



**GALWAY
COMMUNITY
CIRCUS**

**GALWAY COMMUNITY CIRCUS
COMMUNITY IMPACT STUDY**

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Galway Community Circus is a youth arts charity based in Galway on the west coast of Ireland. Galway Community Circus has been in existence since 2002 and over the last five years their membership has grown from roughly forty young people to over two hundred and fifty. The circus offers classes and training in circus arts for young people aged between five and twenty years of age and operates a special bursary programme to ensure that economic difficulties do not stand in the way of a young person's membership. In June 2013 Galway Community Circus Director, Ulla Hokkanen, requested the administrative staff to develop a community impact study. The primary purpose of this study was to gauge and document the effect the circus has had on its members over the last five years. The secondary purpose of the study was to develop a document that would be of use to current and potential funders as an easy and concise way of explaining where their investment has been spent, and where their funding could be spent. The study was divided into four loose phases:

- Phase 1:** The development and dissemination of an online survey that would allow the parents of members to register and report their feelings and sentiments towards the Galway Community Circus (henceforth GCC).
- Phase 2:** The dissemination of an internal performance review focussing on communication between the board, staff members and volunteers. It also examined the efficiency of the internal and external communication systems of the GCC.
- Phase 3:** The deployment of a variety of research methods to gauge the opinions and attitudes of the youth circus membership including online surveys, panel interviews, group surveys and face-to-face surveys. Four separate approaches were employed for the four target ages groups.
- Phase 4:** The final phase saw the analysis and write-up conducted by Dr. Stephen Cadwell under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Brendan Rooney.

All surveys, questionnaires and interviews were voluntary and, where possible, steps were taken to ensure the anonymity of participants. In total, approximately 100 individual responses were received during the six month study.

The purpose of this final report and analysis is to offer some degree of insight into the workings and impact of Galway Community Circus while at the same time documenting and recording the Galway Community Circus' work.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The data garnered through the surveys, discussions, interviews and questionnaires paint an overwhelmingly positive picture of the current state of Galway Community Circus. In terms of staff and member satisfaction, community engagement and the productivity of the membership, the results are consistently high. A great insight has been given into areas of the circus community that previously went undocumented. For example, the word-of-mouth network made up of parents and volunteers has now been recorded.

Overall, the Galway Community Circus seems to have loyal and vocal members who are very happy with the services offered. They feel that the GCC provides high quality teaching in a safe, welcoming and fun environment. The members themselves appear to view the GCC as an important aspect of their social lives. The results of the survey also suggest that there is a strong desire among the members for growth and expansion of the GCC and that the fees, as they stand, are at an acceptable level. The results suggest that the members are very happy with how things are and only want to see more of what is being done rather than any significant change in strategy or staff.

METHODOLOGY

a. The Artistic Vibrancy system

The first step in developing the community impact report was to find the most appropriate method for measuring the performance of a not-for-profit youth circus. There are dozens of performance assessment methods available, but many of them rely on commercial profit and loss as their criterion for success, a criterion which did not suit this organisation.

The most appropriate system for measuring the performance of the circus and fulfilling the brief of the community impact study was found to be the 'artistic vibrancy' system developed by du Preez and Bailey for the Australian Council for the Arts. “

Artistic vibrancy is a catch-all phrase that tries to capture the goals and qualities that artists and arts organisations strive for.” (Du Preez and Bailey 2009 p4) Du Preez and Bailey interviewed artists, educators, performing arts organisations and specialist academic researchers to try and determine what norms and ideals are shared by not-for profit small to medium sized arts companies.

The study resulted in five broad categories:

- Artistic quality or excellence
- Audience engagement and stimulation
- A fresh approach to the preservation or development of the art form
- Artist development
- Community relevance

An artistically vibrant company will strive for excellence and high quality work within its field, communicate and engage with their audience, try and the develop their art form in novel ways while in turn developing themselves as artists and finally maintain a close relevance with their community. The most important concept within artistic vibrancy was the idea of regular self-assessment. To facilitate this Du Preez, Bailey and their team developed a self-reflection tool-kit which offers a variety of methods by which an organisation can examine itself and measure its artistic vibrancy.

i. Adding an emotional component

Certain parts of the self-reflection tool kit needed to be altered to fit with the broad spectrum of activities undertaken by the Galway Community Circus. In making these alterations an absence was noted. There was a strong focus on feelings of value for money, position among peers and relevance to a community, but the actual emotional impact of the work undertaken by an arts organisation was missing.

This stood out as an important issue, not only for the overall quality of data submitted for the report, but also because of the intuition that the circus had a significant impact on the emotional lives of its members. There was a great deal of anecdotal evidence to suggest that the fun they had at circus, the pride they had in their achievements and the happiness they experienced while training was one of the main reasons they returned week after week, year after year. Parents talked about how often their children would report positive stories about their time at circus and how that encouraged them to spread the word to other parents and as to why they felt no qualms about paying for performances, cabarets or class fees.

In order to fulfil the brief of the project, the emotional effect of the circus needed to be measured. This had less to do with providing a holistic or sensitive account of the circus' work and more to do with accurately tracing and representing what was a key component in the circus' recent success.

The need for documenting the emotional impact of the circus comes down, quite simply, to funding. At a recent meeting of the Caravan network EU ministers sketched out the goals and ideals for the €16 billion youth development scheme Erasmus + . One of this programme's primary goals was to improve the well-being of young people in the EU. If this project can document a relationship between a certain approach to teaching youth circus and the well-being of young people then an argument can be made to funders, like the board of Erasmus +, that youth circus' like Galway Community Circus contribute positively to the well-being of young people without relying on feelings or intuitions.

ii. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

It was decided that a descriptive statistical analysis would be the most time effective way of highlighting the relationship between the well-being of the membership and the work of the circus. To ensure that this analysis would be ethical and in line with best practice, assistance was taken from Dr. Brendan Rooney, a statistician and empirical psychologist from DLIADT. This ensured the least impact on the data from the subjective interpretation. But the upside of using descriptive statistical analysis is that it can be easily read, appreciated or copied from document to document without a need for a lot of explanation.

b. Defining Key Stakeholders

The next stage of the community impact report was to define key stakeholders. The artistic vibrancy self-reflection tool kit provided valuable insight into who should be included and why. Du Preez and Bailey offer the categories of peers, staff, audience, community, other artists and funders. These categories were a helpful starting point but they also left space for individual tailoring.

Staff:	The administrative staff: Circus director, Circus Administrator, Jobbridge Intern, EVS volunteer, Youth Co-Ordinator. The teaching staff: Freelance Tutors and Trainee Tutors
Audience:	Youth members divided by age, 5-7, 8-11, 12-14 and 15-20 years. Actual performance audience
Community:	Parents, audience members, neighbours.
Funders:	Irish Arts Council, Galway City Council, Galway County Council

c. Parent's General Survey

The first group to be surveyed were the parents. The goal behind this survey was to take a general account of their attitudes and opinions to the circus from the last five years. Each survey consisted of twenty six questions which were divided into 6 categories

1. General information
2. Social and Personal Development
3. Quality of teaching
4. Quality of facilities
5. Safety and wellbeing
6. The future

These categories were decided upon in order to give a broad overview of the membership's satisfaction levels. The survey was widely distributed online through emails and via online social networks.

d. Internal Performance Review

The second group to be surveyed were the staff, including administration, teachings, freelance and trainees. The goal was to examine satisfaction rates and to gain insight into how efficient the lines of communication are within the GCC. A

problem arose given the conflict of interests that may arise due to the fact that the administration staff would be both the agent and the object of this survey. The solution to this problem arose through the “Skills for Work Life” program organised by Angela Teahen of NUI Galway. The Skills for Work Life program places undergraduate students with charities and community groups around Galway city in an effort to provide the students with work experience and to provide the organisations with additional staff. The four undergraduates (Patrick Hynes- Foy, Joseph Kelly, Ross Earley & Matthew Flynn) were able to act as intermediaries between the study team and the administration. This enabled the internal performance to achieve an insight that would otherwise not have been possible.

e. Youth Membership Survey

The last group of stakeholders who needed to be surveyed were also the largest group. To survey the youth membership, a group whose age ranges from 5 to 20 years of age, there needed to be a way of dividing them into appropriate groups. It was decided that the best approach would be to follow the class divisions. We divided the youth membership into four groups, the eldest ranging from 15-20 years, the teens from 12-14 years, the older children from 8-11 years and the youngest from 5-7 years. For the eldest group the simplest approach could be taken. As young adults there was little concern about the veracity of their responses or their willingness to help. An online questionnaire was made available through a private online social-network group for 14 days and responses were drawn within that time. For the younger teens, it was decided that face-to-face paper questionnaires were to be made available for voluntary completion during before and after their class time. This allowed for more immediate responses and avoided any concerns respecting their online privacy. For the 8 to 11 year olds we decided to have a panel discussion which was recorded. The thinking behind this was down to the fact that that age group have a lot to say, but many are reluctant to answer written questions as it is too closely related to school work and causes concerns over answering ‘correctly’. With the youngest group I designed a series of games based on multiple choice questions. This allowed them to choose answers without having to read or write.

PARENT'S GENERAL SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

a. General Overview

The majority of the responses came from parents of the Senior Circus and Junior Circus members, with both groups totalling more than 50% of the overall responses. Only two respondents identified themselves as being parents of young people from the Family Circus group. Nearly 50% of responses came from relatively new members, registering that they had been attending the circus for less than two years. Word-of-mouth seems to be the GCC's strongest marketing tool for securing new members. This reveals the membership to have a strong desire to share positive accounts of the GCC and a desire to see it grow. Nearly 90% of members surveyed said that they would be very likely to recommend a course at GCC to a friend. The Galway Educate Together National School community cannot be underestimated in relation to spreading word about the GCC.

More than 75% of GCC members identified themselves as being "Very Happy" which was the highest possible response. Similarly more than 75% of respondents declared that the GCC plays an above average part in the member's social life. An area that will be examined in more detail following this initial survey is the effect GCC has on its member's particular skills. Initial reports suggest that performance skills improve the most through the work of the GCC but what this means in particular will be studied.

78% of members polled described the quality of teaching at GCC as either "Very Good" or "Excellent". The remaining 22% described as "good" meaning that no members selected the average, poor, very poor or terrible options. Similarly 96% of responses selected "Very Well" or "Quite Well" when asked how the GCC teachers relate to the members.

More than half of the responses described GCC's fees as being "somewhat lower" or "about the same" as other similar after-school activities. It could be argued that, given the current financial climate, the act of maintaining the fees at the same level has had a very positive response among the members.

Aerial Acrobatics is without doubt still the most popular of the skills on offer by the GCC. This would suggest maintaining the policy of having aerialists as youth co-ordinators and of keeping up the partnership with Fidget Feet Aerial Dance.

More than 80% of members regularly report positive experiences from GCC to their families. These experiences seem to revolve around each other, revealing the GCC to be an important aspect of its member's social lives. Likewise, 80% of members never or rarely report negative experiences of the GCC to their families, and again these experiences tend to revolve around other members which would reaffirm the notion that the GCC is an important centre of social activity for its members.

94% of members polled declared very strong feelings of safety at GCC and more than 80% declared no or very few concerns about bullying at the circus.

More than 75% of responses described the facilities at GCC to be either “Excellent” or “Very good”, but there is a very strong desire amongst the membership for the GCC to have its own premises.

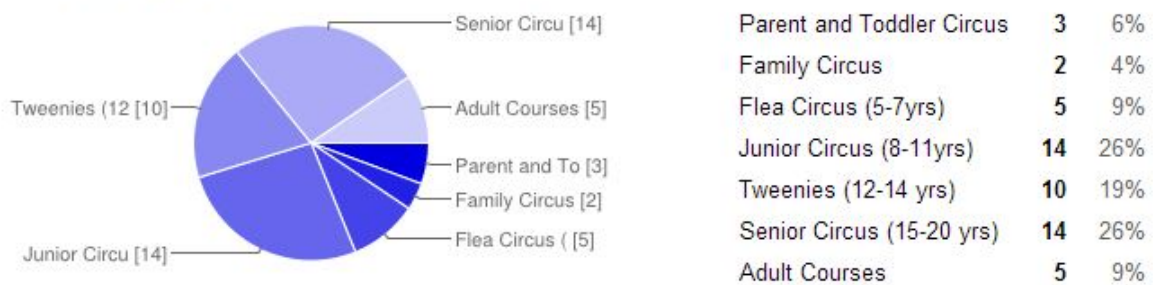
Almost every member surveyed displayed a high level of satisfaction with how GCC communicates with them and nearly 90% declare that they would be likely to continue with the circus next year.

b. Summary

Overall, the Galway Community Circus seems to have loyal and vocal members who are very happy with the services offered. They feel that the GCC provides high quality teaching in a safe, welcoming and fun environment. The members themselves appear to view the GCC as an important aspect of their social lives. The results of the survey also suggest that there is a strong desire among the members for growth and expansion of the GCC and that the fees, as they stand, are at an acceptable level. The results suggest that the members are very happy with how things are and only want to see more of what is being done rather than any significant change in strategy or staff.

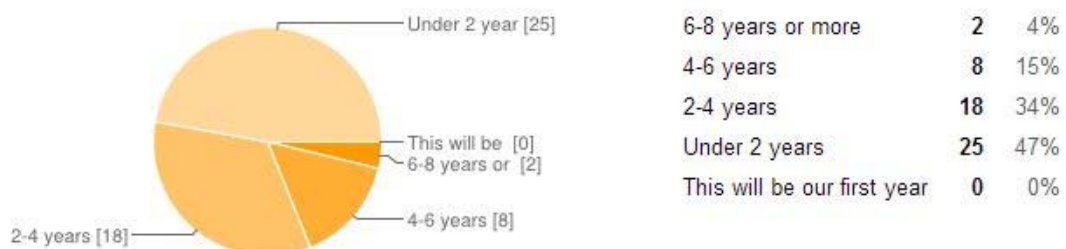
c. Detailed results and analysis

Which group is your child/children currently enrolled in?



These numbers parse fairly well with the class numbers, in positive terms this suggests that the survey is a good expression of the general sentiments of the GCC, in negative terms it may be an issue that Parent and Toddler, Family and Adult groups won't be properly represented

How many years has your child/children been attending Galway Community Circus?



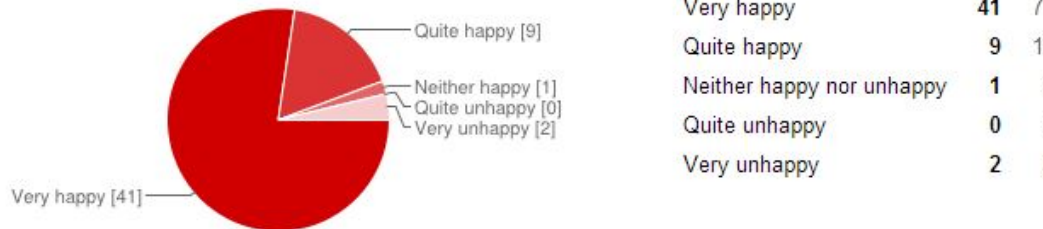
The fact that only 19% of the responses come from members for four or more years may be in issue with regards hearing from those with the most experience, but given the growth of the membership in the last four years this relation could well be representative of the membership.

How did you hear about the classes at Galway Community Circus?

Aaron naomhan Galway Advertiser i started classes His brother did circus walk up through a friend Naomhan Mckeon Joyce by osmosis daughters friend was doing it I used to do it when I was seven/eight Through children from Galway Educate Together School a friend friend at school Word of mouth Rachel Webb Family local paper circus came to my school Through a friend word of mouth long ago friends A friend told from Karin Wimmer passing by old venue Galway Educate Together friend Friends My cousin was involved and asked me to go see his show Through friends FRIENDS AT SCHOOL From friends website school friends word of mouth Contact through friend

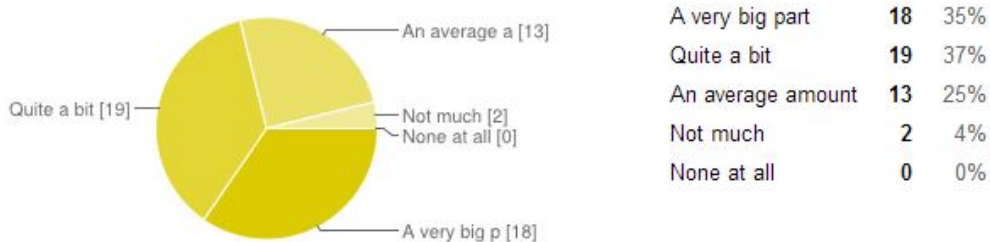
As mentioned above, word of mouth still plays a very important role in GCC’s marketing strategy. This reveals a loyal membership, willing to help the organisation. It also suggests that this may be a resource worth tapping into to a greater degree.

How happy does your child/children feel at Galway Community Circus?



This relatively simple question will be explored in much greater detail in later parts of the study, but for now it is a strikingly positive response, albeit to a blunt question.

How big a part does Galway Community Circus play in your child/children’s social life?



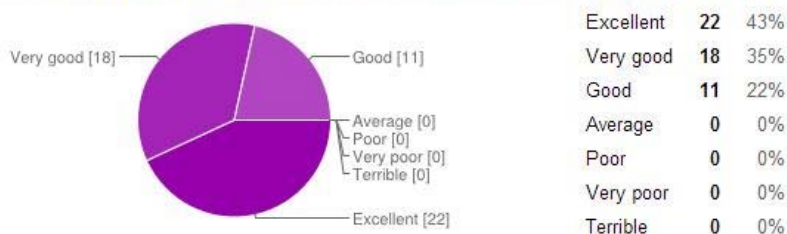
These responses, in tandem with the responses and positive and negative experiences paint a very clear picture of the role GCC plays in the member's social lives. This might seem a banality on first reading, but in relation to funding, expansion and development it is crucial to be able to support claims that GCC is an integral part of a young person's social development.

Would you say attending Galway Community Circus has improved your child/children's skills in the following areas? (you can choose more than one)



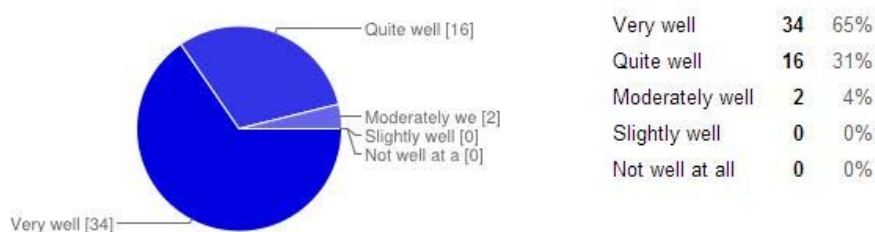
These figures show us, pretty much, what we already knew. Circus Arts help primarily with performance skills and balance. In order to find out to a greater degree what this means regards a young person's wellbeing, more study will be needed

How would you describe the quality of teaching at Galway Community Circus?



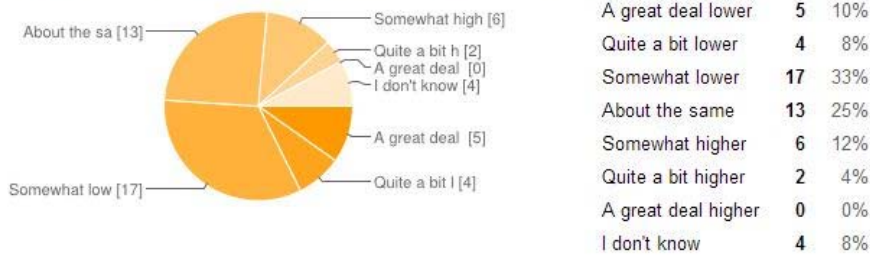
The importance of this question, and of the exceptionally positive responses, cannot be underestimated. As a youth centred organisation which teaches circus arts the quality of the teaching must be both the tent-pole and the anchor. That the membership is completely positive in describing the quality of that teaching the GCC can rest easy knowing that it is focussing its energy and attention in the correct places.

How well do Galway Community Circus teachers relate to you or your child/children?



