiveness and assess whether or not to continue services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower level education rates • Higher rates of poverty • Fewer qualified workers in the work force
CAUSES TO AGENCY PROBLEM	BROADER “MACRO-LEVEL” HEALTH/SOCIAL PROBLEM	CONSEQUENCES TO AGENCY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adequate funding • Instrument fees are too high • Arts education viewed as not important part of academics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children from lower income households are less likely to obtain higher levels of education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer students participating in arts education • Underserved low income communities lack arts education resources • Decline in population that supports arts education

III. Project Description and Implementation

This capstone completed an evaluation of the Clinicians in Schools program, which brings a full band of professional jazz artists to the classrooms to help music teachers take their ensembles to the next level. School Music Directors within Monterey County are paired with a lead artist who serves as a year-long partner in achieving their school's musical goals. Some of these goals include: developing improvisational skills, improving and expanding rhythm section techniques, ear training and composition and arranging. Through the Clinicians in Schools program, artists can help schools meet new curricular standards, and to measure and evaluate their successes. This evaluation of the Clinicians in Schools analyzed data collected from participating students. The data collected consisted of a predetermined (multiple choice) set of responses to a series of questions regarding the student's satisfaction with the program. In addition to these fixed responses a student was required to specify their exact reasoning for selecting the responses.

Over 200 students utilizing the Clinicians in Schools program participated in the survey and each varied in age as well as school district. There are approximately 140 schools in Monterey County. However, the surveys were collected from 10 schools that varied by geographical location, student population and the economic welfare of surrounding neighborhoods. It is also important to mention that the surveys were evenly distributed between middle school and high school students. Elementary school students were not surveyed due to the complexity of expressing their individual needs in specific areas such as composition as well as articulating their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the program. The surveyed group made up approximately 10 percent of the total population served and is believed to have captured a large enough snap shot that included the various subgroups within the total population. The

broad snapshot consequently resulted in a well-rounded understanding of MJF’s clients and will assist in the improvement of services to ensure their continued success. Table 2 presents a summary of the project scope of work.

Table 2: Project Scope of Work		
Goal: Evaluation of Monterey Jazz Festival’s Clinicians in the Schools		
Primary objective of the project: Assess client satisfaction and increase knowledge in order to improve services		
Activities	Deliverables	Timeline/deadlines
1. Discuss capstone project ideas with mentor	1. Final capstone project idea approved	1. Dec 14 th , 2018 Completed
2. Research program being evaluated	2. Thorough understanding of program	2. Nov 6 th , 2018 Completed
3. Develop survey to assess effectiveness of program	3. Final approved survey	3. Mar 15 th , 2018 Completed
4. Identify individuals to survey and schedule time and location for interviews	4. Interview location & dates/times confirmed/approved	4. Mar 1 st , 2019 Completed
5. Analyze data collected.	5. Organize data into a usable format	5. Mar 29 th , 2019 Completed
6. Discovery	6. Identify key issues surrounding the program evaluation.	6. April 10 th , 2019 Completed
7. Present information	7. Present findings to agency	7. April 26 th , 2019 Completed
9. Complete reporting requirements	9. Final agency and capstone reports	9. May 3 rd , 2019 Completed
10. Prepare capstone presentation in selected format	10. Instructor approval & Dress Rehearsal of final capstone presentation format (posters submitted for printing)	10. May 8-10, 2018 Completed
11. Final preparation for Capstone Festival	11. Final presentation at Capstone Festival	11. May 16 th , 2019 Completed

IV. Project Assessment Process

MJF’s desired outcome for this evaluation was to achieve a deeper understanding of each client’s individual needs. The surveys were constructed to determine if students agreed with what the program aimed to achieve. The survey also provided an area for additional comments where students could express their specific needs. Through the analysis of responses made in the

