

National Research Project for El Sistema-inspired Orchestras



June Newsletter

Key Topics:

- Endings and Beginnings
- Research Fellows
- Thinking Ahead

End of the Year

This is the fifth newsletter from the research team at Longy School of Music of Bard College and WolfBrown. The format was originally designed to keep us all in touch and on track –with as few as possible separate emails. So as we all wind towards the end of our school year and program year, and as we orient toward what lies ahead this summer and next fall – we wanted to be in touch with a final newsletter full of information about the close of the year, next steps, and plans for 2015 - 16

Again, our **deep thanks** to all of you who helped pilot and refine the common measures. The early reviews coming in from the Spring round of data gathering are that the revisions make for stronger, clearer, and more representative instruments. The fact that it was a collaborative effort across varied sites represents the ensemble spirit of our work. So heading into the important 2015-16 year of data gathering, we can feel confident that we have field-tested, robust measures to work with.

Finishing Up

For those still completing measures and uploading data, please do so as soon as is possible. Your Spring round of data goes into the same site specific DropBox that you used for the fall, with this round clearly labeled. As well, academic data – students' grades, test scores, attendance and disciplinary referrals – can also be scanned and placed in your DropBox if it is coming from students' report cards. If it is coming directly from the school or district in the form of excel files or pdfs, these can be placed in the DropBox as well. If you need any support in collecting these final pieces, do not hesitate to be in touch with us directly. We will begin the next steps of our analysis just as soon as all the data is complete and received.

Beginning Again

It is not too early to begin thinking about next year, particularly in strategizing about two areas:

1. **Consent/Assent Forms:** Since our IRB approval goes through December 2016, we will be using the same forms next year as we did this year. Firstly, any families that have already submitted forms (both program students and comparison group students) are covered for the duration of the study. You do not need to collect additional forms from these families. Good news! Some sites have suggested, however, that they might send a note to these families informing them that the study they have given their consent for continues through the 2015-

16 school year.

For new consent/assent forms that need to be collected, it is important to plan ahead and have these forms ready for parent/family packets or informational meetings at the start of the school year. A number of sites strongly recommended that asking schools to include those forms in their beginning of year packets for parents and families is the best way to get a good rate of return. Please review the forms now and contact us with questions or thoughts as you plan for the highest return rate possible.

2. **School and District Cooperation:** We have worked quite specifically and directly with nearly all of you to ease this pathway of cooperation and information flow. We will be creating a summary sheet that you can use with cooperating classroom and music teachers so that you can inform them right away about the calendar for the study, along with when and how they will be involved. If you are still experiencing difficulties or anticipate any challenges, NOW would be the time to begin trouble-shooting. Please be in touch if you need our support here.

Research Fellows

We are thrilled to announce that through the generosity of our donors (the Buck Family Foundation and the Mellon Foundation) we have been able to choose two Research Fellows from among Longy's MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) 2014-15 student cohort. Jennifer Johnson and Angelica Cortez will be joining the team to assist in many facets of the work. We welcome them and introduce them briefly to you here.

Angelica Cortez

Angelica Cortez is a graduate of UC Davis, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in music performance, and minored in education. Her studies in music performance have allowed her to perform in Spain, Peru, Italy and throughout the US. In 2012, she performed at Chosen Vale's International Trumpet seminar, where she had the privilege of performing and studying with Stephen Burns, Hakan Hardenberger, Gabrielle Cassone and Edward Carroll. Angelica regularly studied with Adam Luftman and Scott Macomber during her time at UC Davis.

Angelica is driven by her passion for music education. She believes strongly in music's power to change lives and better communities. This passion eventually led her to Los Angeles, where she began her Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) at Longy School of Music of Bard College. During her time at Longy, she continued her trumpet studies with Christopher Still, while working with Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) at Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), the second of three music education sites created by the Los Angeles Philharmonic. While at YOLA at HOLA, Angelica led several brass, wind and string classes. She was also the Assistant Director of YOLA's two-week residential summer camp. She was responsible for creating and facilitating all music programming during this time. She also led and collaborated with teaching artists from all three YOLA sites to create curriculum for over 200 students.

Angelica also had the opportunity to collaborate with the Longy-WolfBrown National El Sistema Evaluation Project. She created brass repertoire for the study, and will continue to assist with this research as a Research Fellow throughout the 2015-2016 school year. Upon graduating from Longy, Angelica will continue to work as a Teaching Artist for YOLA at HOLA, and with the Los Angeles Philharmonic as an administrator.

Jennifer Johnson

After arriving in New York City from her hometown in Wyoming, Jennifer Rose Johnson began working with the Corona Youth Music Project, an El Sistema-inspired program. While there, she found her true passion: using music education as a vehicle for social change. Jennifer graduated Summa Cum Laude from the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College with a degree in Violin Performance in 2012. During this time,

she had the wonderful opportunity to study with Joey Corpus, Charles Neidich, and Burton Kaplan, but realized that music education is where her heart lies.

In June 2015, Jennifer is completing the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) at the Longy School of Music of Bard College, where she has been able to hone her skills as educator and musician. Through this program, Jennifer has been collaborating with first violinist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Vijay Gupta, the Sistema-inspired program Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA), and researchers from WolfBrown.

Mr. Gupta is also the Founder and Artistic Director of Street Symphony, an organization that raises awareness for issues of mental health, homelessness, and incarceration by performing concerts in the Los Angeles County jails and in Skid Row, and has welcomed Jennifer into Street Symphony as both active observer and performer. Throughout the MAT, Jennifer has been working with YOLA at HOLA where she has taught strings, woodwinds, and young composers. She also had the opportunity to work with the Longy-WolfBrown National El Sistema Evaluation Project and will continue to do so as a Research Fellow during the 2015-16 school year.

Her interest in mastering the art of teaching as well as providing access for all children to create high quality music has been highlighted by her participation in the 2013 Institute of Musicianship and Public Service at Community Music Works in Rhode Island, her appointment as an ambassador for the 2012 Take-A-Stand Symposium in Los Angeles, and during the 2013-14 school year when she was chosen as one of thirty New York City teachers to attend the Music Educator's Workshop at Carnegie Hall. While pursuing new ways to develop her teaching artistry, Jennifer continually strives to instill her students with passion, perseverance, and determination.

Thinking Ahead

Finally, as you begin to plan ahead for 2015-16 here is a big picture calendar to keep steadily before you.

July 2015

- Strategize with Research Team around Site Specific Measures

August 2015

- Complete final preparation for consent process and school/district permissions
- Distribute summary sheet informing music and classroom teachers about the year-long calendar and their involvement
- Receive measure booklets and repertoire for performance measure
- Assemble the team of teaching artists/teachers who will serve as evaluators for the performance measure. Use an online tutorial to complete their training and insure inter-rater reliability and consistency
- Discuss Site-specific Measures at each site

September-October 2015

- Conduct Fall Round of common data collection at all sites
- Collect Site Specific measures where applicable

October –November 2015

- Send all data – common and site specific to research team

April-May 2016

- Conduct Spring Round of common data collection at all sites
- Collect Site Specific measures where applicable

June 2016

- Send all data – common and site specific sent to research team

July-August 2016

- Draft of final written reports come to sites for follow-up discussion
- Summary report that sites can use with their stakeholders

Any Questions?

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