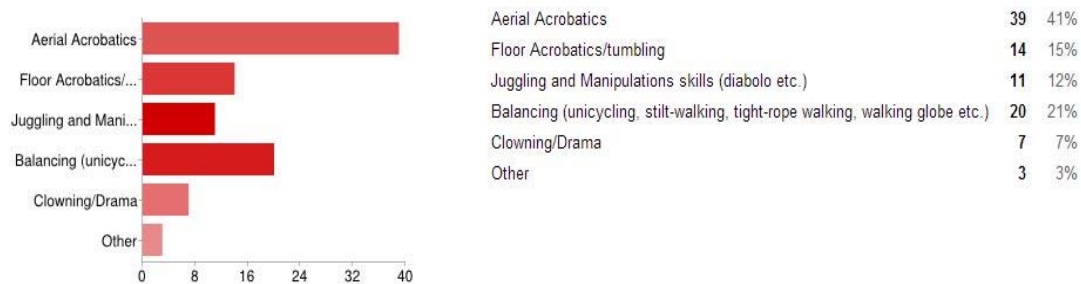
Likewise, it is of great importance that the teaching and tutoring team can relate well to the members, this high positive results again show that the work currently being carried out is as good as can be expected.

Compared to other similar activities, are our course fees higher, lower, or about the same?



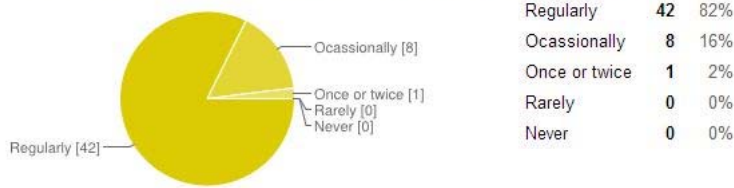
As mentioned above, the fact that members are happy with the services the GCC provides and, from these results, happy with the price they pay for them shows a clear approval for the current strategy and practices of the GCC. However, with only 10% describing the fees as being a great deal lower it would be prudent to tread lightly when increasing any course fees.

What is your child/children's favourite circus discipline to learn/study? (you can choose more than one)

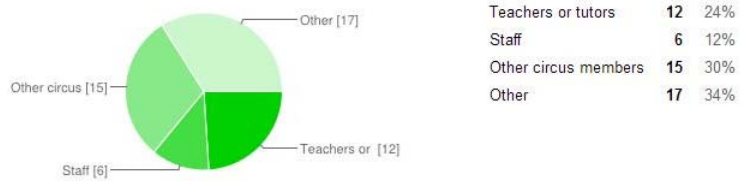


Given that Aerial Acrobatics score twice as high as any other discipline it would be wise to maintain its prominence among the curriculum and to also continue the relationship with Fidget Feet Aerial Dance

How often does your child/children report a positive experience from their time at Galway Community Circus to you?

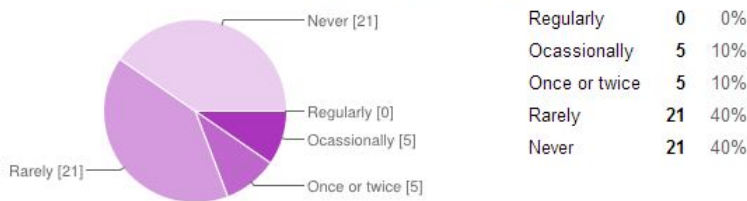


Who does this positive experience focus on primarily?

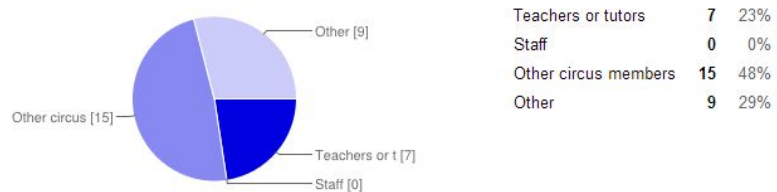


Given that 82% of members regularly report positive experiences from GCC to their families and that these experiences seem to revolve around each other, it confirms the intuition that GCC is an important aspect of its member’s social lives.

How often does your child/children report a negative experience from their time at Galway Community Circus to you?

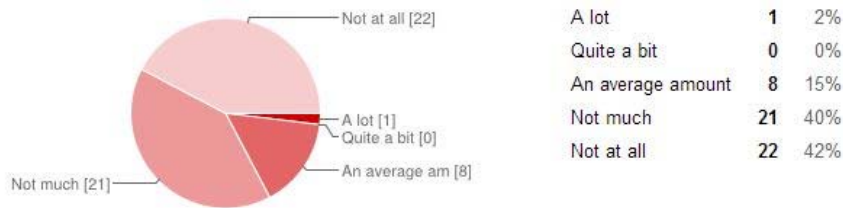


Who does this negative experience focus on primarily?



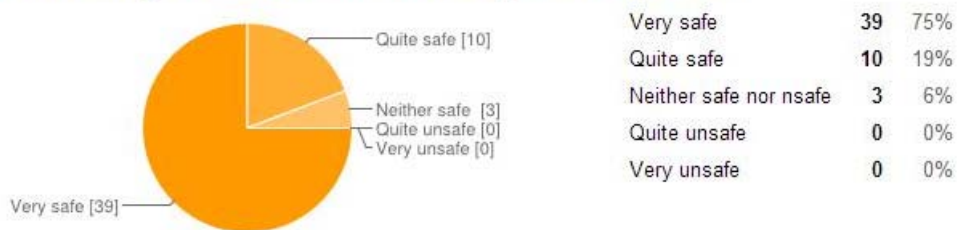
Likewise, 80% of members never or rarely report negative experiences of the GCC to their families, and again that these experiences tend to revolve around other members it reaffirms the notion that the GCC is an important centre of social activity for its members.

How concerned are you about bullying at Galway Community Circus?



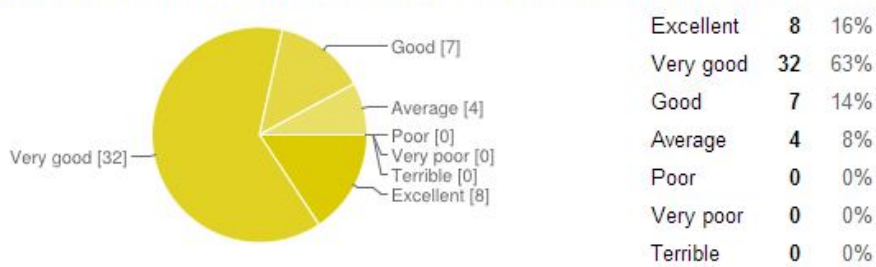
The difficulty of limiting bullying among youth groups is common knowledge; as such the figures here should not be a major cause of worry. 42% of those surveyed reporting no concern at all is, according to my research, a very high and healthy result. The 2% may be an anomalous figure¹, or it may be worth looking into but given that the remaining 55% see no more than an average cause for concern should be regarded as a very positive result for the wellbeing of the membership.

How safe does your child/children feel at Galway Community Circus?



As important as social wellbeing is, it is obviously secondary to physical wellbeing and that 94% of those surveyed describe their experience as safe reveals the success of GCC's health and safety strategy and its implementation.

How would you describe the quality of the facilities at Galway Community Circus?



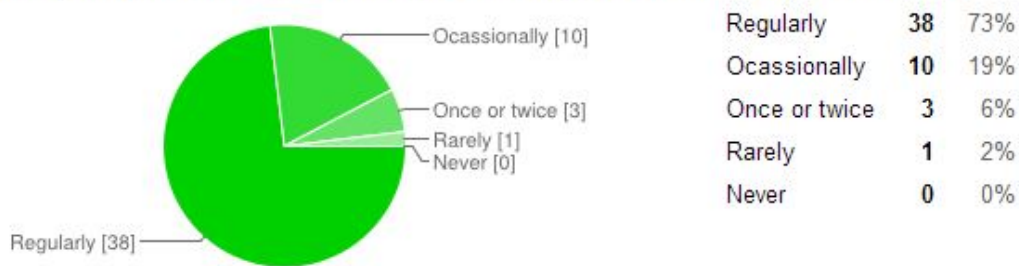
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¹ A former senior staff member made it known that she took this survey, as such this figure may represent her position.

In what way could Galway Community Circus make their facilities more amenable to you/your family?

cant think of any More equipment Bigger space! I don't think the circus as such can change anything with regard to the facilities. It would be nice if it was a little less hostile with certain members of the centres staff, but there isn't really anything the circus can do about that. I feel the circus copes amazingly with the facilities they have. Well done everyone. :) one on one discussions to see what the children would like to become better at have the adult classes and kids classes further apart more time to train cheaper More classes Not sure. more trinning being able to use the aerial equipment without a tutor Weekend Training/Classes I would love to see the circus find its own space and not be comprimised by shared facilities more mats needed I know it's not possible given the building but I would prefer toilets that were not accessible to the general public for the children to use during classes. More acro stuff smaller classes ,more ariels children toilet, lcocker for shoes/bags More of them! a later class for Tweenies, starting at 5:30 or 6:00

How regularly do you attend Galway Community Circus events/performances?



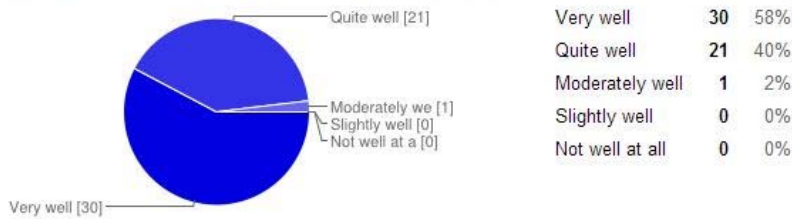
Again, this issue shall be examined more closely in later parts of the study but it is satisfying to note that the members and their families take a keen interest in supporting the artistic endeavours of the GCC.

How likely would you be to recommend a course at Galway Community Circus to a friend/colleague/family member?



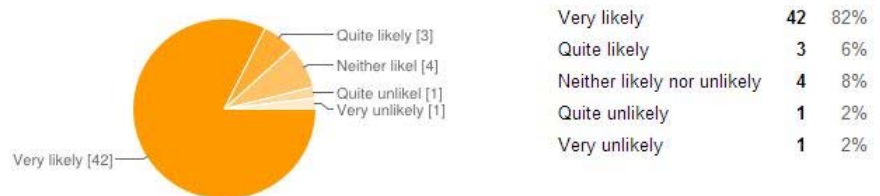
This result really reveals how willing the GCC members are to help. This is a truly excellent sign of member satisfaction and support for the organisation.

How well do you feel Galway Community Circus communicates with you (web, email, text etc.)?



Another simple question, but this does reveal that, in general, the members are happy with the lines of communication between themselves and the GCC. An easy flow of communication between an organisation and its members is often cited as an integral building block in an organisations support network/community. These results show that GCC’s flow of communication is working well.

How likely would it be to that you will continue with Galway Community Circus next year?



Retention of members and the development of a community are two of the most important criteria behind the longevity of an organisation such as GCC, that 82% are very likely continue next year shows that that this point should not be of major concern.

How would you like to see Galway Community Circus improve over the next five years?

Finally, this question was an opportunity for respondents to make their opinions known to the GCC. The majority of feelings expressed are positive, and where negative, the feelings have been represented either in the above results or in other forms. Below are the unedited and anonymous responses.

dedicated premises and failing that some additions re storing childrens bags/shoes Allow the newer members to try the ariels instead of only letting those who are very experienced on it all the time (Molly and Ariel do not allow anyone else to use the silks) I haven't gotten a chance to learn how to use it because no one will let me. get a bigger training space and more equipment I feel it's very big and shows are very boring to watch as everyone wants to show their skill at the same thing. I don't think children learn real acrobatics or clowning, maybe because there are too many members? Shows are not exciting for the children or the adults and rubbish storylines. I think With so many children each child should have one skill to

show off and not the same as more than three others unless synchronised. Mind numbing shows. I don't see an improvement in my childrens balance or acrobatic skills and they have lost interest partly because of that. Great people though Celebrate your roots... Be good with your founders... Don't bully, but include :-) More of everything :) Thanks :) I would like to see a wider variety of skills in the shows. There seems to be too strong an emphasis on aerial work which can be very repetitive during a 1 1/2 hour show. More detail on the costumes! Get their own space hopefully. Due to my working hours, my daughter is now in a Play school from 8 till 6pm Monday till Friday...she misses Circus School so much, and talks about it often. Is there any chance of a Saturday or Sunday class?...For parents who work during the week?... Advanced Training for people who want to develop into professionals. Smaller classes so everyone gets to use equipment. More floor mats More tall stilts summer classes- full day A permanent premises! Keep up the great work. Occassionally I miss an event/fundraiser. I dont collect the children from the classes ..&.they can be a bit unreliable handing over the newsletters! I would like Galway Community Circus to find better accomadation for a bigger group of people where we can all practice together and study other circus acts in more depth. Just continue doing the great child centered job ye are doing and improving staff and tutor pay! Ye deserve it, superpeople all ♡ Get a bigger and more equipped space

and full time tutors get their own permanent training space i think it should replace PE Over the next 5 years ideally we would have our own facilities and not have to rely on others if we want to do something outside the 'set hours'. Failing this, I really don't know what else can be done to improve the circus. We have come so far in the last 5 years, going from a group where approx 4 members and 1 tutor was willing to continue to the group we have now. We should be so proud of how far we have come. Well done everyone. Specially Ulla. :) More funding for more projects :) more clowning! :) possibly open practice for juggling too :) Place of your own. Flying trapezes. Continuing with fidget feet and finding a way to allow more people on the waiting list to join the circus. One area I feel needs attention is the age divisioning. For example, in the flea groups there is quite a range of age and ability. The activities seem geared towards the younger children, which often fail to challenge the older members of the group enough. Perhaps reconsider the age groups? Or redesign the classes to challenge age appropriately. Just keep doing what you're doing!! More of the same Division according to abilities in addition to age as otherwise new people join and are simply placed in that age group with no further division to encourage those who have been attending and practicing for years. no changes - keep up the good work Broaden circus skills and continue to push the boundries as much as possible within safe limits for each age group. And keep up the great work. A bigger and better space with more experienced tutors and more equipment so that the circus community grows and everyone has access and space to it sometimes the group is far too busy... I think limiting the number of children attending each day would be a good idea. I would really love my child to continue with Galway Community Circus, because it is very important to me that he is involved in non-competitive and fun physical activities. I find Ulla particularly to be

very respectful of the children and ensures that each one feels special and nurtured. However I would like the teachers and circus to be more up-to-date on teaching children without the use of reward systems which have been shown not to motivate children. It has also been shown that they are less likely to achieve their full potential when looking for external rewards. I think that it would be lovely to trust that the children will want to learn (I am speaking specifically about the last teacher, Sara who used a bingo card system which distracted my son and made him feel like he had to achieve to be like everyone else and he seemed to be a bit weighed down at the end of the class and concerned with not having achieved bingo at the end of the class, and I observed that he didn't enjoy the actual circus skills as much as previously. I think he felt judged rather than free). He also told me that they were told that they were going to be given three warnings and then put outside the door for 10 minutes. I'm assuming that he must have misheard as this would be a safety issue. To give more classes in various disciplines - but to include beginner and advanced classes- this would enable members to progress and give the kids something to aim for. Personally I feel the energy and skill (both teaching and organising) are without match in anything I've ever been involved in- you guys are truly amazing. It's getting very big very quickly so the challenge will be to maintain the high standards and to offer kids that really want to take it more seriously the chance to do it... And of course you'll find a way because you are superstars !! Get bigger. Have regular adult performances. Travel more with circus. More figget feet. I would love to see some more live musical aspects to the performances. Thanks for all the work! I'd like to see more courses for adults. Maybe separate course for silks, separate for trapeze and hoop etc I'd also love to be able to use the space for some training time. If we could get few hours during the week (like during summer) where we could practice (no teacher necessary) this would be great as it allows to improve skills and it's not that expensive. More equipment would be good too (especially silks) and some workshops with interesting teachers would be appreciate too. By finding their own space to run classes and training sessions all week long. By creating more outreach programmes so that children who don't live in the city get a chance to experience circus through workshops and other events. By continuing to develop & grow, bringing the wonder of play to more people through the joy of circus. A permanent premises would be wonderful. I hope there will always be a space for my children at GCC.

INTERNAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

a. General Overview

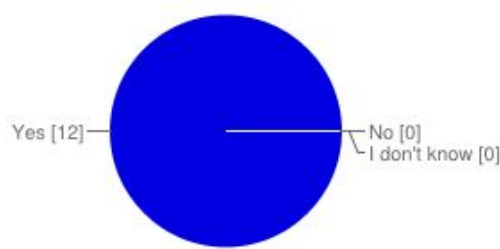
The administrative and teaching staff of the GCC reported very positive feelings about their involvement with the circus and all are satisfied with the conditions that they work in. There is a great deal of awareness of the goals and mission of the GCC and a strong sense among the staff that these ideals are upheld by the day-to-day work of the circus. There is room to improve with regards the efficiency of the communication between the furthest points of the organisations structure but that area does not seem to impact on the high level of morale experienced by the staff. There is a strong optimistic desire for improved communication rather than a frustration felt by any perceived difficulties. 92% of the staff report feeling very motivated by their work and by their supervisors and 50% of the team report this as a significant increase on the level of motivation they felt when they began. Literature shows that an improvement in motivation over time is a strong indicator of a healthy and supportive workplace. The questions were taken from a variety of sources and the face-to-face interviews were conducted and recorded by volunteers from the “Skills for Work Life” program organised by Angela Teahen of NUI Galway. The Skills for Work Life program places undergraduate students with charities and community groups around Galway city in an effort to provide the students with work experience and to provide the organisations with additional staff. The four undergraduates (Patrick Hynes- Foy, Joseph Kelly, Ross Earley & Matthew Flynn) were able to act as intermediaries between the study team and the administration. This enabled the internal performance to achieve an insight that would otherwise not have been possible.

What is your role in Galway Community Circus?

Tutor and performer. I am a graphic designer. I help with administration and organising events. I am a tutor and performer, specialising in juggling. Project manager. I am a student in some classes. I am a trainee tutor in the five to seven year old classes. I am a stilt instructor and I run the stilt club. Tutor, runs unicycle club every Tuesday. Administrator- Takes care of Accounts, organise gigs and workshops, teach stilt training. Administration. I am responsible for general inquiries, communication and marketing. Trainee tutor. I am the facilitator of the toddler circus. I used to facilitate the family circus. I run the toddler and family circus classes. This year I am teaching the juniors and tweenies, which are people up to 14 years of age.

This first simple question served to show and account for the wide variety of staff who work for GCC. A cross section of 12 members were interviewed from across the disciplines

Does Galway Community Circus have a mission statement?



Yes	12	100%
No	0	0%
I don't know	0	0%

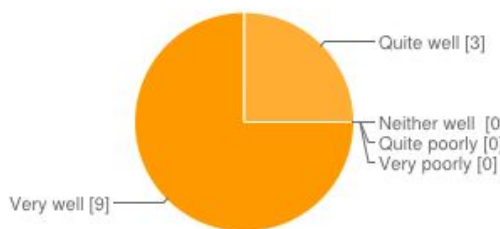
100% of staff members were aware of the existence of the circus' mission statement. This reveals the widespread understanding that the circus is a goal-oriented and project driven organisation

Can you tell us what the mission statement is?

Bringing the joy of circus arts to the community Bringing the joy of circus arts to the community. I'm not sure exactly but I know it involves creating an inclusive, fun and non-competitive environment for learning diverse skills. To bring the joy of circus into the community. Brings the joy... (couldn't remember the rest) Give the kids something special. No To bring the joy of circus into community Give the kids a place to have fun and develop their social skills Promoting confidence, agility, teamwork, creative expression and community It's a social circus where children of different races and ages meet. To bring the skill of circus into the community.

The GCC mission statement “Bringing the joy of circus arts to the community” can be seen to be widely known and understood among the staff. Even in those cases where an imperfect answer was given, the spirit of the message was clear.