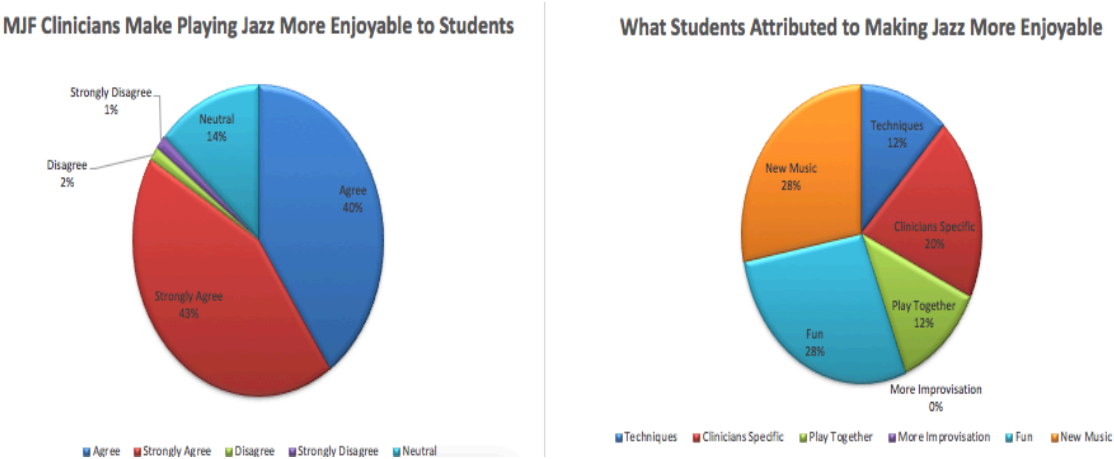
comment section of each question 6 categories were created. These categories were: *New Music*, *More Improvisation*, *Fun*, *Techniques*, *Play Together* and *Clinicians Specific*. *New music* represents a student's desire to play something different than the music taught by his or her school Music Director. *More Improvisation* expressed a student's desire to learn certain aspects of playing solos or making improv changes to their current compositions. *Fun* articulated the importance students expressed about the atmosphere of the classroom and the attitudes of the Clinicians. *Techniques* portrayed a student's desire to learn more specific tools that would improve their musical talent such as scales and more difficult compositions to challenge their abilities. *Clinician Specific* represented the student's request for clinicians who specialize in their specific instrument. The evidence collected and the continued implementation of the program evaluations will assist MJF in making well informed decisions that result in positive changes to program services and insure that the program is changing alongside its target populations to meet their current needs. This program evaluation and data analysis will not implement any changes to the current services provided by MJF, however through future utilization of data collection methods and program evaluations will guarantee the program optimizes at its greatest effectiveness

V. Evaluation Results

Clinicians in the Schools was designed to enhance a student's musical ability and encourage them to improve on their talents while creating an enjoyable educational experience. The surveys revealed that the program is undeniably successful in this regard. Out of the 211 responses received 83 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that MJF Clinicians made playing music more enjoyable. This is illustrated below in *Figure A*. In relation to these responses the individual comments collected from this question revealed that the 6 distinct

categories created from the comments show that an almost evenly distributed focus on each category is responsible for this success.

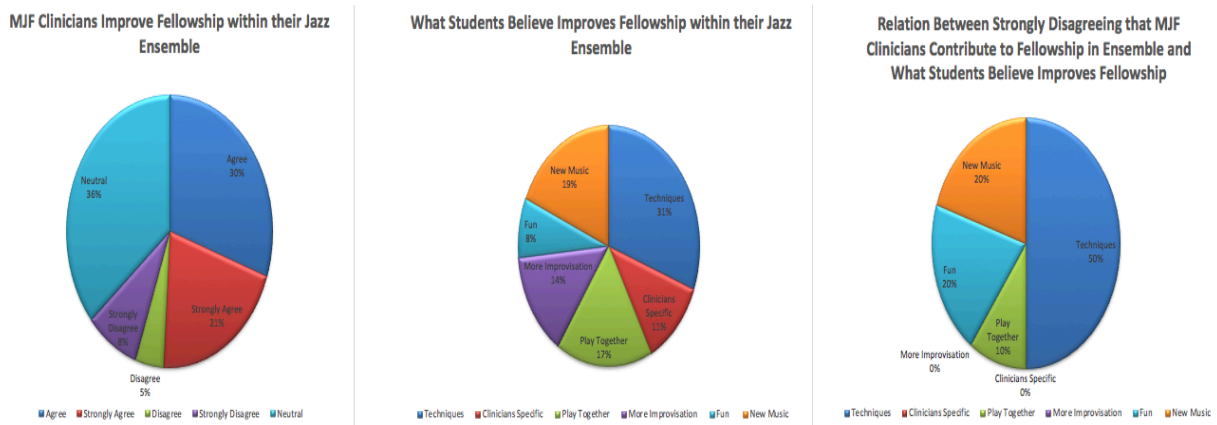
Figure A. Responses to Clinicians Making Jazz More Enjoyable



