2019

EDUCATING THROUGH THEATRE

Network-Wide Program Outcomes Assessment

THEATRE FORWARD.
In 2017-18, Theatre Forward supported and assessed 19 education programs offered by our member nonprofit regional theatres.

This study describes the perceptions of program participants on the most significant areas of potential impact and the characteristics of programs that potentially lead to that impact.

The most salient program outcomes were in the areas of:
1) English Language Arts/literacy/writing
2) 21st century workforce skills/ Social-emotional learning
3) Theatre skills

The most comprehensive program models included professional development for teachers, assessment for program improvement, and collaboration with schools.
Program Background

Each of the 19 programs included is diverse, multi-faceted, and includes a variety of pedagogical approaches, settings, delivery systems and outcomes.

Students

![Chart showing student demographics]

- Pre-K through Grade 5: 93,107
- Grades 6-8: 4,658
- High School & Over 18

Survey Respondents

- Generalist or Classroom Teacher
- Subject School Teacher
- Arts Specialist School Teacher
- Teaching Artist
- Other (assistant principal, afterschool coordinator, special education teacher, etc.)

- 93,107 Students
- 4,658 School Teachers
- 142 Teaching Artists
- 19 Theatres

Half of Programs were at least one hour per week.

Programs were 1-4 weeks long.
Average teacher ratings were highest for increased engagement and motivation, collaborative skills, and developing a sense of ownership of the learning process.

83% of teachers reported

STUDENTS DEVELOPED:

- Self-Confidence and an Ability to Take Positive Risks
- A Sense of Ownership of the Learning Process
- Greater Sense of Empathy for Others
- Increased Engagement and Motivation to Participate in Class Activities
- Collaborative and Cooperative Learning Skills

80% Developed Ability to Persevere and Stay on Task

77% Developed Increased Ability to Focus
"As the program went on, I could see his confidence build and he was able to use and strengthen the creative problem-solving skills and verbal-linguistic skills."

"Even students who were reluctant to participate in class discussions were eagerly sharing their thinking about the main character in the story."

"Our students learned how to be excellent and generous collaborators. [...] They cared more about the final piece than what they were doing as individuals."

"My students were able to feel more comfortable with each other and encourage one another to participate."

"The trajectory students took was astonishing, with virtually all students gaining increased confidence in the power of their voice while students of wildly disparate backgrounds build compassion and mutual understanding towards one another."

"As a result of this program I have seen my students' confidence soar."

"This program helped students to take positive risks in front of each other."
Some programs supported learning in related academic areas, particularly English Language skills and cultural understanding.

"I really saw a lot of growth in my students' comprehension, creativity, and connection making."

Half of teachers reported students' increased understanding of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) skills

69% Of teachers reported students developed English Language skills

Of teachers reported students acquired knowledge and understanding of different cultures
Theatre programs helped students understand social and historical figures and events, making them relevant to students' lives and contemporary issues.

"The program generated a greater awareness of social issues, such as segregation, and prompted a deeper understanding through discussion and role play."

"My students are majority low-SocioEconomic Status English language Learners. [The Program] gives them the opportunity to experience quality theatre that they would otherwise be unable to attend, but also reinforces language skills, allows them to coordinate with others, and helps them experience a variety of cultures and perspectives."

Theatre helped students understand narrative, character, and sequence in stories, plays, and other literature.

"Because of the program, students are able to remember key vocabulary (solid, liquid, gas, texture, temperature, flexibility) because they learned them through acting them out. Months after the program, we were talking about them in Science and about 80% of my students remembered what they were."

Students acquired and applied new vocabulary through theatre projects.

"Not only did our students grow, but we as educators came away with more confidence to be able to implement these techniques in our own classrooms."
Communications Skills

Teachers reported student gains in understanding and interest in theatre as well as expressive skills.

80% of teachers reported

STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED:
- increased verbal expressive skills
- increased non-verbal expressive skills
- increased physical awareness of physical control through participating in the program

"Students come to understand that art is a reflection of life and the human experience...Then, in turn, they are able to reflect upon their own lives discovering deeper meaning, feelings and thoughts within their own experiences."

"Students were able to nonverbally express themselves through facial and body expression. We also applied this in reading fluency by reading with expression for various characters."
Survey Methodology

The survey was designed and evaluated by Dr. Rob Horowitz

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In this report, we explore areas of potential impact within the educational programs of Theatre Forward’s constituent theatres. We conducted this survey to understand how the theatre education practitioners perceived of areas of potential impact and the characteristics of their program that might lead to that impact.

We asked each theatre to select one program and to respond to two surveys. One survey was designed for collaborating educators and was disseminated to the educators by the theatres through an online link, the other went to the theatres directly for response.
Participating Theatres

ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE *
Louisville, Kentucky

ALLEY THEATRE
Houston, Texas

ALLIANCE THEATRE
Atlanta, Georgia

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER *
San Francisco, California

AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER *
Cambridge, Massachusetts

ARENA STAGE
Washington, DC

CENTER THEATRE GROUP *
Los Angeles, California

CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE *
Cleveland, Ohio

DALLAS THEATER CENTER
Dallas, Texas

DENVER CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
Denver, Colorado

GOODMAN THEATRE
Chicago, Illinois

GUTHRIE THEATER *
Minneapolis, Minnesota

HARTFORD STAGE
Hartford, Connecticut

LONG WHARF THEATRE *
New Haven, Connecticut

MANHATTAN THEATRE CLUB
New York, New York

THE OLD GLOBE *
San Diego, California

SEATTLE REPERTORY THEATRE *
Seattle, Washington

TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY *
Providence, Rhode Island

WALNUT STREET THEATRE
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*Founding Member Theatres

Photo Credits

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American Conservatory Theater

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Center Theatre Group

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Actors Theatre of Louisville

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American Conservatory Theater
About Theatre Forward

Theatre Forward is devoted to advancing the American theatre and its communities by providing funding and other resources to the country’s leading nonprofit theatres. From its base in New York, Theatre Forward aims to increase access and opportunity for all to experience theatre that builds community and sets the stage for individual achievement by advancing strong theatre and educating through theatre.

For more information or to download the report visit www.theatreforward.org
STUDENTS GAINED INCREASED CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF THEIR VOICE WHILE STUDENTS OF WILDLY DISPARATE BACKGROUNDS BUILT COMPASSION AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER. THE PROGRAM GENERATED A GREATER AWARENESS OF SOCIAL ISSUES, SUCH AS SEGREGATION, AND PROMPTED A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING THOROUGH DISCUSSION AND ROLE PLAY. MY STUDENTS LEARNED HOW TO COLLABORATE OR HOW TO LEAD IN A HARMONIOUS WAY. THE PROGRAM ALSO REINFORCES LANGUAGE SKILLS AND HELPS THEM EXPERIENCE A VARIETY OF CULTURES AND PERSPECTIVES. THE PROGRAM HELPED STUDENTS TO TAKE POSITIVE RISKS IN FRONT OF EACH OTHER. MORE EXPRESSIVE IN WORDS AND ACTIONS. THEY ARE ABLE TO REFLECT UPON THEIR OWN LIVES DISCOVERING DEEPER MEANINGS, FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS WITHIN THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES. LIVE THEATER IS A VITAL, VISERAL, COMMUNAL ART FORM. ART IS A REFLECTION OF LIFE. ABLE TO FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH EACH OTHER AND TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER TO PARTICIPATE. MY STUDENTS LEARNED A STRONG SENSE OF SELF DISCIPLINE. THEATRE FORWARD