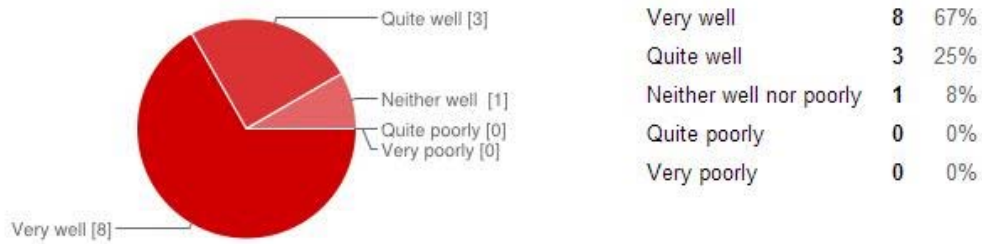
How well do you think Galway Community Circus fulfils this mission statement?



Very well	9	75%
Quite well	3	25%
Neither well nor poorly	0	0%
Quite poorly	0	0%
Very poorly	0	0%

This question is of far more importance than the parroting of the mission statement in its exact wording. Even if every staff member had memorised the mission statement, it would be for naught if they felt that the mission was not being fulfilled. Considering 75% of the staff interviewed agreed that the mission is being fulfilled very well and 25% feel it is being done quite well, there is no need to worry about the organisation's guidance.

How well do you think your work fulfils this mission statement?



Probing this point to a deeper level, it is clear to see that the majority, 67%, of the staff feel their work directly contributes to the action of bringing the joy of circus arts to the community. These figures are more diffuse than the previous question but that can be accounted for by the broad spectrum of tasks and jobs undertaken by the staff of the circus.

Can you describe, in your own words, the staff structure of Galway Community Circus, beginning with those in direct contact with the members and proceeding to any other staff or volunteers?

There is the volunteer board running the company. Then there is the part time project managers. Below them there is the administrators. Then there is the full time office workers then there is the tutor team. Ulla is the project director, Gwen is the main administrator in charge of finance, Stephen is an administrator involved in marketing, Jess is the main tutor and under that is the trainee tutors and freelance tutors. First there is Ulla who is the co-ordinator. Then there is Gwen who is an administrator. Next there is Stephen who takes care of marketing, technological work and presentations abroad. Then there is Jess who is the main tutor. Below her are all the facilitators. Ulla is the director. Then there is Gwen who is the administrator. Stephen helps the administrator. Below him there is Alicia who does marketing and web design. Then there is Jess who is the main tutor. Below her are the trainee tutors. At the top there are the Board of Directors. These are Janet, Siobhan, Barbra and David. Then there is the Project Manager Ulla. Below her there is the administrator Gwen. Below the project manager in a different streamline would be Jess the youth co-ordinator. Below her would be the tutors, then the lecturers then the volunteers. Board of Directors Ulla Hokkanen Gwen Le Guillou Stephen Cadwell Tutors Trainees Volunteers Ulla is the director, Gwen is the head of administration, Stephen helps the administrators, Alicia is involved in marketing and web design and Jess is the tutor co-ordinator. After that there is tutors and trainees. The Board of Directors is at the top. Barbara is on the board and Jane is the treasurer. There are also a couple more people on the board. Ulla is the project manager, Gwen, Alicia and Stephen work in the office. Jess is the head tutor and below her are outreach tutors like Amelie and Maria and then there are trainee tutors. Gwen is the administrator. Then Ulla deals with child welfare. Below that there is Stephen who works in administration. Then there is Jess who is the main tutor. Below her are all the trainee tutors and below them are all the guest trainers. Ulla is the project manager, Gwen is the head administrator, Stephen is the philosopher in charge of marketing, Jess is the tutor co-ordinator and under her are the paid tutors and finally the volunteers. Ulla is the manager. Then there is Gwen who is an administrator. Then Stephen who organises fundraising and manages communication in the organisation. Below that would be me then there is Jess who is the main tutor. The Board of Directors is at the top, Ulla is the project manager, Jessica O'Connor is the tutor co-ordinator, Gwen is the head of administration and Alicia and Stephen also work in administration. The tutors and the volunteers would be at the bottom of the staff structure I suppose.

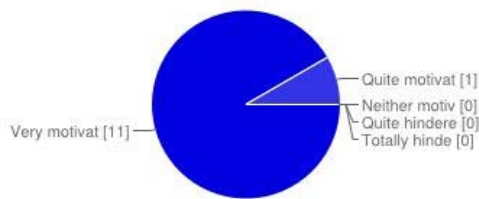
These responses show that there is a clear understanding of the structures of the circus and that the work of the administration is understood and of relevance to those who teach the class. Minimising the divide between administration and 'front line' staff is often an action point to be taken from studies such as this, but the circus is clearly in excellent shape.

How would you rate the amount of work you do for Galway Community Circus?



On this scale 5 represents being overworked and 1 represents being under-utilised. It is comforting to see that no one interviewed feels over-worked but what is of concern is that 25% of the staff interviewed feels under utilised. This can lead to listlessness and a drop in motivation.

How would you describe your level of motivation in Galway Community Circus?



Very motivated	11	92%
Quite motivated	1	8%
Neither motivated nor hindered	0	0%
Quite hindered	0	0%
Totally hindered	0	0%

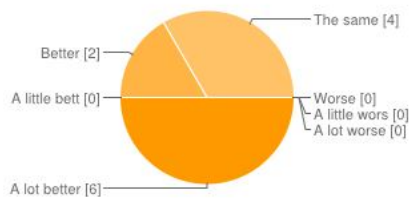
Fortunately, motivation is not a problem in the circus with a staggering 92% feeling very motivated in their work. This motivating factor should be analysed and encouraged

What or who would you credit with this level of motivation?

The kids. It makes me proud when I see them accomplish and learn skills that they didn't have before. I love the circus so it's just something that I enjoy taking part in. The people involved in the circus are great and this also motivates me. Helping the younger people to learn also makes me feel good. Ulla The self satisfaction it gives me to get kids juggling. I like the place, the mission statement and the atmosphere in the Galway Community Circus. The children. I want to teach them how to juggle and I love to see them becoming more confident. I get self-satisfaction when I see the kids enjoying themselves and getting better at juggling. Everyone as they are all happy and willing to help. The group of people who I work with and the kids are the main things that motivate me. When you teach a child a new trick and their little face lights up it's just the best thing in the world. Ulla Hokkanen and the smile on the children faces. without Ulla their would be no heart in this circus. The children. Ulla is the main motivation for most of the work we do in the circus. She is such an improvement on the last project manager we had. Also, the kids are what motivates me. Ulla is huge part of it. Also the two girls I work with Rachel and Amelie.

The young people who attend the circus are a clear motivating factor, as well as Ulla the circus director. While little can be done to promote or maintain the motivation provided by the young people, a lot can be done to ensure that Ulla has the freedom and resources need to ensure that the staff continue to be happy to work hard for the circus.

How would you compare this level of motivation to when you first began working with Galway Community Circus?



A lot better	6	50%
A little better	0	0%
Better	2	17%
The same	4	33%
Worse	0	0%
A little worse	0	0%
A lot worse	0	0%

67% of the staff feel more motivated now than when they began, while 33% see it as the same. Again, if this feeling could be bottled the circus would be full of millionaires.

What or who would you credit with this change?

Ulla, the increasing number of children joining. New tutors and their new ideas. Starting new classes, different things. Increase in membership. N/A Ulla mainly but there is also the board of directors, Stephen, Amelie as well as others. Increased support from the community. The fact that the communication and duties are streamlined and we are all assigned duties and tasks. Ulla, the parents, the board of directors and Gwen. Increase in the amount of members, management and the kids. Ulla has been brilliant for the circus. She brings so much energy and enthusiasm and gets everyone involved. Mainly Ulla, she has been so great for the circus. Gwen is also very good on the finances. The parents of the children thanking me for the work that I do is also a great motivator for me to continue my work.

Here again we see Ulla being credited with so much motivation. Clearly whatever Ulla is doing is benefitting the circus greatly. The increased involvement of the community also seems to be a strong contributing factor. Another hugely important point to be taken from these responses is to note that not one single staff member mentioned 'money' or any type of financial reward as their motivating factor. The staff members see their jobs as ends in themselves, jobs worth doing and worth doing well. From the organisation's standpoint this attribute is priceless; a

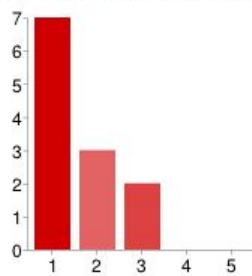
motivated team, who work for the sake of the job. The danger here is tampering with the system too much

What would you describe as the most fulfilling aspect of your work with Galway Community Circus?

Feedback from parents. Seeing the young people improve over time and have fun taking part in the circus. Helping the children, recording payments. When we get in money I know this can improve the circus. Giving work to tutors. Seeing the kids excited to come and to see the them improving. To teach people juggling and object manipulation. Also, getting paid to do something I love. How the circus changes the lives of children. My work as a graphic designer. Teaching juggling or object manipulation. To get paid for something you enjoy. Helping the kids to gain confidence in themselves. Working with young people. Seeing the kids gain confidence in themselves and the gratitude that the kids and the parents show for the work that I do. Also, the circus always makes me feel good. I can feel stressed or unhappy coming into work but as soon as I start teaching I feel happy and this feeling lasts for the rest of the day. It's great! Making the kids happy and helping them to learn how to have fun stilt-walking.

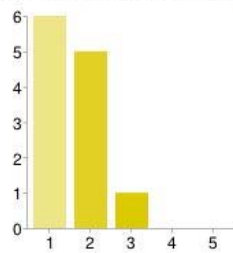
With these responses we see the first mention from the staff about getting paid, and it is only raised in relation to being paid for something they love to do.

How would you rate the sense of achievement you have from your work with Galway Community Circus?



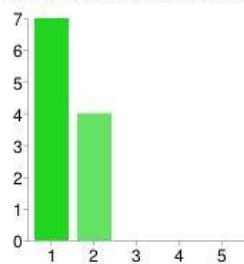
1	7	58%
2	3	25%
3	2	17%
4	0	0%
5	0	0%

How would you rate the sense of excitement you have when coming to work with Galway Community Circus?



1	6	50%
2	5	42%
3	1	8%
4	0	0%
5	0	0%

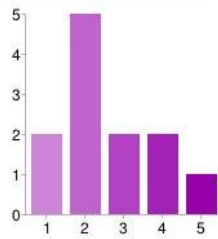
How would you rate the sense community you have when working with Galway Community Circus?



1	7	64%
2	4	36%
3	0	0%
4	0	0%
5	0	0%

For these questions, 1 represented strong feelings and 5 represented weak feelings. With this group of questions we can see that the staff feel an overwhelming sense of community, achievement and excitement in relation to their work. No doubt these positive emotional responses will contribute in many ways to their overall feelings of motivation and empowerment.

How would you rate the level of impact your work has on the young people involved in Galway Community Circus?



1	2	17%
2	5	42%
3	2	17%
4	2	17%
5	1	8%

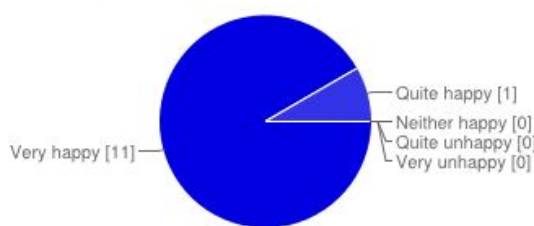
Similarly, for this question 1 represented a great impact, 5 represented no impact at all. The wide spread of responses to this question reveal that there are those on the staff who feel motivated by the impact their work has on the membership and the community, and yet do not feel that their work has a great impact on them directly. An action point to be taken from this would be increase the transparency between the structures so everyone understands clearly how their work affects the membership.

How would you characterise the impact your work has on the young people involved in Galway Community Circus?

I help improve the kids lives socially. For example my young son knows a lot of people in his primary school through the circus. It has a positive impact as it is a positive activity that helps them to build confidence. It broadens their skill level and improves their concentration which can be an issue for many children. Well my club is the most popular in the circus. It has the most members and its popularity seems to be growing all the time. I organise things for them. I facilitate their fun. My impact on the young people would be more in a supporting role. I hope that I provide an open space for the children to have fun, be happy and be themselves. I hope it has a big impact. I think it gives them confidence in themselves and helps to build their self-esteem. Most importantly it makes the kids happy which is what I want more than anything. Well I only teach the circus every few weeks because I travel a lot. If I was here all the time I think I would have a bigger effect on the children. I don't know how I help them, but I see them come back every week. I bring them friendship the children see me as their friend. My impact of my work on the young people would be teaching them how to juggle and would be higher if I got the opportunity to do more of this. I helped members gain confidence in themselves. I also helped them improve their physical fitness and helped them improve their lives socially. The impact of my work on the young people would be in a supporting role along with the tutor. We would help them gain confidence and to make new friends.

These responses show that the staff members feel a great sense of pride in what they do and almost have a competitive edge in relation to impacting the young people's lives. Perhaps this is behind their motivation?

How happy do you feel when you work with Galway Community Circus?



Very happy	11	92%
Quite happy	1	8%
Neither happy nor unhappy	0	0%
Quite unhappy	0	0%
Very unhappy	0	0%

These results really speak for themselves. An overwhelmingly happy team will always be best for the organisation.

YOUTH MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

5-7 years of age

a) General Overview

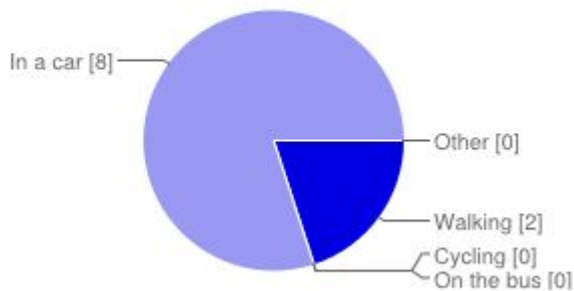
The method we used to gauge the responses to these questions was to make the questionnaire a game. The youngest members joined me in the centre of the hall, a trainee tutor stood in each corner. I slowly and carefully asked each question and explained each multiple choice answers. Once each member knew the response they wanted to give they ran as fast as they could to one of the four trainee tutors, each representing an answer, and we tallied the results before moving on the next question. This method worked well as it kept their interest, didn't require particular reading or writing skills and gave them room to discuss the questions and answers to ensure they knew what was being asked.

b) Summary

The results are very strong, revealing a very positive attitude towards the circus and their class mates revealing the circus has as much a social impact on our youngest members as it does from an educational perspective.

c) Detailed Results and Analysis

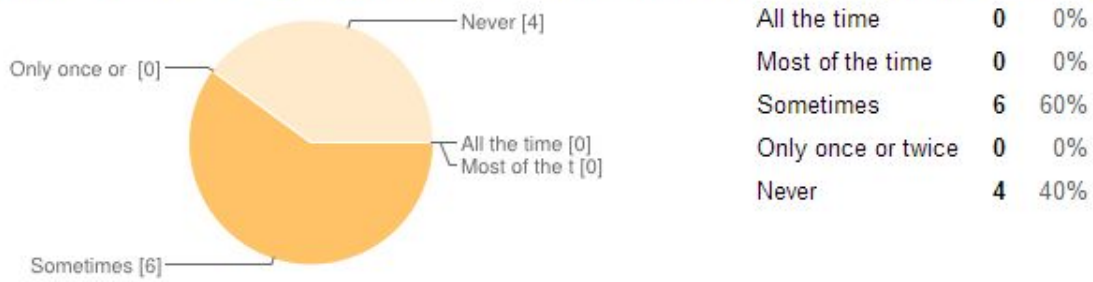
How do you usually come to circus?



Walking	2	20%
Cycling	0	0%
On the bus	0	0%
In a car	8	80%
Other	0	0%

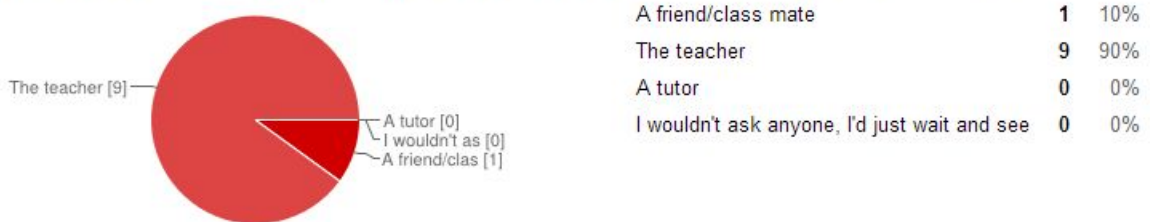
This first question was as much to test the system as to find out an answer. Interesting to see that many members share lifts.

When circus class begins, how often do you know what the class is going to be about?



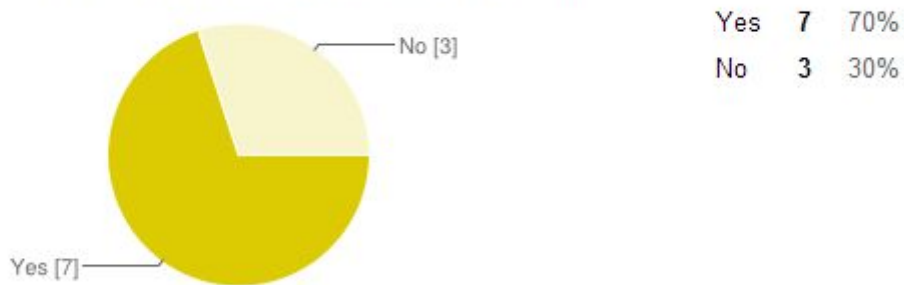
This question was to see how the class structure works. An action point could be to emphasise that classes activities more prominently from the start.

If you aren't sure what is going to happen in class, who would be the first person you would ask?



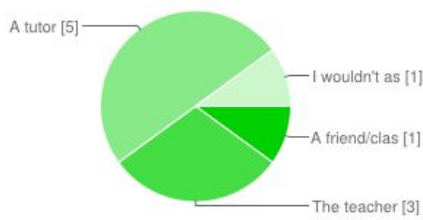
These responses show that there is clear trust in the teacher and their authority is respected and clear.

Do you know the name of everyone in your group?



This question elicited a great deal of discussion. It seems that while the classes are very social, there may be one or two groups of friends in each class that may not mingle as much at this young age.

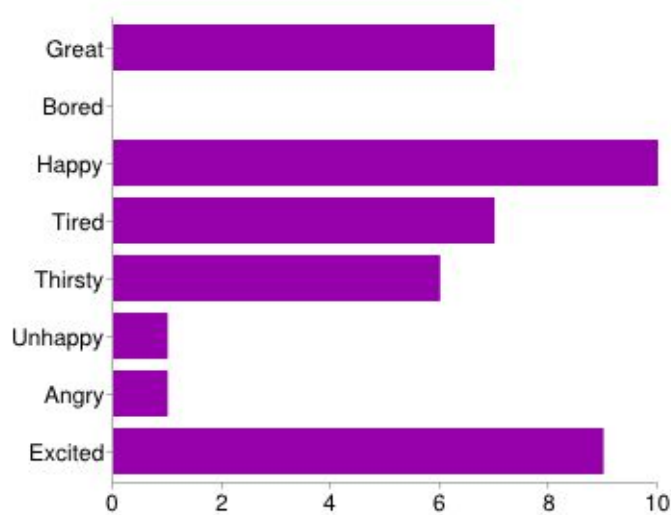
If you are learning something new and aren't sure how to do it right, who do you ask first?



A friend/class mate	1	10%
The teacher	3	30%
A tutor	5	50%
I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and hope for the best	1	10%

The trainee tutor system seems to be working very well as from these responses we can see that they play an important intermediary role between the teacher and the members.