Clinicians in the Schools aimed to improve community within the schools’ ensembles. When students were asked if the program improved the community among its fellow band members 51 percent agreed or strongly agreed. There was an alarming number of students who felt neutral about the statement. The neutral statements totaled 36 percent and when you combine that with the 13 percent that strongly disagreed or disagreed almost half of the students expressed that this area was in need of improvement. More specifically, the top three responses to what students believe improves fellowship are playing new music, playing together and learning new techniques. One can assume that learning new music and techniques together as a band creates conversations among students resulting in a stronger sense of community. *Figure B* below displays these responses, however it is important to notice that the students who strongly disagreed with the statement expressed a larger attention to having a fun atmosphere, which just so happened to be the smallest percent of responses when looking at the total responses. This

may suggest that when the program is focusing on new music, techniques and playing together that the Clinicians may instinctively revert back to a more formal classroom. To improve the community among students, Clinicians must implement new innovative methods of teaching larger groups of students that emphasizes a more relaxed and fun learning environment.

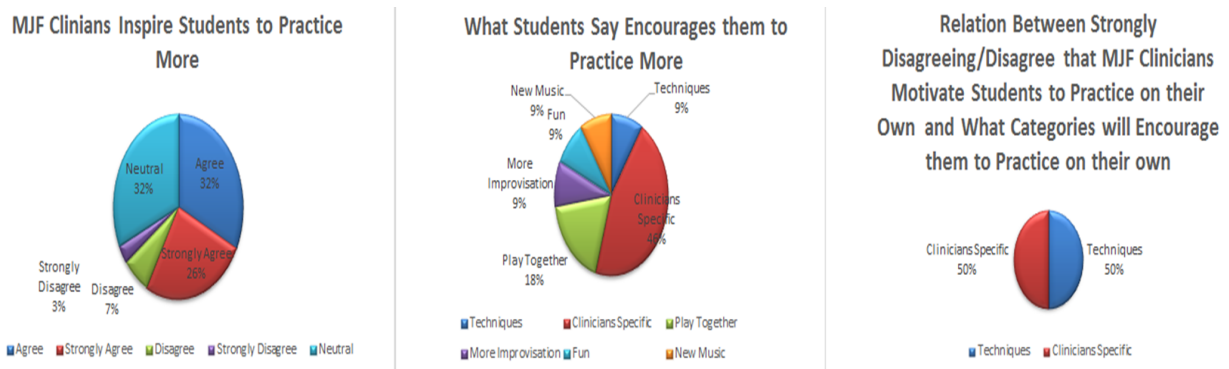
Figure B. Responses to Clinicians Improving Fellowship



One of the main objectives the Clinicians in the Schools aims to achieve is encouraging its students to improve on their musical talents. Students often become bored and unenthused with activities when tasks are seemingly easy. However, Clinicians in the Schools builds students enthusiasm by challenging their musical abilities. The excitement of learning new and challenging things is intended to inspire students to practice more frequently. In *Figure C* below we can see that a little over half the students agree or strongly agree that the program inspires them to practice more. There were also a third of the students who expressed that they were neutral about being inspired to practice more. If you combine those students with those who disagree and strongly disagree, 42 percent were unaffected by the program. When asked what would encourage students to practice more the overwhelming response was to have Clinicians who taught each students specific instrument. More importantly *Figure C* shows that students