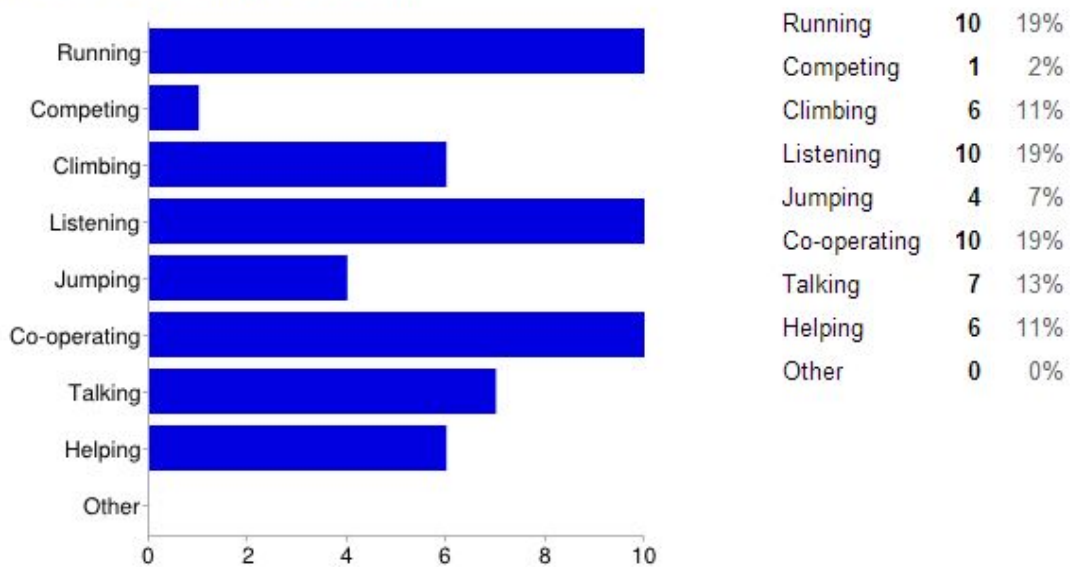
When I learn something new at circus I feel...



Great	7	17%
Bored	0	0%
Happy	10	24%
Tired	7	17%
Thirsty	6	15%
Unhappy	1	2%
Angry	1	2%
Excited	9	22%

From the point of view of reactions extra curricular activities these responses are ideal. The members feel happy and excited showing they have enjoyed the activity but they also feel tired show that effort has been expended, from that we can assume that training has taken place

At circus we usually do a lot of...



Again, these responses show how positive the benefits of the circus classes are to the youngest members focussing on non-competitive physical education and on promoting positive interpersonal interaction.

When I come to circus I want to...



It is important to ensure that the wishes of our youngest members are at the forefront of class and curriculum design. These results reveal exactly what it is that the members want when they come to circus. Again, a hugely positive response.

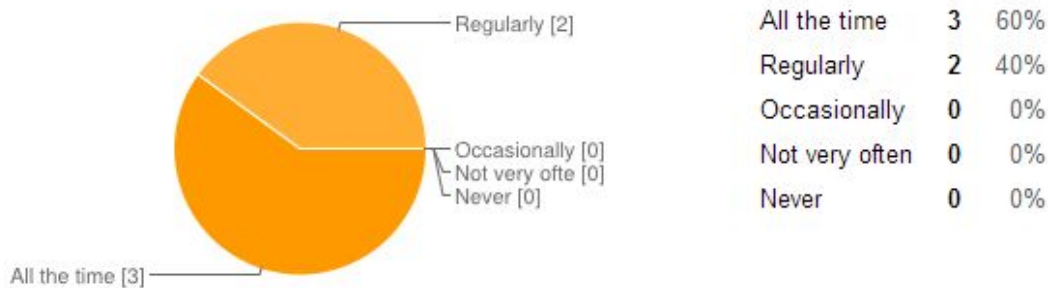
8-11 year olds

a) Overview

The method involved with this age bracket was to use a group interview. The questions were asked to a group of volunteers and each question was discussed and clarified. The responses gave great insight into this age group who mark the midpoint between the youngest members and the teenage members. Again, responses were clear and positive although there was less agreement on certain issues than found with other ages.

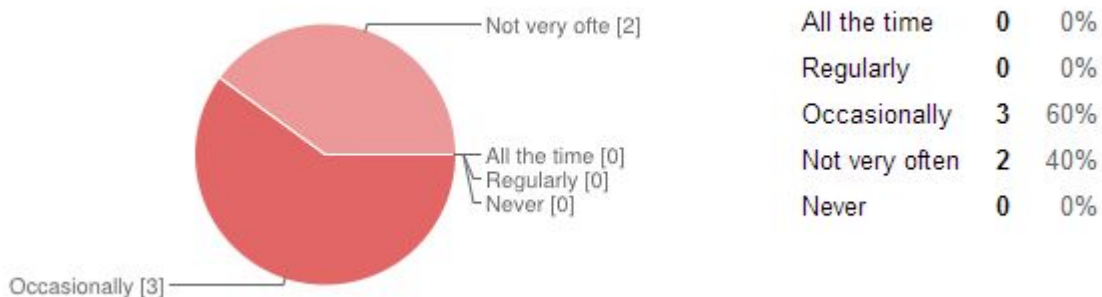
b) Detailed Results and Analysis

When circus class begins, how often do you know what the class is going to be about?



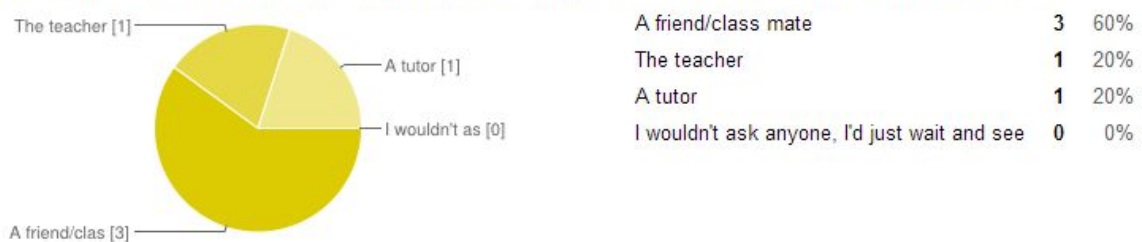
The small sample size for this age group can lead to some skewing of the analysis but these results seem to show that the communication between the teachers, tutors and class members work quite well.

How often do you have to ask someone what class is about?



Similarly, there seems to be strong and regular interaction between the tutor team and the class members

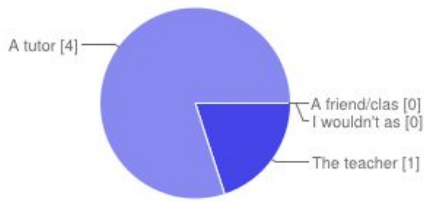
If you aren't sure what is going to happen in class, who would be the first person you would ask?



40% of the respondents said they would ask for clarification from the tutor or teacher while 60% would ask a friend/class mate. This means that there may be a

sense of anxiety or nerves about asking questions or it may just mean that it is easier to ask a friend in these situations.

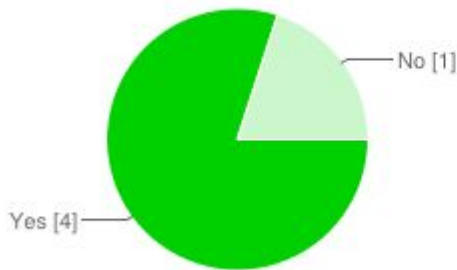
If you are learning something new and aren't sure how to do it right, who do you ask first?



A friend/class mate	0	0%
The teacher	1	20%
A tutor	4	80%
I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and hope for the best	0	0%

The fact that 80% would ask a tutor is again confirmation of the tutor trainee programme and puts the rest any concerns about anxiety that may have arisen from the preceding responses.

Do you know the name of everyone in your group?



Yes	4	80%
No	1	20%

The trend mention in relation to the 5-7 year olds of there meaning groups of friends within a class seems to have faded by the time circus members reach this age, although there is still a slight reluctance to openly and freely befriend everyone in the group. The main reason for this seems to be that certain class mates only come to circus to mess.

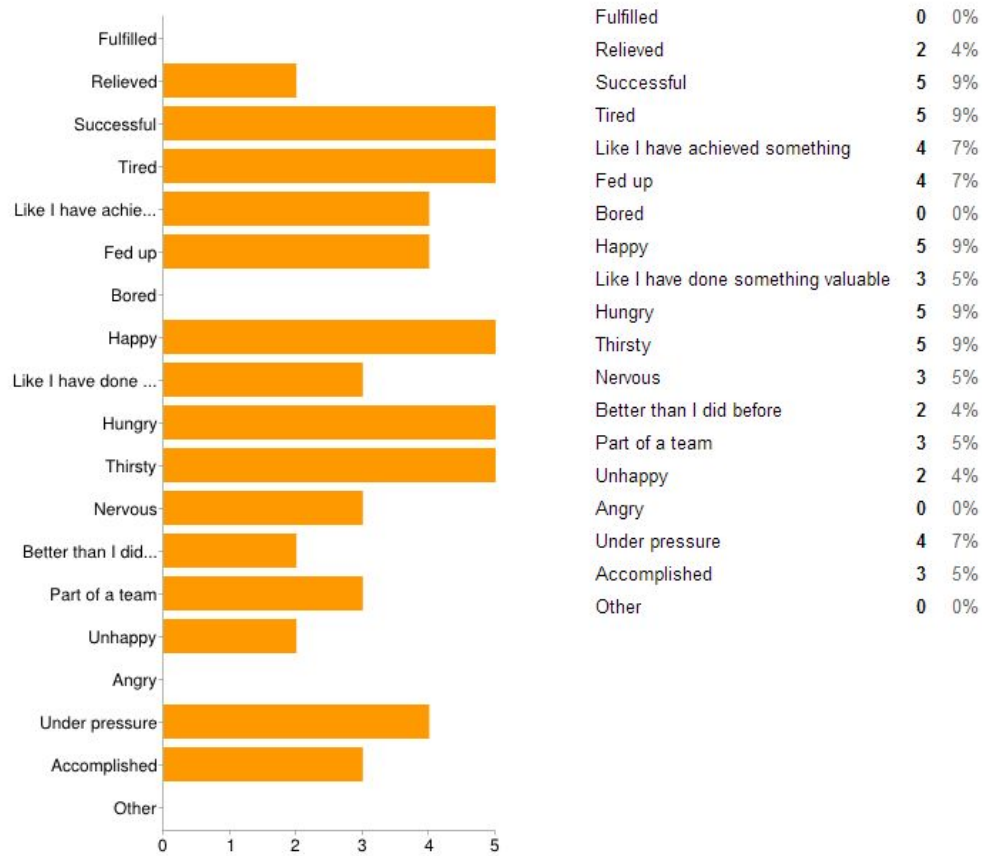
Is there anyone in your group you have never spoken to?



Yes	3	75%
No	1	25%

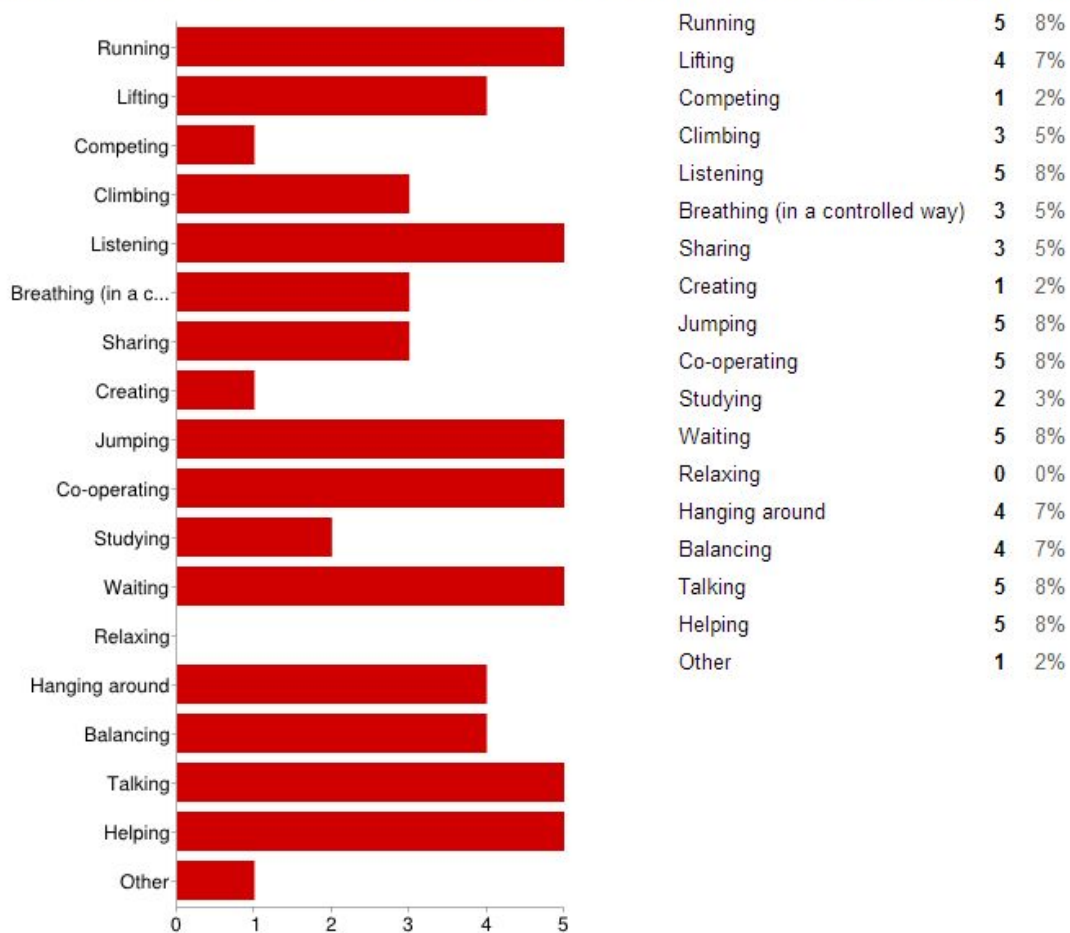
These results add further weight to the suspicion that some class mates just don't interact. Little can be done about this other than to ensure that there is space for friendships to grow and develop.

Which of these words describe the feeling of learning something new at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



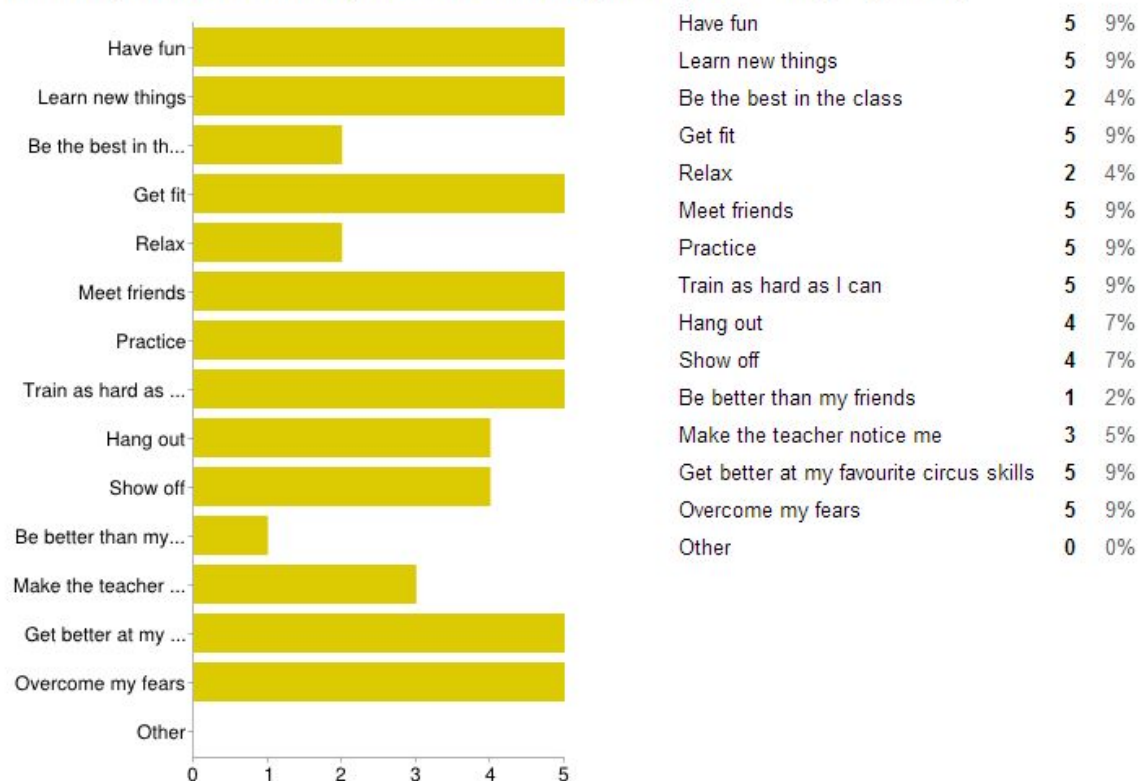
These results reveal a great deal about the educational process felt during circus classes. They are positive and yet reveal how much effort is expended during the course of any given class

Which of these words best describe the things you do at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



Again, it is important to acknowledge and record what members believe takes place during a class as well as what is assigned. For example, 'waiting' is not an activity that is intended to take up time in a class but due to limited resources every member interviewed agreed that there is often a great deal of waiting to do in class.

What do you want to do when you come to circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



Likewise, it is positive to see what activities students of this age group want to do at circus. It seems that much of what they desire is to improve and graduate to a higher level. This shows a positive, inclusive and non-competitive interaction between the seniors, tweenies, and juniors; where each level admires what the next level does.

Finish this sentence in any way you want: After circus I feel...

hungry thirsty tired Tired and looking forward to next week/ Tired and looking forward to relaxing energetic thirsty depressed about taking a shower content hungry stress relieved

Finally, these responses confirm the level of effort expended in a class, which since circus is a promoted as non-competitive physical education, must be regarded as a positive result.

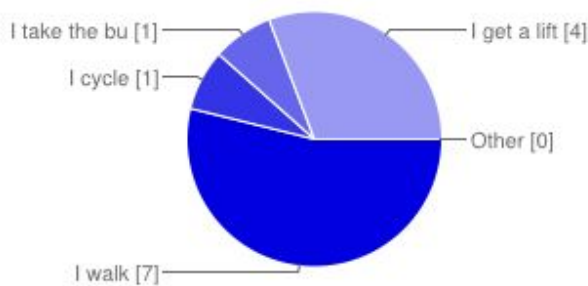
12-14 year olds

a) Overview

For this age group, it was determined that a pen-and-paper questionnaire would be the most efficient method of communication. This enabled us to get the most responses by reaching out to both Tweenies groups. The responses do not represent a total sample, but a large cross section of that membership. The responses are mixed, but overall very positive. Given that these members are so close to the senior group, yet not being able to take advantage of everything that is open to the seniors (due to age restrictions) this group has often had more issues than other groups. Bearing that in mind, the results are very positive.

b) Detailed results and analysis

How do you usually get to circus?



I walk	7	54%
I cycle	1	8%
I take the bus	1	8%
I get a lift	4	31%
Other	0	0%

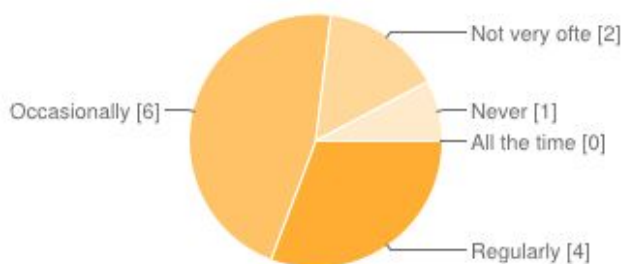
It is interesting to note that we have crossed an age threshold where the young people are, for the most part, trusted to come to circus by themselves. This is worth bearing in mind in relation to security, bad weather, or contacting member's parents.

Have ever been late for circus? If so can you think of one particular time? What happened, did anyone talk to you about it? If so what did they say?

Only once and it was extremely awkward No n/a Late once. Stephen Made Séamus give out to me Once they made me do push-ups I have been late I'm always late and the teachers just say that I'm late

This question was asked to register the modes and methods of discipline used by the circus. Fortunately, discipline is not an over-riding issue for the circus, when compared to other extra-curricular activities. But it is also worth noting that there are rules in place, these rules are known, and are felt as being enforced in a playful, as opposed to a strict, manner.

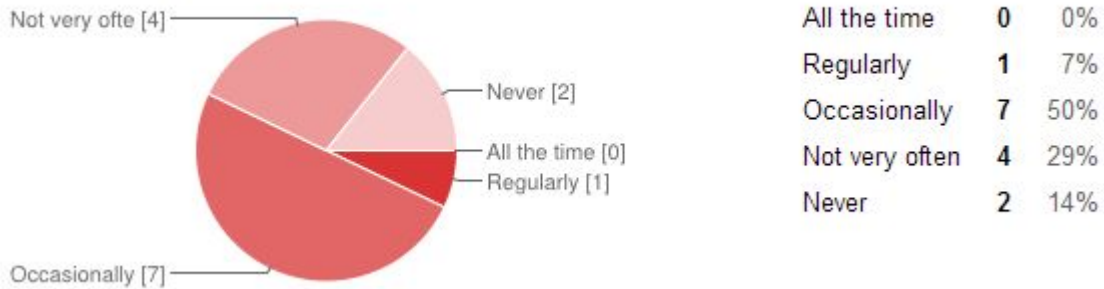
When circus class begins, how often do you know what the class is going to be about?



All the time	0	0%
Regularly	4	31%
Occasionally	6	46%
Not very often	2	15%
Never	1	8%

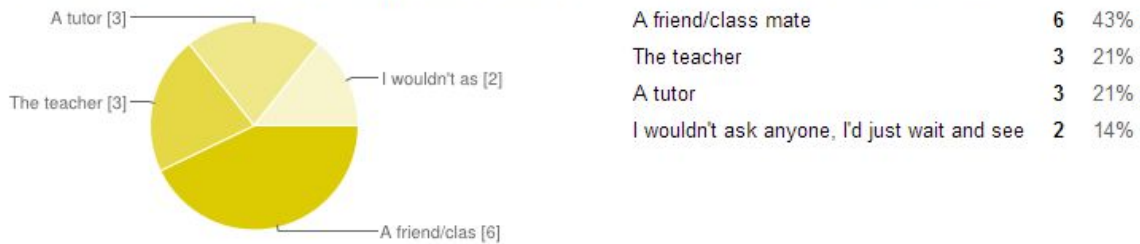
With these results we see the difficulty this age group has with attention. Compared to the younger groups, this age group seem to be less aware of a class's content. An action point to be taken from this point could be to give instructions and to check them afterwards.

How often do you have to ask someone what class is about?

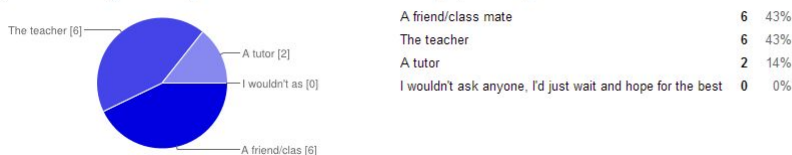


Similarly, this age group are less sure about what they should be doing, but not to the point that would indicate a major difficulty with communication.

If you aren't sure what is going to happen in class, who would be the first person you would ask?



If you are learning something new and aren't sure how to do it right, who do you ask first?



Can you think of a time in circus when you found something hard to learn and asked for help? What was the activity and who helped you? How did they help?

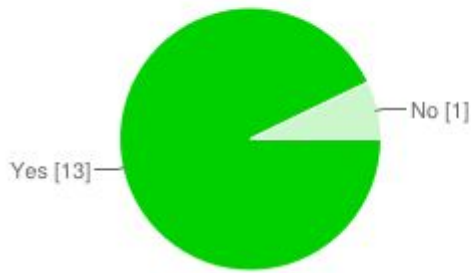
yes people helped Jess, contact juggling. They explained the staff, a tutor Silks, asked the teacher unicycling and I got help from a tutor who held me up Contact juggling, Fia and the Tutor yes, they showed me Diabalo, I asked the tutor and they showed me the right way to do it Trapeze, I asked the teacher When we were juggling Alex helped me

How did you feel after they helped you?

Good Anger, I still got it wrong Helped, I don't know normal good Happy I felt better about being able to learn it meh I felt better

If there were a difficulty with communication, the responses to this question would be very different. These responses show that trainee tutor programme works at this age group, that there is trust between the students and the teachers, and that there is solid and appropriate peer interaction. The young people are happy to ask for help whether it is from a tutor, friend or the teacher. They find help to be available and worth while. This issue can be very important for educational development and as such it is very positive to see it being in place, but it should never be overlooked. Students must always feel the space to and worth in asking for help.

Do you know the name of everyone in your group?



Yes	13	93%
No	1	7%

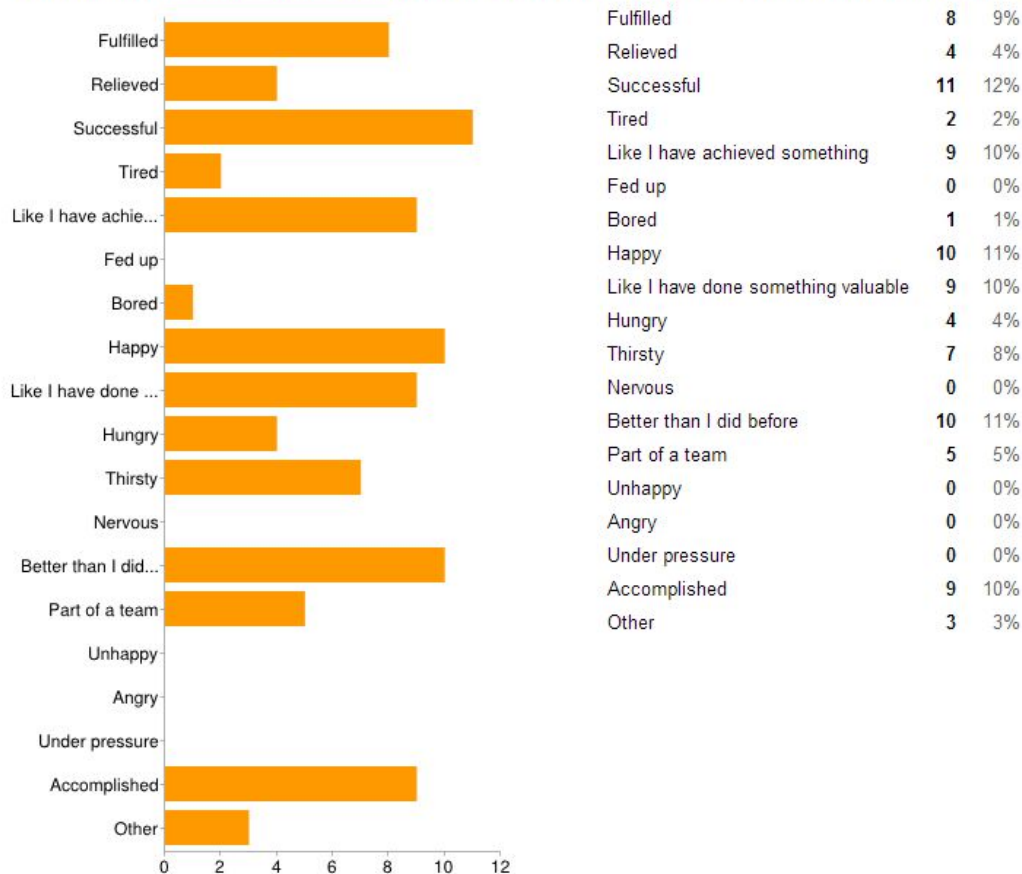
Is there anyone in your group you have never spoken to?



Yes	1	7%
No	13	93%

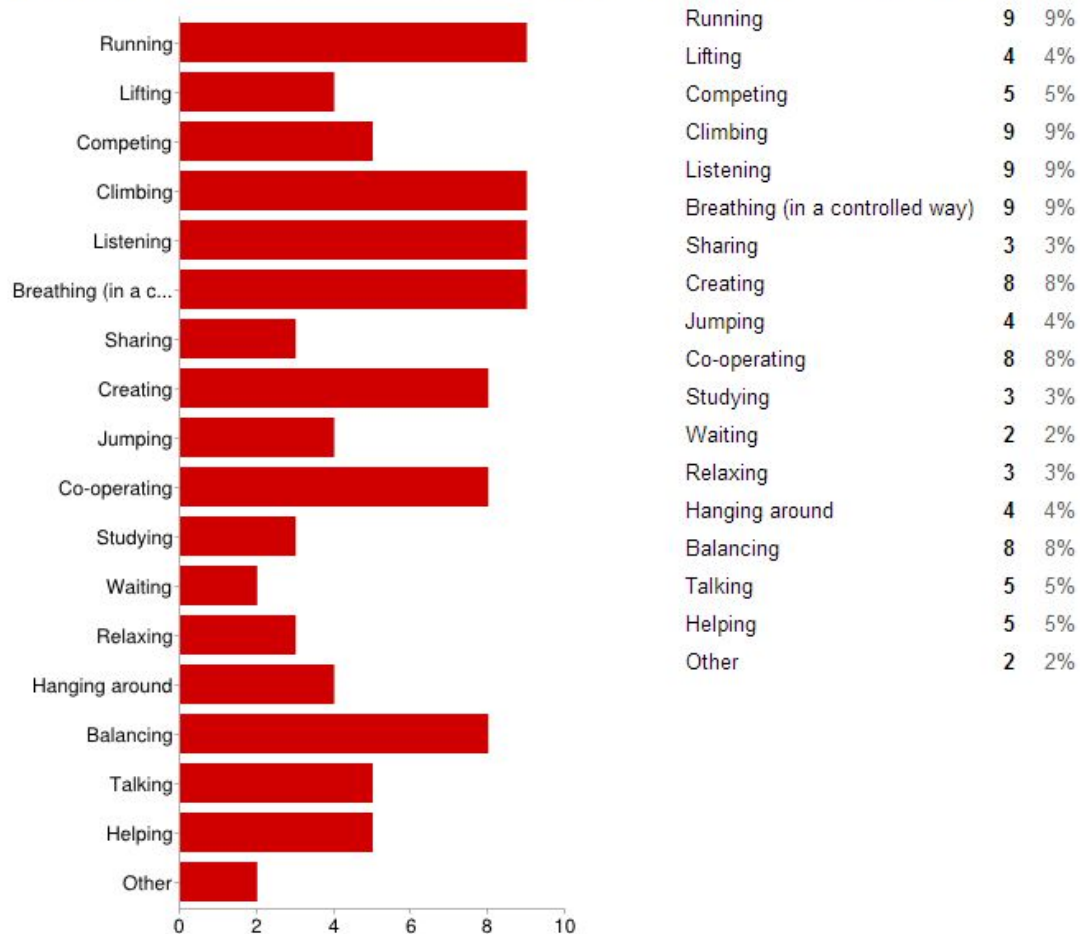
The high level of peer interaction suggested above is confirmed by these results. This group interacts in a way that has less, if any, static social groupings.

Which of these words describe the feeling of learning something new at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



The emotional responses listed by these members are overwhelmingly positive. For their age group and the stresses and strains they are under from other sources, it is surprising and pleasing to see how positive an effect circus has on their lives in their own estimation (this topic is explored in more detail in my article- attached)

Which of these words best describe the things you do at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



Again, it is very important to keep track of the students' experiences of the activities that take place in class. There is little surprising here, again the only action point would be to try and cut down on waiting time where applicable.

What do you want to do when you come to circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



Similarly, it is important to ensure that the classes reflect what the students' want so as to avoid anybody being asked to partake in activities that they genuinely don't want to. It is worth noting that the only point to get full support is "to have fun", interesting and positive.

Finish this sentence in any way you want: After circus I feel...

happy! exhausted Mainly accomplished, often tired and always relaxed and thirsty happy Good, usually Tired but happy Happy Tired and Happy Happy if i found something new to work on, tired REALLY hungry happy and successful

Leading on from that point, it is comforting to see again that so many students report feeling happy after they finish circus. This tied in with feeling tired should reveal a great deal about how the circus is fulfilling its mission.

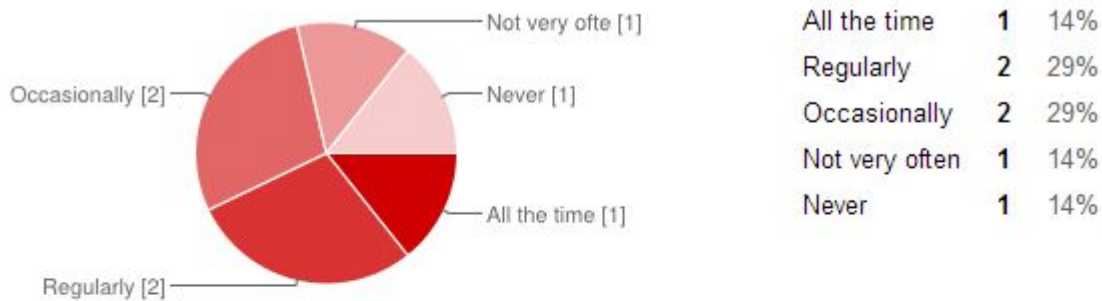
15-20 year olds

a) Overview

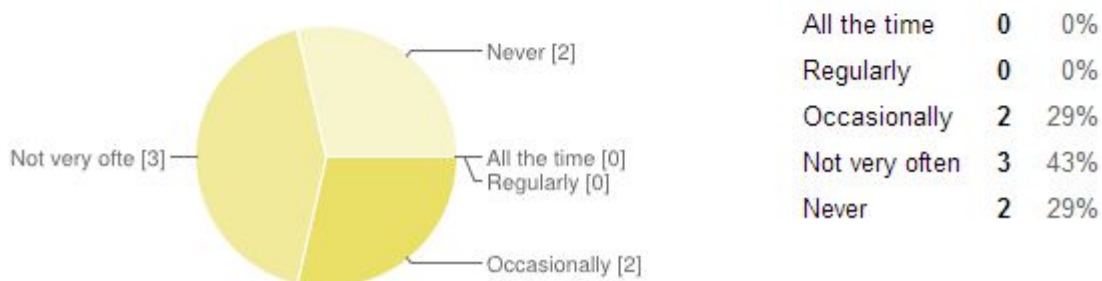
This section of the report was conducted online. It was accepted that the senior members of the circus were mature enough to manage their time and answer the questions without the need for feedback or follow ups. The responses proved insightful and reflected the intuition that the senior group see circus in a slightly different light than the younger groups. The seniors, in general, treat circus as another teacher might treat a sport or an apprenticeship. The goal of circus is not just for fun or for socialising but for improvement and development, whether as an end-in-itself or for a future career in circus arts.

b) Detailed analysis and results

How often would you say you are early for circus?



How often would you say you are late for circus?



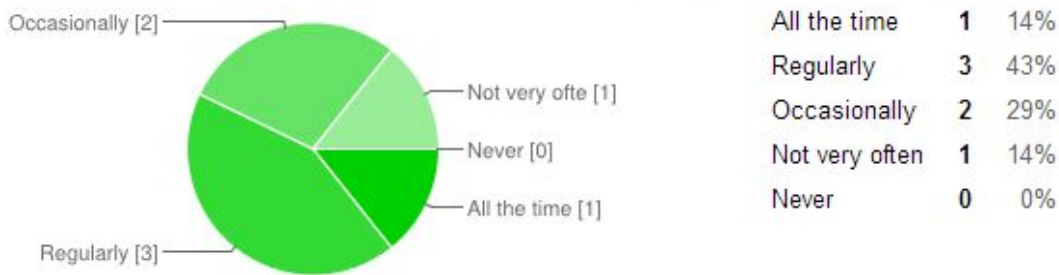
These straightforward questions served to act as indicator of how the seniors view circus. The fact that 78% of those questioned often arrive early to circus and 72% say that they are very rarely late is a good indication that circus is something that they take seriously and plan their time around it accordingly.

If you have ever been late, can you think of one particular time? What happened, did anyone mention it to you? If so what did they say?

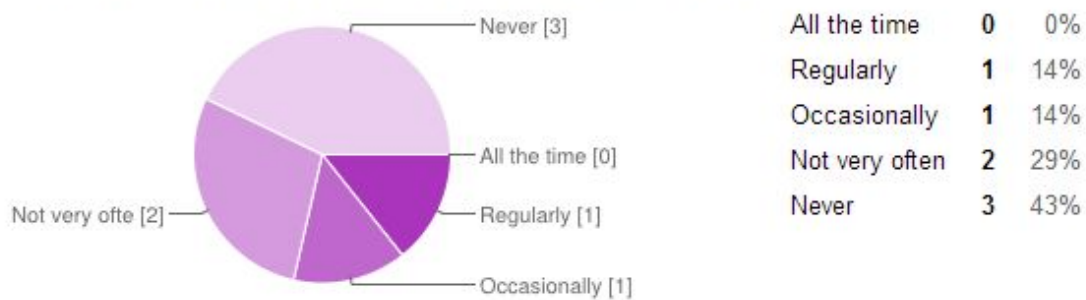
yes. i thought class started later than it did and a tutor told me to not let it happen again. People made silly jokes for s few minutes, maybe I had to do laps or push ups to make up for warm up. I was late from school and was told not to let it happen again. i was delays for various reasons, they told me to not be late next time! n/a. can't think of anything notable.. but i would have been asked to please not be late again.

Again it is interesting to see that with regards to discipline, the seniors are in general simply asked not to be late again. This shows that a mature approach is taken with the most mature circus members. This practice will instil confidence and mutual respect and should be commended and maintained.

When circus class begins, how often do you know what the class is going to be about?

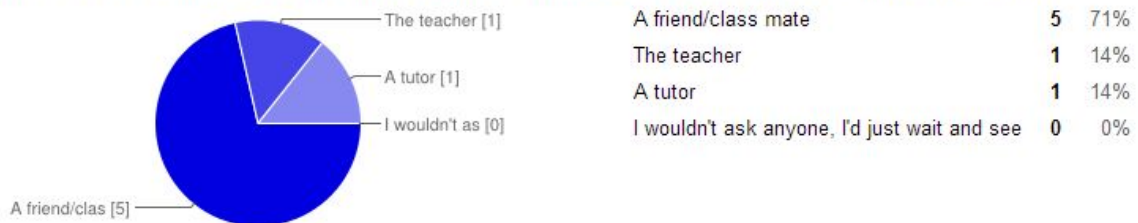


How often do you have to ask someone what class is about?



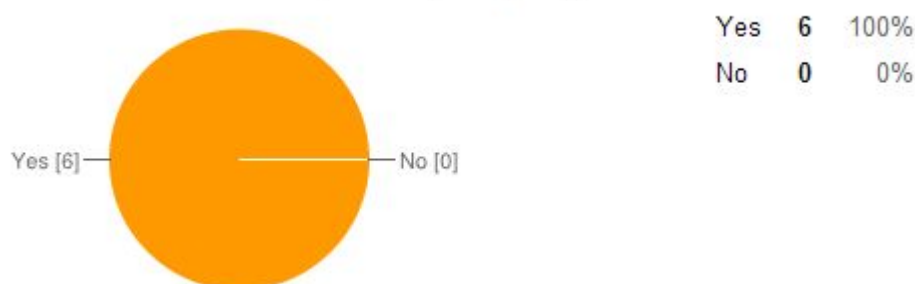
Positive results here again for questions concerning communication and preparedness but perhaps the action point mentioned above of giving then checking instructions should be introduced throughout the age groups.

If you aren't sure what is going to happen in class, who would be the first person you would ask?



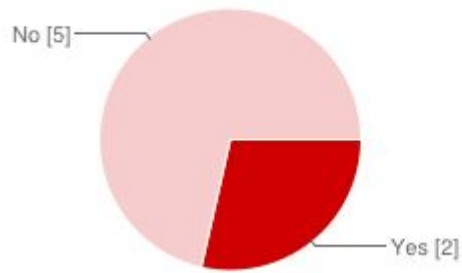
Interesting to see that with the seniors they would be happier asking each other rather than a teacher or a tutor what was happening in class. This point could be examined in more detail at a forum or class feedback but what is most important is that no one responded by saying they wouldn't ask anyone. That would show the atmosphere of the class to be overly strict and inappropriate. These results, as with all other age groups, reveal the class atmosphere to be positive and open.

Do you know the name of everyone in your group?



A great result that says it all; the seniors are a team!

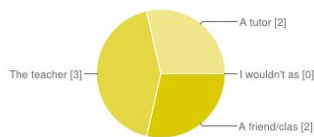
Is there anyone in your group you have never spoken to?