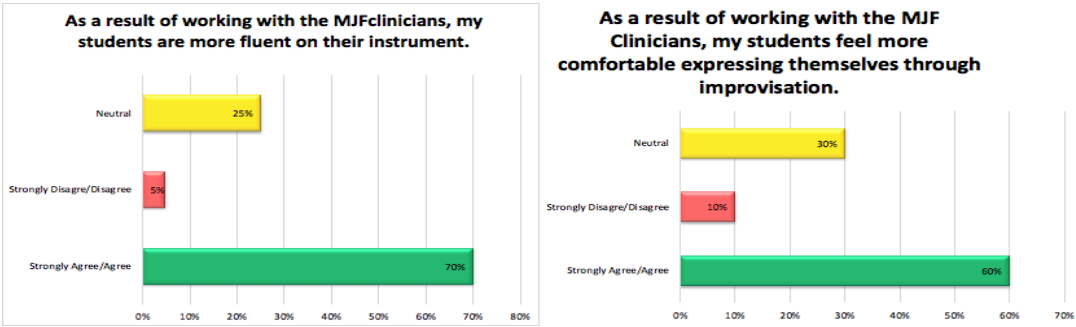
unaffected by the program expressed concern equally in two areas: students preferred clinicians teaching the instrument that they played and through learning new techniques.

Figure C. Responses to Clinicians Inspiring Students to Practice More



MJF’s mission is to provide students the opportunity to experience jazz through educational programs that expand their musical boundaries and empower students to express themselves musically. The Clinicians in Schools program specifically focuses on carrying out that mission and there are two primary ways in which the program fulfills this commitment. The clinicians lesson plans consist of a well-balanced curriculum and more specifically coaches students in the area of improvisation or better known as solos. A solo is a piece or a section of a piece that is played by a single performer. The soloist will play an improvised melody within the piece that showcases the individual’s talent. Building a student’s confidence is key to their future success. Below *Figure D* illustrates that Clinicians in Schools achieves this goal. 60 percent of the students surveyed agreed that through the program they are now more comfortable with expressing themselves. Also *Figure D* proves that students have expanded their knowledge and feel more competent in their instruments with an overwhelming 70 percent of students agreeing that the program made them more fluent in their instrument.

Figure D. Responses to Clinicians Improving Fluency and Improvisation



After analyzing the survey results it is evident that the Clinicians in Schools is an overall success among its student participants. The program is achieving its desired goals of: creating an enjoyable learning experience, developing improvisational skills, improving techniques and increasing students’ proficiency of their instrument. There was some concern in the area of encouraging students to practice more. Students expressed a greater need for clinicians that teach their specific instrument. This issue may be prove difficult to address. However, creative efforts must be made to optimize program effectiveness. It may be impossible to have a clinician for every instrument of a schools ensemble. This could be far too costly for the organization but perhaps the program could select clinicians that play various instruments. Another possible solution may involve clinicians teaching a workshop for a specific instrument and have a single location where students from various schools can attend.

Lastly another area of concern was the sense of community. The students expressed their sense of community was largely dependent on clinicians teaching new techniques as well as learning new music. A significant amount of responses reveal that students believed the program had taught them new techniques, which draws the attention to the expressed desire to learn new music. A student desire to learn new music may not simply be teaching them a new piece of music. Students may want to learn new music that is currently being played on popular radio stations. Further research into what specific songs students wish to learn may result in

improvements to the sense of community. Nevertheless this evaluation determined the program to be effectively achieving its goals and it is recommended that the program continue its efforts to monitor the satisfaction of its participants as well as make necessary changes that accomplish their goals.