Yes	2	29%
No	5	71%

A slightly less positive result, perhaps this is due to shyness or age difference but again it could be addressed at a forum or class feedback session. Perhaps a mingling/talking game would be a way to break the ice

If you are learning something new and aren't sure how to do it right, who do you ask first?



A friend/class mate	2	29%
The teacher	3	43%
A tutor	2	29%
I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and hope for the best	0	0%

Can you think of a time in circus when you found something hard to learn and asked for help? What was the activity and who helped you? How did they help?

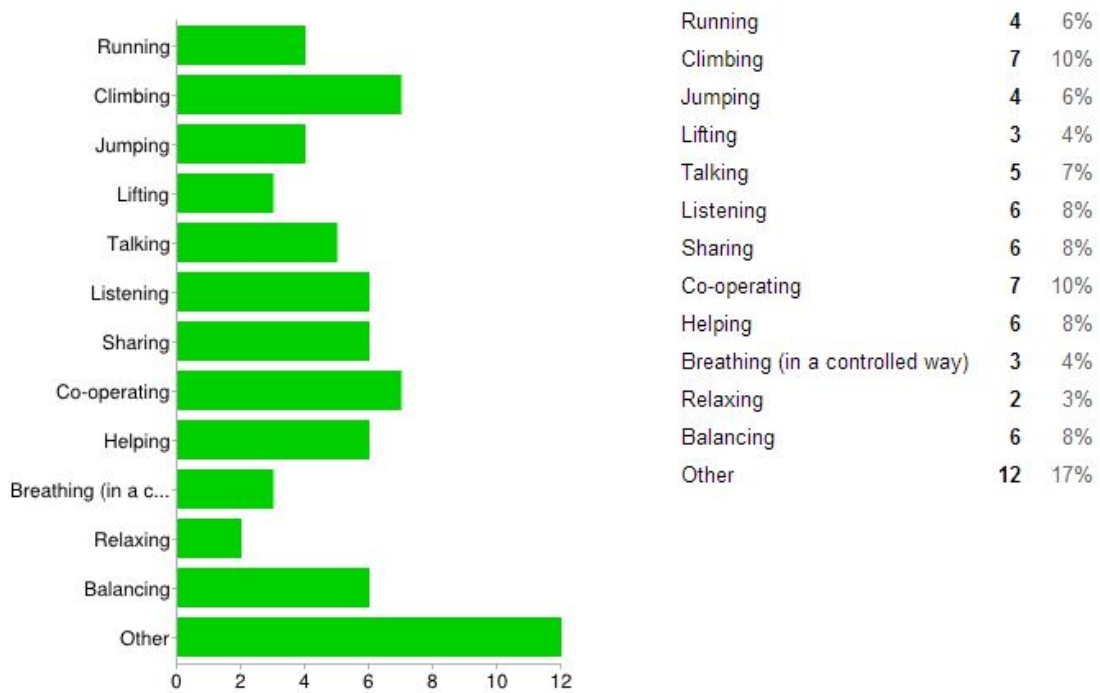
Aerial acrobatics, my strength and flexibility and mental strength are not able for it. I ask the teacher for help which they give when they are ready, and i ask my classmates for help which they do help.
 Diablo; I asked the teacher and they explained it to again and helped me to it we were walking on each others shoulder practicing for a performance and we asked the tutor how to do it correctly. I've been helped with moves on aerial equipment by a tutor when I was having trouble Asked Jess to help me learn a new trick on silts. Any sort of new tricks in aerial that I didn't quite get. They would have been explained to me by anyone available beside me at the time if they knew it i.e student, teacher, tutor. Everyone is very helpful.

How did you feel after they helped you?

Happy to know how to do it, even happier if I could do the trick. Accomplished and grateful Grateful for the help, i feel supported and encouraged by classmates and teachers. and also frustrated that i cant do things as easily as most people. That i had learnt something helpful to preform with. good because i knew how to do it. :) Happy I was getting it

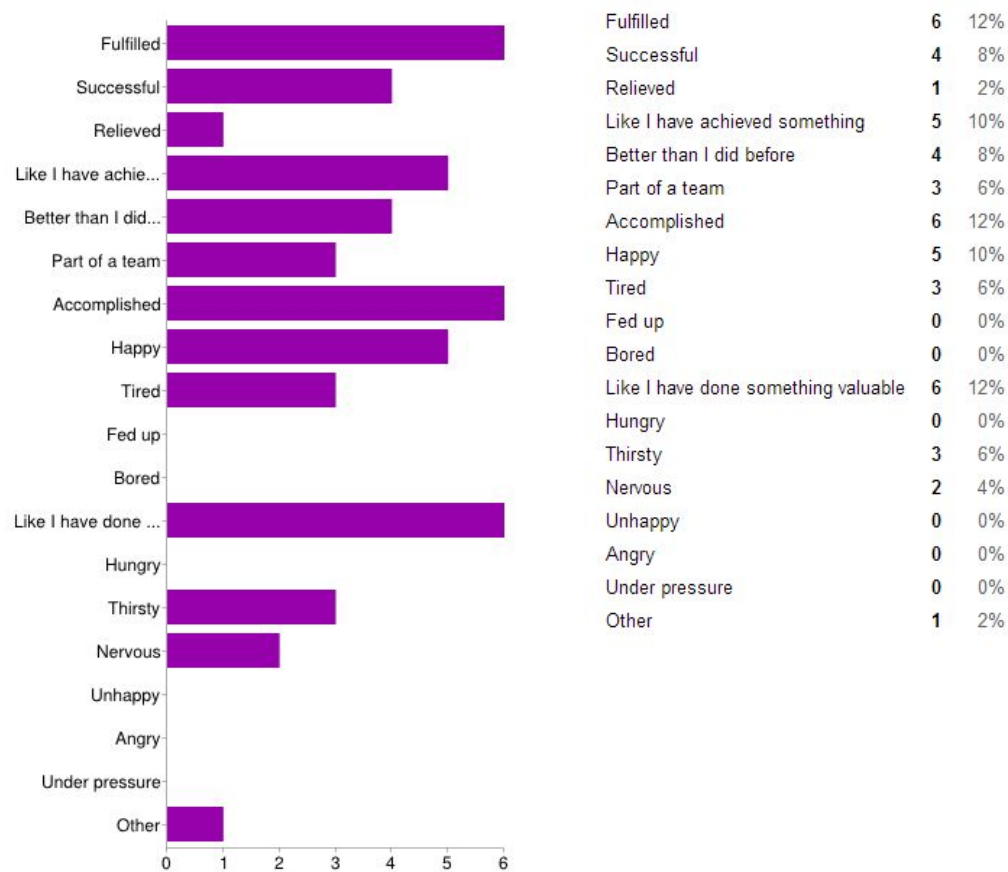
Very positive results about technical communication and help, students clearly feel supported and that expert advice is always available. Again, very positive to see that no one reports waiting and hoping for the best, which is excellent news from a health and safety perspective. Most importantly it is rewarding to see that the help and advice being offered works and is offered in a polite and friendly manner. No one reported coming away from asking for help feeling stupid or patronised or any other negative reaction that can arise when younger people ask for help.

Which of these words best describe the things you do at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



As with the younger groups it is important to see how the members describe the activities that take place during a circus class. What is very interesting to note is that there is less agreement which (after some research) reveals that this is most likely down to specialisation. At a senior level some students have chosen their specialist skills/techniques and as such their class has a different texture than that of another class member.

Which of these words describe the feeling of learning something new at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



Very positive results considering that this age group should have the most self-awareness and the highest critical faculties the fact that they report almost completely positive feelings shows that whatever the circus does, it is having a positive emotional effect on its participants (again more of this in the article, attached)

What do you want to do when you come to circus? (you can pick as many as you like)



Likewise it is great to see that “have fun”, “practice”, and “learn new things” come in so highly ranked. But most of all it is great to see that “get better at my favourite circus skill” comes out in the highest ranked position. This is an excellent indicator that the young people come to circus first and foremost to learn, which shows that as an educational activity it has reached each member at a point of self-direction and self-motivation, two issues which greatly contribute to the well-being of young people in contemporary society.

Finish this sentence in any way you want: After circus I feel...

tired but very happy. Relaxed as it helps me space out and also that i have achieved some thing new or happy that i have improved a skill i like. Also inspired as i like being in a space so rounded by all different creativity going on makes me smile. inspired, tired, happy, lucky i found what i love doing Good tired, like i've done something good for me, but also stressed as physical activity and certain group dynamics and not being good at things straight away makes me stressed. i feel i'm not as good as other people and am a slow learner, mainly due to not being physically fit and strong. I beat myself up about being lazy and unfit. but i keep trying again and try to get better. circus is a fun great way for someone like me who was never into group sports or exercise, to get fit and learn interesting skills in a fun environment. and it makes me realise i dont' have to be super fit to be able to do the activities i can still do fun circus stuff. Happy and wanting to do more Absolutely awesome :) If somewhat knackered occasionally :) very happy and positive and in a good mood cause i learned new things and had a good time

Finally, these results really speak for themselves. The young people’s own words reveal the circus to be a positive, effective and beneficial element of their lives.

Galway Community Circus Survey

Thank You for taking the time to fill out this survey. It will help us maintain the quality of our classes and ensure that we will grow in line with our members wishes and interests.

1. Which group is your child/children currently enrolled in?

Mark only one oval.

- Parent and Toddler Circus
- Family Circus
- Flea Circus (5-7yrs)
- Junior Circus (8-11yrs)
- Tweenies (12-14 yrs)
- Senior Circus (15-20 yrs)
- Adult Courses

2. How many years has your child/children been attending Galway Community Circus?

Mark only one oval.

- 6-8 years or more
- 4-6 years
- 2-4 years
- Under 2 years
- This will be our first year

3. How did you hear about the classes at Galway Community Circus?

.....

4. How happy does your child/children feel at Galway Community Circus?

Mark only one oval.

- Very happy
- Quite happy
- Neither happy nor unhappy
- Quite unhappy
- Very unhappy

5. How big a part does Galway Community Circus play in your child/children's social life?

Mark only one oval.

- A very big part
- Quite a bit
- An average amount
- Not much
- None at all

6. Would you say attending Galway Community Circus has improved your child/children's skills in the following areas? (you can choose more than one)

Check all that apply.

- Concentration
- Team work
- Balancing
- Coordination
- Physical fitness
- Performance skills
- Overcoming shyness
- Other:

7. How would you describe the quality of teaching at Galway Community Circus?

Mark only one oval.

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor
- Terrible

8. How well do Galway Community Circus teachers relate to you or your child/children?

Mark only one oval.

- Very well
- Quite well
- Moderately well
- Slightly well
- Not well at all

9. **Compared to other similar activities, are our course fees higher, lower, or about the same?**

Mark *only one oval*.

- A great deal lower
- Quite a bit lower
- Somewhat lower
- About the same
- Somewhat higher
- Quite a bit higher
- A great deal higher
- I don't know

10. **What is your child/children's favourite circus discipline to learn/study? (you can choose more than one)**

Check *all that apply*.

- Aerial Acrobatics
- Floor Acrobatics/tumbling
- Juggling and Manipulations skills (diabolo etc.)
- Balancing (unicycling, stilt-walking, tight-rope walking, walking globe etc.)
- Clowning/Drama
- Other:

11. **How often does your child/children report a positive experience from their time at Galway Community Circus to you?**

Mark *only one oval*.

- Regularly
- Ocassionally
- Once or twice
- Rarely
- Never

12. **Who does this positive experience focus on primarily?**

Mark *only one oval*.

- Teachers or tutors
- Staff
- Other circus members
- Other:

13. **How often does your child/children report a negative experience from their time at Galway Community Circus to you?**

Mark only one oval.

- Regularly
- Ocassionally
- Once or twice
- Rarely
- Never

14. **Who does this negative experience focus on primarily?**

Mark only one oval.

- Teachers or tutors
- Staff
- Other circus members
- Other:

15. **How safe does your child/children feel at Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

- Very safe
- Quite safe
- Neither safe nor nsafe
- Quite unsafe
- Very unsafe

16. **How concerned are you about bullying at Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

- A lot
- Quite a bit
- An average amount
- Not much
- Not at all

17. How would you describe the quality of the facilities at Galway Community Circus?

Mark only one oval.

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor
- Terrible

18. In what way could Galway Community Circus make their facilities more amenable to you/your family?

.....

19. How regularly do you attend Galway Community Circus events/performances?

Mark only one oval.

- Regularly
- Ocassionally
- Once or twice
- Rarely
- Never

20. How likely would you be to recommend a course at Galway Community Circus to a friend/colleague/family member?

Mark only one oval.

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Quite unlikely
- Very unlikely

21. How well do you feel Galway Community Circus communicates with you (web, email, text etc.)?

Mark only one oval.

- Very well
- Quite well
- Moderately well
- Slightly well
- Not well at all

22. How likely would it be to that you will continue with Galway Community Circus next year?

Mark only one oval.

- Very likely
- Quite likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Quite unlikely
- Very unlikely

23. How would you like to see Galway Community Circus improve over the next five years?

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Galway Community Circus Internal Performance Assessment

Please fill out this form as honestly and as openly as possible. Please do not mention your name or your position at any point nor the names of any of your colleagues. This will help to maintain the anonymity of the data. Thank you and enjoy!

* Required

1. Name of interviewer *

.....

2. Name of recorder *

.....

3. What is your role in Galway Community Circus? *

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Does Galway Community Circus have a mission statement?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

5. Can you tell us what the mission statement is?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6. **How well do you think Galway Community Circus fulfils this mission statement?**

Mark only one oval.

- Very well
- Quite well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Quite poorly
- Very poorly

7. **How well do you think your work fulfils this mission statement?**

Mark only one oval.

- Very well
- Quite well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Quite poorly
- Very poorly

8. **Can you describe, in your own words, the staff structure of Galway Community Circus, beginning with those in direct contact with the members and proceeding to any other staff or volunteers?**

Another way of phrasing this question would be to describe the hierarchy of staff and volunteers in Galway Community Circus

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9. **How would you describe the level of communication between the furthest points of the structure you just described?**

Mark only one oval.

- Excellent
- Quite good
- Satisfactory
- Not great
- Terrible

10. **How would you describe the level of communication between you and your colleagues?**

Mark only one oval.

- Excellent
- Quite good
- Satisfactory
- Not great
- Terrible

11. **Is there anything you would do to change the way your and your colleagues communicate with each other?**

If you could wave a magic wand and make any change to internal communications what would those changes be?

.....

.....

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.....

12. **How would you rate the amount of work you do for Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Over-worked	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Under utilised

13. **How would you describe your level of motivation in Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

- Very motivated
- Quite motivated
- Neither motivated nor hindered
- Quite hindered
- Totally hindered

14. **What or who would you credit with this level of motivation?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

15. **How would you compare this level of motivation to when you first began working with Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

- A lot better
- A little better
- Better
- The same
- Worse
- A little worse
- A lot worse

16. **What or who would you credit with this change?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

17. **What would you describe as the most fulfilling aspect of your work with Galway Community Circus?**

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18. **What would you describe as the least fulfilling aspect of your work with Galway Community Circus?**

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.....

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.....

.....

19. **How would you rate the sense of achievement you have from your work with Galway Community Circus?**

For example: 1 = I have a strong sense of achievement

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5	
Strong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Weak

20. **How would you rate the sense of excitement you have when coming to work with Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Weak

21. **How would you rate the sense community you have when working with Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Weak

22. **How would you rate the level of impact your work has on the young people involved in Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
A great impact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	No impact at all

23. **How would you characterise the impact your work has on the young people involved in Galway Community Circus?**

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24. **How happy do you feel when you work with Galway Community Circus?**

Mark only one oval.

- Very happy
- Quite happy
- Neither happy nor unhappy
- Quite unhappy
- Very unhappy

Junior Members Survey

Please fill this survey out as honestly as you can, but please don't mention your name or the names of any of your friends or people from the circus. Thanks! You're a super star!!

1. How do you usually come to circus?

Mark only one oval.

- Walking
- Cycling
- On the bus
- In a car
- Other:

2. When circus class begins, how often do you know what the class is going to be about?

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Most of the time
- Sometimes
- Only once or twice
- Never

3. If you aren't sure what is going to happen in class, who would be the first person you would ask?

Mark only one oval.

- A friend/class mate
- The teacher
- A tutor
- I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and see

4. Do you know the name of everyone in your group?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

5. **If you are learning something new and aren't sure how to do it right, who do you ask first?**

Mark only one oval.

- A friend/class mate
- The teacher
- A tutor
- I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and hope for the best

6. **When I learn something new at circus I feel...**

Check all that apply.

- Great
- Bored
- Happy
- Tired
- Thirsty
- Unhappy
- Angry
- Excited

7. **At circus we usually do a lot of...**

Check all that apply.

- Running
- Competing
- Climbing
- Listening
- Jumping
- Co-operating
- Talking
- Helping
- Other:

8. When I come to circus I want to...

Check all that apply.

- Have fun
- Learn new things
- Be the best in the class
- Get fit
- Meet friends
- Show off
- Be better than my friends
- Get better at my favourite circus skills

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Younger Members Survey

Please fill this survey out as honestly as you can, but please don't mention your name or the names of any of your friends or people from the circus. Thanks! You're a super star!!

1. How do you usually get to circus?

Mark only one oval.

- I walk
- I cycle
- I take the bus
- I get a lift
- Other:

2. Have ever been late for circus? If so can you think of one particular time? What happened, did anyone talk to you about it? If so what did they say?

If you've never been late just put "n/a" in the box

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3. When circus class begins, how often do you know what the class is going to be about?

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Not very often
- Never

4. How often do you have to ask someone what class is about?

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Not very often
- Never

5. **If you aren't sure what is going to happen in class, who would be the first person you would ask?**

Mark only one oval.

- A friend/class mate
- The teacher
- A tutor
- I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and see

6. **Do you know the name of everyone in your group?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

7. **Is there anyone in your group you have never spoken to?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

8. **If you are learning something new and aren't sure how to do it right, who do you ask first?**

Mark only one oval.

- A friend/class mate
- The teacher
- A tutor
- I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and hope for the best

9. **Can you think of a time in circus when you found something hard to learn and asked for help? What was the activity and who helped you? How did they help?**

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10. **How did you feel after they helped you?**

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11. **Which of these words describe the feeling of learning something new at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)**

When I learn something new at circus I feel...

Check all that apply.

- Fulfilled
- Relieved
- Successful
- Tired
- Like I have achieved something
- Fed up
- Bored
- Happy
- Like I have done something valuable
- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Nervous
- Better than I did before
- Part of a team
- Unhappy
- Angry
- Under pressure
- Accomplished
- Other:

12. **Which of these words best describe the things you do at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)**

At circus we usually do a lot of...

Check all that apply.

- Running
- Lifting
- Competing
- Climbing
- Listening
- Breathing (in a controlled way)
- Sharing
- Creating
- Jumping
- Co-operating
- Studying
- Waiting
- Relaxing
- Hanging around
- Balancing
- Talking
- Helping
- Other:

13. What do you want to do when you come to circus? (you can pick as many as you like)

When I come to circus I want to...

Check all that apply.

- Have fun
- Learn new things
- Be the best in the class
- Get fit
- Relax
- Meet friends
- Practice
- Train as hard as I can
- Hang out
- Show off
- Be better than my friends
- Make the teacher notice me
- Get better at my favourite circus skills
- Overcome my fears
- Other:

14. Finish this sentence in any way you want: After circus I feel...

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Tweenies Survey

Please fill this survey out as honestly as you can, but please don't mention your name or the names of any of your friends or people from the circus. Thanks! You're a super star!!

1. How do you usually get to circus?

Mark only one oval.

- I walk
- I cycle
- I take the bus
- I get a lift
- Other:

2. Have ever been late for circus? If so can you think of one particular time? What happened, did anyone talk to you about it? If so what did they say?

If you've never been late just put "n/a" in the box

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3. When circus class begins, how often do you know what the class is going to be about?

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Not very often
- Never

4. How often do you have to ask someone what class is about?

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Not very often
- Never

5. **If you aren't sure what is going to happen in class, who would be the first person you would ask?**

Mark *only one oval*.

- A friend/class mate
- The teacher
- A tutor
- I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and see

6. **Do you know the name of everyone in your group?**

Mark *only one oval*.

- Yes
- No

7. **Is there anyone in your group you have never spoken to?**

Mark *only one oval*.

- Yes
- No

8. **If you are learning something new and aren't sure how to do it right, who do you ask first?**

Mark *only one oval*.

- A friend/class mate
- The teacher
- A tutor
- I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and hope for the best

9. **Can you think of a time in circus when you found something hard to learn and asked for help? What was the activity and who helped you? How did they help?**

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10. **How did you feel after they helped you?**

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11. **Which of these words describe the feeling of learning something new at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)**

When I learn something new at circus I feel...

Check all that apply.

- Fulfilled
- Relieved
- Successful
- Tired
- Like I have achieved something
- Fed up
- Bored
- Happy
- Like I have done something valuable
- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Nervous
- Better than I did before
- Part of a team
- Unhappy
- Angry
- Under pressure
- Accomplished
- Other:

12. **Which of these words best describe the things you do at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)**

At circus we usually do a lot of...

Check all that apply.

- Running
- Lifting
- Competing
- Climbing
- Listening
- Breathing (in a controlled way)
- Sharing
- Creating
- Jumping
- Co-operating
- Studying
- Waiting
- Relaxing
- Hanging around
- Balancing
- Talking
- Helping
- Other:

13. What do you want to do when you come to circus? (you can pick as many as you like)

When I come to circus I want to...

Check all that apply.

- Have fun
- Learn new things
- Be the best in the class
- Get fit
- Relax
- Meet friends
- Practice
- Train as hard as I can
- Hang out
- Show off
- Be better than my friends
- Make the teacher notice me
- Get better at my favourite circus skills
- Overcome my fears
- Other:

14. Finish this sentence in any way you want: After circus I feel...

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Seniors Survey

Please fill this survey out as honestly as you can, but please don't mention your name or the names of any of your friends or people from the circus. Thanks! You're a super star!!

1. How do you usually get to circus?

Mark only one oval.

- I walk
- I cycle
- I take the bus
- I get a lift
- Other:

2. Do you usually come in your training gear or do you change when you get here?

Mark only one oval.

- I wear my training gear from home/school
- I get changed when I arrive

3. How often would you say you are early for circus?

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Not very often
- Never

4. How often would you say you are late for circus?

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Not very often
- Never

5. **If you have ever been late, can you think of one particular time? What happened, did anyone mention it to you? If so what did they say?**

If you've never been late just put "n/a" in the box

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6. **When circus class begins, how often do you know what the class is going to be about?**

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Not very often
- Never

7. **How often do you have to ask someone what class is about?**

Mark only one oval.

- All the time
- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Not very often
- Never

8. **If you aren't sure what is going to happen in class, who would be the first person you would ask?**

Mark only one oval.

- A friend/class mate
- The teacher
- A tutor
- I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and see

9. **Do you know the name of everyone in your group?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

10. **Is there anyone in your group you have never spoken to?**

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

11. **If you are learning something new and aren't sure how to do it right, who do you ask first?**

Mark only one oval.

- A friend/class mate
- The teacher
- A tutor
- I wouldn't ask anyone, I'd just wait and hope for the best

12. **Can you think of a time in circus when you found something hard to learn and asked for help? What was the activity and who helped you? How did they help?**

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13. **How did you feel after they helped you?**

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14. **Which of these words best describe the things you do at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)**

At circus we usually do a lot of...

Check all that apply.

- Running
- Climbing
- Jumping
- Lifting
- Talking
- Listening
- Sharing
- Co-operating
- Helping
- Breathing (in a controlled way)
- Relaxing
- Balancing
- Other:

15. **Which of these words describe the feeling of learning something new at circus? (you can pick as many as you like)**

When I learn something new at circus I feel...

Check all that apply.

- Fulfilled
- Successful
- Relieved
- Like I have achieved something
- Better than I did before
- Part of a team
- Accomplished
- Happy
- Tired
- Fed up
- Bored
- Like I have done something valuable
- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Nervous
- Unhappy
- Angry
- Under pressure
- Other:

16. What do you want to do when you come to circus? (you can pick as many as you like)

When I come to circus I want to...

Check all that apply.

- Have fun
- Learn new things
- Be the best in the class
- Get fit
- Relax
- Meet friends
- Practice
- Train as hard as I can
- Hang out
- Show off
- Be better than my friends
- Make the teacher notice me
- Get better at my favourite circus skills
- Overcome my fears
- Other:

17. Finish this sentence in any way you want: After circus I feel...

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MEASURING HAPPINESS

ASSESSING THE INTRINSIC VALUE OF YOUTH CIRCUS

DR. STEPHEN J. CADWELL

GALWAY COMMUNITY CIRCUS

AND

DR. BRENDAN ROONEY

DLIADT

PROJECT SUMMARY

- Problem: There is a need to bridge the gap between youth circus performance assessment methods and the lived experience of youth circus participants.*
- Theory: If an appropriate version of Aristotle's eudemonia is used as a criterion for performance assessment, a more accurate description of the effect of a youth circus' work will be possible. An inference can be drawn between the activities undertaken and the development of those activities with reported feelings of happiness*
- Study: This study will use self-reporting questionnaires and non-parametric statistics to explore the relationship between the effort expended during an activity and the positive emotional states related to those activities*
- Outcome: If our theory is correct, the analysis will show that the eudemonia criterion provides a closer, more accurate description of a Youth Circus participant's experience and, as such, the youth circus' work. Results revealed a ceiling effect for positive emotional expression and activity. Further analysis, using Chi-Square test of independence, revealed a significant relationship between reporting experiencing negative emotions and periods of inactivity during the circus activity.*

INTRODUCTION

For the last nine months I have been fortunate enough to work with Galway Community Circus. They are a youth arts charity based in Galway on the west coast of Ireland. Galway Community Circus has been in existence since 2002 and over the last five years their membership has grown from roughly forty young to over two hundred and fifty. The circus offers classes and training in circus arts for young people aged between five and twenty years of age and operates a special bursary programme to ensure that economic difficulties do not stand in the way of a young person's membership. My work there has been rich and varied, mainly revolving around administration and PR but also including work in classes, on productions and even the occasional performance. One of the major projects I worked on was the Community Impact Report, a six month performance review that was to document and analyse where the organisation excelled and where there was room for improvement.

I was in a very fortunate position. I had a great deal of academic experience under my belt, specifically in the philosophy of art, and now I was engaged in a project where I could utilise those skills in a practical way and still be associated with the art world. The first step in managing this project was to find the most appropriate method or system for measuring the performance of a not-for-profit youth circus. There are dozens of performance assessment methods available, but many of them rely on commercial profit and loss as their criterion for success, a criterion which didn't suit this organisation.

After a great deal of searching I discovered the Artistic Vibrancy system developed by du Preez and Bailey for the Australian Council for the Arts. Du Preez and Bailey describe the concept behind this system by writing, "Artistic vibrancy is a catch-all phrase that tries to capture the goals and qualities that artists and arts organisations strive for." (Du Preez and Bailey 2009 p4) Du Preez and Bailey interviewed artists, educators, performing arts organisations and specialist academic researchers to try and determine what norms and ideals are shared by not-for profit small to medium sized arts companies. It was an ideal fit for this project. It offered a means to sensibly track and measure the performance of the organisation without relying on profit & loss but instead focussing on a set of ideals that they found to be relevant to arts practitioners.

Artistic Vibrancy can be broken up into five broad categories:

- Artistic quality or excellence
- Audience engagement and stimulation
- A fresh approach to the preservation or development of the art form

- Artist development
- Community relevance

An artistically vibrant company will strive for excellence and high quality work within its field, communicate and engage with their audience, try and the develop their art form in novel ways while in turn developing themselves as artists and finally maintain a close relevance with their community. The most important concept within artistic vibrancy was the idea of regular self-assessment. To facilitate this Du Preez, Bailey and their team developed a self-reflection tool-kit which offers a variety of methods by which an organisation can examine itself and measure its artistic vibrancy.

As I began working with the tool, adjusting certain parts to make it fit with the broad spectrum of activities undertaken by the Galway Community Circus, I noticed something missing. I was tailoring the kit's methods used to analyse audience response in order to account for our member's satisfaction with the circus classes when I realised there was very little room for emotion. There was a strong focus on feelings of value for money, position among peers and relevance to a community, but the actual emotional impact of the work undertaken by an arts organisation was missing.

This stood out to me as an important issue, not only for the overall quality of data submitted for the report, but because having had the opportunity to work and spend time with the members of the GCC I knew that the circus had a significant impact on their emotional lives. I had heard a great deal of anecdotal evidence to suggest that the fun they had at circus, the pride they had in their achievements and the happiness they experienced while training was one of the main reasons they returned week after week, year after year. Parents told to me how often their children would report positive stories about their time at circus and how that encouraged them to spread the word to other parents and as to why they felt no qualms about paying for performances, cabarets or class fees.

In order to fulfil the brief of the project, the emotional effect of the circus needed to be measured. This had less to do with providing a holistic or sensitive account of the circus' work and more to do with accurately tracing and representing what I held to be a key component in the circus' recent success. But I needed a way of documenting this anecdotal evidence in terms that would correspond with the artistic vibrancy self-reflection kit and be palatable to the board of directors, key stakeholders and funding bodies.

The artistic vibrancy system gave me a framework and a starting point but I had to develop an extra element beyond the five listed above in order to capture the emotional impact, as well as the artistic vibrancy, of the GCC. To do this I needed to do three things. Firstly, to find out how the members of

Galway Community Circus actually felt. Secondly, to document these feelings in a way that showed a relationship with the performance of Galway Community Circus. Thirdly, to find a conceptual framework that supported the putative relationship between those activities and the emotional responses of the members.

The need for a clear conceptual framework comes down, quite simply, to funding. At a recent meeting of the Caravan network¹ EU ministers sketched out the goals and ideals for the €16 billion youth development scheme *Erasmus +*². One of this programme's primary goals was to improve the well-being of young people in the EU. If this project can document a statistical relationship between a certain approach to teaching youth circus and the well-being of young people then an argument can be made to maintain or increase funding and as such help organisations like Galway Community Circus carry on their work. Unfortunately well-being, and other related terms, are spoken of freely and regularly without satisfying definitions. In order to ensure the best possible argument in favour of youth circus training as a positive force in the well-being of young people I needed to find a strong and stable definition for well-being. Aristotle's *eudaimonia* was determined to be the most suitable definition for this current project.

To explain, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle discusses and analyses the best life that a person can lead. The term he uses to describe this life-lived-as-well-as-can-be is *eudaimonia*. Regularly, *eudaimonia* is translated as happiness or flourishing. Both of these translations work, but they require some explanation. For example, Ackrill writes "eudaimonia ... is a life, enjoyable and worthwhile all the way through" (Ackrill 1980 p19). This explanation of *eudaimonia* captures some crucial aspects of the concept. *Eudaimonia* is happiness, and flourishing, but as an end in itself and not as a means to an end. It is a way of living not the goal of a life. It is a process not a product. Overall, it should be thought of as living well, or for my purposes well-being. Ackrill also comments on this when he writes "eudaimonia is constituted by activities that are ends in themselves" (Ackrill 1980 p19). *Eudaimonia* isn't the product of activities; rather, it is the activities and these activities must be done well. For any activity there is a better and worse way to do it. The success or failure of each activity is determined by the goal of each activity, so what is the best way for a surgeon to act is based on the success of the operation whereas what is best for a construction worker is the creation of a safe and sturdy building. If all the activities of a life are performed excellently, that life will be *eudaimonia*.

¹ The CARAVAN network is an association of 12 international circus schools whose objective is to promote circus practices in youth education throughout Europe and to favour their development, through concrete actions such as youth exchanges and training for trainers.

² <http://eu2013.ie/news/news-items/20130626erasmuspluspren/>

The function that eudaimonia needs to perform in this study two-fold. Firstly, from a purely pragmatic perspective it is helpful to have a term that is more precise than happiness or well-being and also has a rich history of study and conceptual elucidation behind it. This means that while it is not in the common parlance there is a great deal of texts and information about it, so should someone desire to know more about it, they can do so very easily.

It should be pointed out that eudaimonia is a term that is still the subject of frequent heated debate among Aristotle scholars; in this project eudaimonia will only be used in a very limited way. My concern is not to explain how we are to reach eudaimonia, but rather the exact opposite. My argument is that the members of Galway Community Circus flourish feel happy and are fulfilled by the activities undertaken by the organisation. I can best describe this relationship between action and emotional response in terms of eudaimonia; if eudaimonia is a complex life-long process then their experiences in the circus form one component of it. If this argument is correct then there will be a relationship between what activities the members undertake, how they undertake them, and the emotional effect these activities have. To put it simply, the study will try to show that there will be a significant relationship between self-reported activities engaged in and self-reported experience of happiness and positive emotions. If I can document this relationship then I can explain to funders, like the board of Erasmus +, that youth circus' like Galway Community Circus contribute positively to the well-being of young people without relying on feelings or intuitions but instead backing up my claim with solid statistical data.

I designed a study that would run concurrently with the larger community impact study to test this hypothesis and support the argument I want to make

METHODOLOGY

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the study were drawn randomly from the current membership of Galway Community Circus. Participation was voluntary and the sample was made up of 33 members aged between 5 and 20 years of age. Of those 33, 11 were male and 22 were female. This ratio, while unequal, accurately reflects the overall gender balance of the youth circus. Ten were aged between 5 and 7, five were aged between 8 and 11, nine were aged between 12 and 14 and seven were aged between 15 and 20.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Given the broad range of ages within the sample, the materials and methods used to record participant's experiences would need to be different and age appropriate. For the eldest group the simplest approach could be taken. As young adults there was little concern about the veracity of their responses or their willingness to help. An online questionnaire was made available through a private online social-network group for 14 days and responses were drawn within that time. For the younger teens, it was decided that face-to-face paper questionnaires were to be made available for voluntary completion during before and after their class time. This allowed for more immediate responses and avoided any concerns respecting their online privacy. For the 8 to 11 year olds we decided to have a panel discussion which was recorded. The thinking behind this was down to the fact that that age group have a lot to say, but many are reluctant to answer written questions as it is too closely related to school work and causes concerns over answering 'correctly'. With the youngest group I designed a series of games based on multiple choice questions. This allowed them to choose answers without having to read or write.

PROCEDURE

One of the major problems faced by this study was its reliance on the community impact study. It was this larger, simpler project that gave rise to and enabled the present study. But as the time frame and research team for the present study were so limited the procedures had to be designed in such a way as to work well for both the community impact report and the measuring happiness study.

The solution was to design both the report and the present study in such a way that the data could be read in detail for each group of stakeholders (staff, members, volunteers etc.) and then each age group within the members, while at the same time, the results from the different member age groups could be coded to be read as being representative of the general membership. This was achieved by making each set of questions follow the same narrative.

The questions posed to the senior members became like a template and for each group a simplification of the phrasing occurred. This meant that there may be a stark difference between the questions posed to the young and oldest members but the results could be coded in the exact same way. This enabled the results to reflect the spectrum of ages of participants. For example, a senior member would have been surveyed about the regularity of which they perform a specific set of aerial techniques in class whereas a junior member would have been asked how regularly they climb and balance. This allowed for greater detail in the dominant community impact report and easier codification of results for the satellite emotional study.

RESULTS

To explore the relationship between expressed happiness and performed activities, categorical responses were obtained and coded using SPSS software. Initially, in order to calculate expressed happiness, responses to the question “Which of these words describe the feeling of learning something new at circus?” were coded by two independent researchers depending on whether or not they contained positive emotions or feelings (Fulfilled, Successful, Like I have achieved something, Better than I did before, Part of a team, Accomplished, Happy, Like I have done something valuable). However, a ceiling effect was observed in the data, whereby all responses involved positive comments. A similar observation was made when coding for activities. Initially, the aim was to code responses based on whether or not participants mentioned particular activities, yet a ceiling effect was observed here whereby all participants reported engaging in these tasks. Thus all participants reported both positive emotions and the same activities, limiting the variance in the data and inhibiting the ability to explore the relationship between the two variables.

Rather than inferring a level of happiness or a level of activity from closed question responses, the decision was made to test the reverse / opposite hypothesis. This meant that instead of exploring the relationship between happiness and activity, the research explored the relationship between self-reported negative emotions and reported inactivity. To derive this information from participant responses, researchers coded the data to identify where participants reported experiencing negative emotions (e.g. fed-up, bored...) and where they reported periods of inactivity (hanging around, waiting). Each of these variables was coded dichotomously as “featured” or “not featured”.

To explore the relationship between negative expression and inactivity, a Chi square test of Independence was conducted. This identified a significant relationship between negative expression and inactivity (see table X). That is, significantly more participants that mentioned inactivity also mentioned negative emotion, than we would expect by chance. Thus expression of negative emotion is significantly related to reporting inactivity during the circus time.

Table X

Expressed / Remembered? Emotion	Mentioned some Inactivity (waiting)	Only Mentioned Activities	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
All Positive	6 (17%)	22 (61%)	8.036	1	.005**
Some Negative (fed up, bored)	6 (17%)*	2 (6%)			

*std. res = 2, thus this cell departs significantly from chance

**statistically significant

% = % of total sample

While this may suggest that inactivity allows for negative emotions to be experienced, it is possible that this is merely an artefact of the design and methods. These are self-report measures and so it is possible that the observed findings merely identified that some participants are more likely to remember and report these negative aspects. In order to explore this further, a similar Chi square test of Independence was conducted to test the relationship between expression of negative emotion and self-reported expectation of activity in the circus. This test identified no significant relationship between negative expression and expectation (see table y). That is, there was no relationship between the expression of some negative emotion and the expectation of inactivity in the circus. Thus, all participants enter the circus with the same positive expectations, regardless of whether they expressed negative emotions after the circus.

Table Y

Expectation	Mentioned some Inactivity (waiting)	Only Mentioned Activities	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
All Positive	8 (22%)	19 (53%)	.667	1	.414
Some Negative (fed up, bored)	4 (11%)	5 (14%)			

% = % of total sample

DISCUSSION

These preliminary findings revealed a ceiling effect. This could be seen as a problem but what they actually show is that a high majority of the participants surveyed reported strong feelings of happiness as being primary among their responses to the circus. This means that the overall intuition behind the study is backed up by the data but the usefulness of those results are very limited. With positive responses to similar activities across the board we're left with a situation that these may just be people with a positive outlook who partake in the activities and there is no relationship between the activities and the emotional responses. So to try and pursue the goal of the study we had to reverse the analysis and seek out occasions where negative emotional responses were reported. This is not to say that we had to find people who reported being unhappy at circus, but rather those whose positive emotional responses (happy, successful, better than I felt before) were reported alongside negative, or less positive emotional responses (such as bored, fed up or angry).

There were a smaller number of participants who gave negative emotional responses (listed above) but these participants also reported moments of inactivity at circus. So while almost all participants reported positive emotional responses, and listed similar activities, a much smaller number also gave negative emotional responses but they also listed passive activities such as waiting, hanging around or messing. This shows that there is something of a correlation between not feeling and positive and not partaking fully in the usual activities. For example, we can think of an instance where certain participants found themselves to be bored or fed up because they had to wait to do aerial or acrobatics, which could suggest that if they had been able to partake in the activity they wanted to unimpeded that they would have felt more positively.

However, we wanted to ensure that the participants who responded more negatively just didn't enjoy the circus as much as those who reported more positively. To explore this issue we examined the expectations of all the participants. We wanted to see what they expected when they came to circus. An interesting result from this question was that there was no significant relationship between those who offered negative responses and those who expected less from circus. This would suggest that all the participants came to circus expecting similarly positive experiences and it was only those who found access to their usual activities impeded that gave more negative emotional responses. At this stage, these results go a long way to support our hypothesis and suggest further study.