VI. Findings and Results of Assessment Process

When presenting the program evaluation results to the agency it was revealed that some of the program's desired outcomes were more easily identifiable. The straightforward question of whether or not a student was satisfied with the program was a clear means to answer the agency's question. However, other goals were not so clear, such as what are the factors that contribute to each student's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the program and why? For example there was some concern in the area of the program failing in encouraging its students to practice more. The evaluation identified a correlation between students' desire to have clinicians that teach their specific instrument and dissatisfaction within this goal. However, the evaluation could only reveal a connection between the two and not exactly why or how this problem could be addressed. These issues proposed challenges because the necessary information could not be obtained by a single question, but rather correlations made between a series of questions related to one another. Ultimately this only helped narrow the amount of possible solutions or guide the evaluation to key components that affected the particular goal, however did not provide definite solutions. MJF has provided services for over 50 years and was certain that their program was effective because of its continued demand. However, they did not possess the factual evidence to support this notion. MJF was pleased to have results which illustrated the overall satisfaction of its students participating in the Clinicians in the Schools program. The downside to this program evaluation is that it was the first look into the actual success of the program and unfortunately

much of the information collected is not clear and definitive but will act primarily as a baseline to determine future success. It is unlikely that MJF will change how it currently operates the program but they did advise that they would likely continue to survey its participants to obtain a deeper understanding of its target population in hopes to one day influence future decisions.

VII. Recommendations

Due to the absence of prior program history this evaluation recommends that MJF continue to investigate the concerns among students and monitor their satisfaction to assist in identifying possible challenges within the program. Though this program evaluation was unsuccessful in identifying precise areas of improvement, but instead it narrowed down the amount of reasons why MJF was unable to achieve higher rates of satisfaction within specific areas of the program. This evaluation assisted in broadening the agency's understanding of its students' needs which could assist in helping the agency avoid potential pitfalls. By continuing to evaluate the program, MJF can ensure that the services provided to its clients continue for many years as well as assist underfunded arts education programs within Monterey County schools. Subsequently the program will contribute to the future success of our youth by increasing academic performance and encouraging students to obtain higher levels of education resulting in exceedingly competent and highly educated individuals in our workforce, that contribute to a strong economy and a strong community.

VIII. (New) Conclusions and personal reflection

The important insight gained through the capstone assignment was the knowledge of social issues that could be addressed within the profession. Prior to the field placement at MJF I had a limited perspective of what job opportunities were available. I often looked at the common issues such as homelessness, at risk youth, foster care and different aspects within the healthcare

system. Through my field placement and primarily the capstone project I discovered the endless amount of ways in which individuals, families and communities need assistance. I was completely unaware of the impact of arts education and how the lack of resources available to children, primarily ones from lower income families, were disproportionately affected and how this ultimately reduced a child's likelihood of breaking out of the lower economic class. I also found it very interesting that students benefit so significantly from arts education. Though there are many different types of arts education programs across the county and MJF did not have the evidence of benefits towards a child's academic performance from their specific music program, overwhelming research showed that arts education improves test scores, GPA's as well as likelihood for children to obtain higher levels of education. I also gained a great amount of insight into how a program evaluation is conducted. If asked to complete a program evaluation prior to the capstone project I wouldn't have the slightest idea on where to begin. I found it tremendously beneficial for my professional development to witness first-hand how organizations operate and the amount of effort and organization it takes to provide services to clients, as well as the amount of dedication an organization must have to continue to improve services to clients in order to ensure their needs are met. Through the capstone project I enjoyed analyzing the surveyed responses. Discovering different ways to present information to obtain a deeper impact on an audience is a key tool to gaining support. This tool I am positive I will use in my future career in health and human services.

Lastly, I would strongly advise future interns to engage in their organization as much as possible. I would encourage them to articulate what their specific internship goals are. In regards to their capstone, I would suggest that they have multiple project ideas that overlap. Heavily relying on one specific project could result in utter catastrophe. When implementing and

completing your capstone project it is highly likely that you will not be able to rely on others to assist you in completing the project. If individuals or departments within the organization fail to assist you or delay in completing tasks needed for your capstone project due to their primary work functions it can be frustrating. If you have multiple directions in which your capstone can go, you will have the opportunity to change direction rather than starting all over.

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