Australia Council for the Arts



Artistic vibrancy

Self-reflection tool

Artistic vibrancy

Self-reflection tool

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Publication: December 2009
Author: Jackie Bailey

Other resources


This paper may be read in conjunction with a set of resources on the Australia Council for the Arts website which we hope will be useful for companies thinking about how to evaluate their artistic vibrancy. They are:


- [*“Tell me honestly...”: good practice case studies of artistic self-assessment in performing arts organisations*](#) - a set of Australian and international examples of companies which have made artistic self-assessment a meaningful and useful process for them, and how they did it
- [*Meaningful measurement: a review of the literature about measuring artistic vibrancy*](#) - for the research enthusiasts, a comprehensive literature review of the academic research in this area
- [*Defining artistic vibrancy: a discussion paper*](#) - a look at what artistic vibrancy means, and the traits of an artistically vibrant company

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Introduction

“Artistic vibrancy” includes artistic excellence, audience stimulation, innovation, development of artists and community relevance. For a more detailed discussion of the definition of “artistic vibrancy,” please see *Defining artistic vibrancy: a discussion paper for the major performing arts sector*, on the Australia Council for the Arts website.

Companies can measure their own artistic vibrancy through artistic self-assessment. There are a variety of processes which companies use to help them know if they are on track in terms of artistic vibrancy. There is no one-size-fits-all way for a company to assess its own artistic vibrancy. However, we hope that the attached “self-reflection tool” provokes conversation and exploration by companies.

Who should use the self-reflection tool?

The “self-reflection tool” is intended for use by arts organisations and their boards. It provides detailed suggestions for ways to monitor, reflect upon and evaluate artistic vibrancy.

How was the self-reflection tool developed?

The tool was developed using the input from performing arts companies and the available research on performance measurement in the arts, which can be reviewed in the separate paper *Meaningful measurement: a review of the literature about measuring artistic vibrancy*.

Companies seemed to agree that artistic self-assessment is a multi-faceted process, which cannot rely too heavily on any one stakeholder view, be it the audience, peer, critic, staff, artists or funding body’s views. Processes which companies pointed to as being genuinely useful and meaningful in the self-assessment process included:

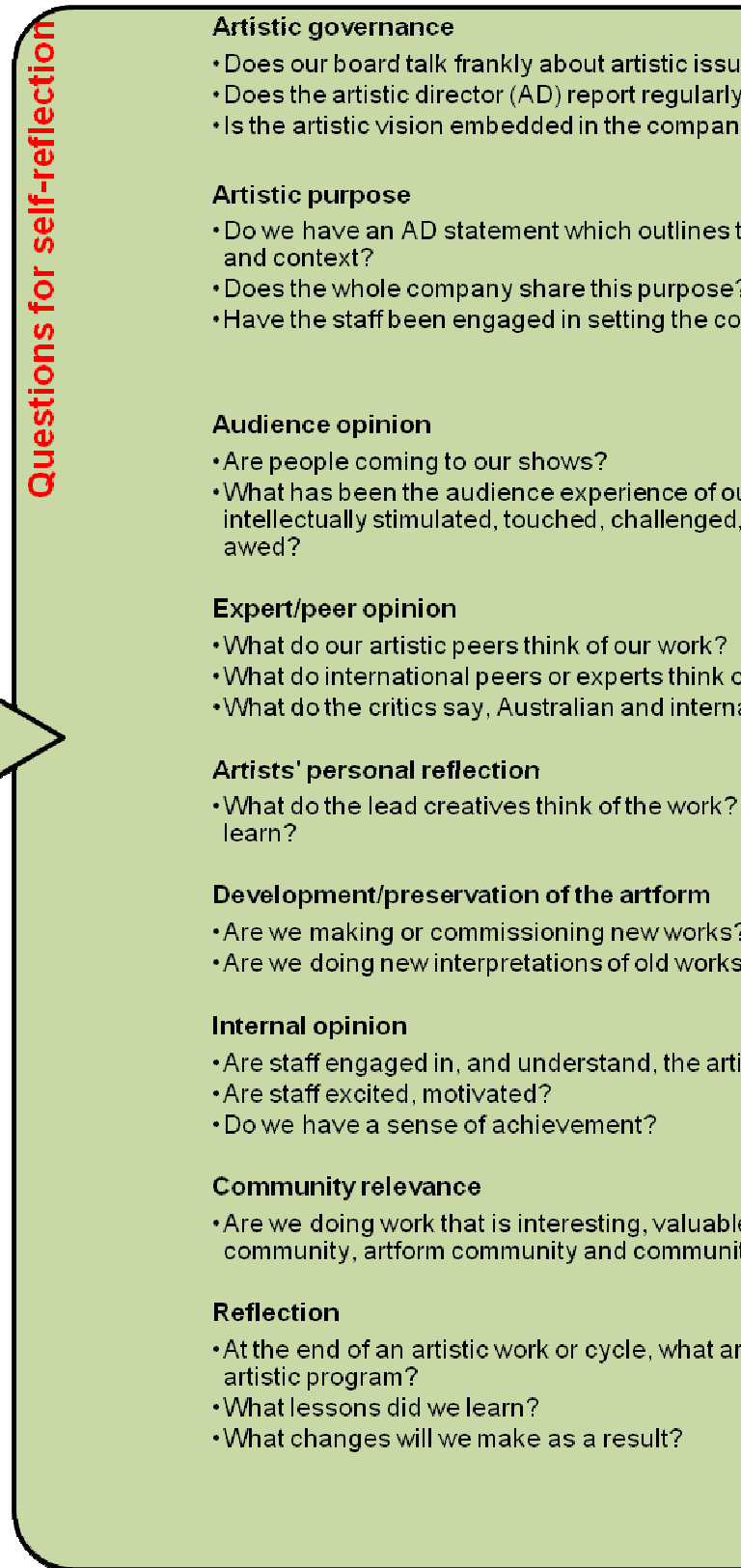
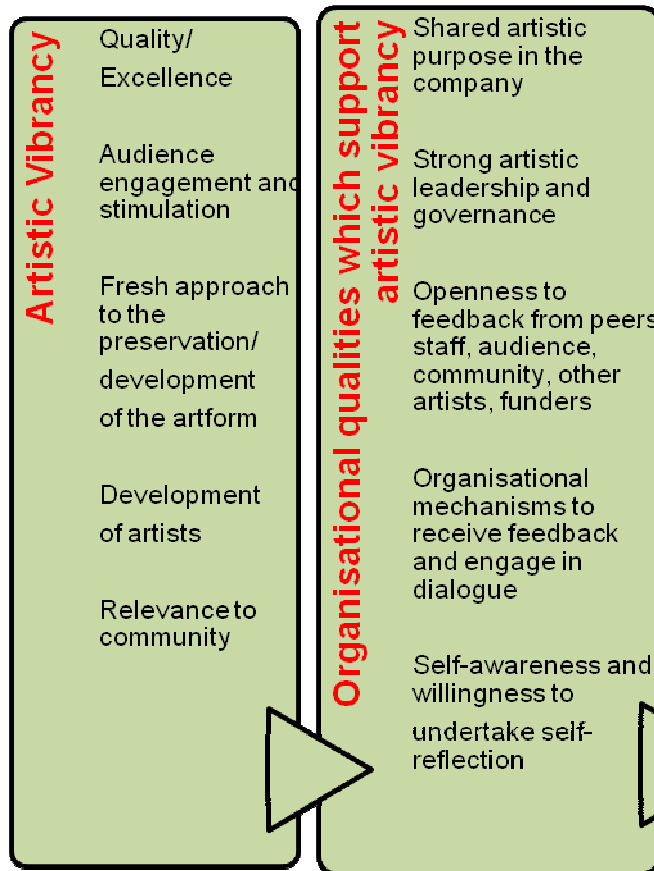
- an artistic director statement at the outset of a planning cycle, which sets out what the company is going to try and achieve and gives the company and other stakeholders with a basis for assessment
- open and frank dialogue about artistic matters amongst the board and staff, including regular artistic director reports to the board
- staff consultation and engagement in artistic decision-making
- artist consultation and engagement in artistic decision-making
- identifying peers to review the company’s work
- peer review, including international experts where a company’s peers are internationally-based
- active consultation with communities, to ensure community relevance
- audience surveys, including surveys to uncover impact on the audience
- an artistic director statement at the end of the cycle which talks about what lessons have been learned from self-assessment, and how these lessons will be incorporated into the next planning cycle

Testing the tool

We will be testing the tool with a group of companies during 2010. Their feedback, including what works, what doesn't work and what else might be useful, will be incorporated into a new draft of the tool at the end of the test period.

Who can I contact for more information?

We invite comments, feedback, criticism and suggestions on this tool and the other resources provided. Please direct your views to Jackie Bailey on j.bailey@australiacouncil.gov.au or Ph: 02 9215 9000 or Toll free: 1800 226 912.



Changes to the future artistic plan

Australia Council for the Arts



Meaningful measurement

A review of the literature about measuring artistic vibrancy

Meaningful measurement

A review of the literature about measuring artistic vibrancy

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Publication: December 2009
Author: Jackie Bailey

Other resources


This paper may be read in conjunction with a set of resources on the Australia Council for the Arts website which we hope will be useful for companies thinking about how to evaluate their artistic vibrancy. They are:


- [Defining artistic vibrancy: a discussion paper](#) - a look at what artistic vibrancy means, and the traits of an artistically vibrant company
- ["Tell me honestly...": good practice case studies of artistic self-assessment in performing arts organisations](#) - a set of Australian and international examples of companies which have made artistic self-assessment a meaningful and useful process, and how they did it
- ["Artistic vibrancy: self-reflection tool"](#) - a set of questions and tools to help performing arts organisations and their boards evaluate their own artistic vibrancy

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Executive Summary

Meaningful Measurement is a summary of the key research in the area of measuring artistic vibrancy. It looks at:

- performance measurement in the arts
- proposed models of performance measurement in the arts
- the notion of “public value” and the arts
- the intrinsic impacts of the arts
- assessing artistic vibrancy, including models and examples

Performance measurement in the arts

Researchers agree on the following core principles of good practice in artistic performance measurement:

Commitment and leadership

Staff and management have to be committed to the process and have a genuine intention to *change* what they do on the basis of their performance assessment

Self-assessment

Assessment should be done by the company itself, but not by a single individual in the company. The company should also ask stakeholders for their assessments: staff, guest artists, funders, peers, audience, public.

Shared artistic purpose

A clear artistic statement of shared artistic purpose is the first step in establishing a meaningful artistic planning and evaluation process. Quantitative and qualitative measures can then be used to monitor whether the company has achieved its artistic goals and if not, why not and what they will do about it in the future.

Role of funding bodies

Funding bodies have a key role in influencing the focus of arts organisations’ self-assessments. Arts companies currently focus on financial assessments of performance, or quantitative measures such as audience numbers, largely because these are easy to measure. Funders have a role in shifting the current emphasis in reporting to encourage frankness about artistic aspirations, lessons learned and future plans.

Proposed models of performance measurement in the arts

Researchers have developed various models for performance measurement in the arts. The models emphasise:

- external and internal views of the organisation’s performance (eg audience, funders, artists, peers, staff)
- organisation’s ownership of the measurement process makes it meaningful
- employees and management must be engaged in the measurement process
- measures have to match the organisation’s mission

They have also found that funding bodies have a major impact on performance measurement. Funding bodies that emphasise financial reporting lead to arts organisation reports which are heavily skewed towards reporting on financial success, rather than artistic progress.

“Public value” and the arts

The notion of “public value” of the arts refers to the way in which everyday people might value the arts. The research into “public value” and ways to measure it may help practitioners looking for ways to assess an arts organisation’s community relevance, which is part of artistic vibrancy.

Intrinsic benefits of the arts

“Intrinsic benefits” of the arts include the spiritual, cognitive, emotional and social benefits of an arts experience for an individual. They are an important part of the artistic vibrancy equation, as they can help to assess an audience’s engagement and stimulation.

Assessing artistic vibrancy

There is some research into how to assess specific elements of artistic vibrancy, including:

- Audience engagement and stimulation
- Community relevance
- Innovation and excellence

Several researchers have developed specific models and tools for assessing artistic quality in opera and audience response to dance, which may also be of use in other artforms.

Guides to performance measurement for arts organisations

A number of funding agencies and philanthropic foundations have released guides to assist arts organisations with performance measurement, including self-assessment. Several examples are included in this paper.

Examples of measuring artistic vibrancy

A number of funding bodies and arts organisations have developed their own approaches to measuring artistic vibrancy. These examples might be useful for those looking at developing their own system of meaningful measurement.

1. Introduction

“...performance assessment [in the arts] is feasible, though not easy; valuable to the organisation, though not cheap; and rewarding to the individuals in the organisation, though not comfortable.”¹

This paper is a summary of some of the key research about how to measure artistic vibrancy.

There has been limited research on this issue. Most of the literature comes from arts management, with some researchers working in cognitive psychology and sociology. Turbide and Laurin, who conducted a survey of non-profit arts companies in relation to performance measurement, noted that:¹

- the research literature in this area is limited, and mostly looks at how non-profits should measure performance as opposed to how they actually do it
- researchers are still struggling with the definition of performance for non-profit organisations and governance practices which would improve performance
- the performance of non-profit organisations is an area still to be explored

Therefore, this paper is limited to what the researchers have looked at. This includes:

- performance measurement in the arts
- notions of value and the benefits of the arts
- ways to measure artistic vibrancy
- other findings which are relevant to artistic vibrancy

A note about definitions

This paper uses a working definition of artistic vibrancy, which includes:

- artistic excellence
- audience engagement and stimulation
- innovation in the preservation or development of the artform
- artist development
- community relevance

This definition is based on consultation with the Australian performing arts sector, the literature contained in this paper, and the separate discussion paper “Artistic vibrancy discussion paper,” Australia Council for the Arts.

¹ Turbide, Johanne and Laurin, Claude, “Performance measurement in the arts sector: the case of the performing arts,” *International Journal of Arts Management*, 11(2) Winter 2009, pp. 56-70 at p. 58; Forbes, D.P., “Measuring the unmeasurable: empirical studies of nonprofit organisation effectiveness from 1977 to 1997,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 27(2), pp.183-202, 1998.

2. Performance Measurement In The Arts

Key points

Researchers agree on the following core principles of good practice in artistic performance measurement:

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2.1 The development of performance measurement in the arts

“There is really not much point in an arts organisation deciding to devote resources to performance assessment if the top managers (or the “shop floor” workers, for that matter!) have no intention of changing what they do, if they cannot agree a way of assessing the success of what they do, if the funding bodies are wholly committed to continued funding (or no more funding), or if the staff just cannot understand or respond to the performance assessment procedures. Performance assessment is only likely to be useful to organisations (and to funding bodies seeking to impose it) if these prerequisites have already been attended to.”¹

The aim of performance measurement is to enable a company to see whether it is on track against its goals; how the company is “performing.”

Researchers originally developed performance measures for commercial, for-profit companies.² Traditional performance measures were very much focused on a company's profits.

Kaplan and Norton criticised this for being too narrow and leaving out key areas of a company's performance. They introduced the concept of the "balanced scorecard"³ which adds together:

- customers
- growth and innovation
- internal business processes
- financial perspective

According to Kaplan and Norton, these metrics, if linked to a strong organisational strategy or plan, can be used as forward-leading indicators of whether a company is on track. For example, they argued that a company's level of innovation was just as important to its overall performance as its bottom line.

Sawhill and Williamson further developed this approach. They suggested that stakeholders other than customers should also be considered. These included employees, community, governments. They contribute to an organisation's achievements, and can assess its progress against its mission.⁴

In the 1990s, academics and practitioners looking at performance measurement in non-profit organisations went even further. They argued that non-profit companies should use a "multidimensional set of indicators, primarily based on *non-financial* indicators [emphasis added]."⁵ Researchers Turbide and Laurin argued that financial indicators are not the relevant indicators of whether a non-profit organisation is achieving its mission.

2.2 The benefits of performance measurement in the arts

In the 1990s, non-profit organisations began to introduce performance measurement systems. They saw the main benefits of adopting and implementing quality systems as:

- maintaining credibility and legitimacy
- pre-empting funders' new requirements
- organisational self-reflection, learning and development⁶

Researchers have also argued that performance assessment in the arts can lead to:

- "clearer vision and sense of direction
- increased understanding of the key success factors in the organisation
- greater feeling of achievement
- improved public image
- improved share of arts funding"⁷

² Turbide and Laurin, "Performance measurement in the arts sector: the case of the performing arts."

³ Kaplan, R.S. and Norton, D.P, "The balanced scorecard – measures that drive performance," *Harvard Business Review*, 70(1), pp71-79, 1992

⁴ Atkinson, A.A., Waterhouse, J.J. and Wells, R.B., "A stakeholder approach to strategic performance measurement," *Sloan Management Review*, 38(3), pp25-37, 1997.

⁵ Turbide and Laurin, "Performance measurement in the arts sector: the case of the performing arts," p56.

⁶ Cairns, Ben, et al, "Improving Performance?: The Adoption and Implementation of Quality Systems in U.K. Nonprofits," *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 16(2), Winter 2005, pp. 135-51, p.141.

⁷ Keens, William, "The Value of Evaluation: Finding Approaches that Work," *Working Paper* No.11, www.wolfbrown.com, p. ii

According to Keens, performance evaluation gives an arts organisation more “knowledge, self-assurance and ability to improve in the future.”⁸ After interviews with arts leaders, he wrote that performance evaluation means that:

- organisational planning and programming are grounded in an understanding of what works
- the true return on investment is clearer, which helps to build a stronger case for support

According to Keens, poor evaluations result from:

- too much reliance on quantitative rather than qualitative measurement
- lessons learned don’t accumulate in the wider field, so every subsequent program design seems to re-invent the wheel

Keens’ interviewees stressed the following:

An evaluation is not about auditioning for more funding. It’s about the hard work of improvement

- Funders should make it clear that an evaluation report is not an “audition for the next round of funding,” but that they “value an honest appraisal of the positives and negatives of a grantee’s experience”⁹
- Funders should involve grantee organisations when developing the evaluation, to make sure the evaluation is valuable to them.
- Many organisations approach evaluation as “simply as a means of securing a (hopefully good) grade for their activities. But meaningful evaluation should engage all stakeholders in the hard – but essential – work of improvement.”¹⁰

Evaluation improves an organisation’s programs because it makes them accountable for their decisions

- Evaluation helps organisations to strengthen programs because they have to “go after the reasons beneath the choices we made” and go beyond the “stars in kids’ eyes as our only measure of accountability.”¹¹

Evaluation should be done by audience and peers

- It’s important to involve partners in the evaluation process. “When evaluating our programs, we find it critical that the artistic work is genuine and authentic. What better way to do so than to engage [students and teachers] not only in the process of making art, but in the assessment process as well.”¹²

Arts organisations need to know if they are on track

⁸ Keens, William, “The Value of Evaluation: Finding Approaches that Work,” p.2.

⁹ Elizabeth T Miller, Director, New Ventures in Philanthropy, Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, as cited in Keens, William, “The Value of Evaluation: Finding Approaches that Work,” p.4. Emphasis added.

¹⁰ Dr Dennie Palmer Wolf, “Evaluation as more than a report card,” *Sounding Board: Perspectives on Nonprofit Strategies by WolfBrown*, Vol 21. Emphasis added.

¹¹ Gigi Antoni, Director of Big Thought, as cited in Keens, William, “The Value of Evaluation: Finding Approaches that Work.” She established an area of the organisation devoted to evaluation and accountability.

¹² David Dik, Managing Director, Metropolitan Opera Guild, as cited in Keens, William, “The Value of Evaluation: Finding Approaches that Work.”

- “We do not try to claim that the arts are different when it comes to demonstrating effectiveness...We ask: “How will you know you are moving in the right direction and making progress towards the results you seek? How will you measure change?”¹³

2.3 Limitations of performance measurement in the arts

Researchers have also identified the limitations of the qualitative measures used by non-profit performing arts companies.

According to Cavaluzzo and Ittner,¹⁴ the factors limiting the development of performance measurement systems in non-profit organisations include:

- difficulty of measuring qualitative outcomes
- lack of technological capability to generate timely information
- weak management commitment
- lack of employee training

Cairns et al, in a study of American and Canadian arts institutions, found that the main limitations of performance measurement were:

- confusion over the multitude of systems, what value each one has, and how to decide which one to use¹⁵
- organisations may be required to use a particular system but do not feel that it relates well to their objectives, way of working, or size
- there is a danger that performance measurement is a matter of just ticking boxes
- most study participants, especially those from smaller organisations, felt that implementation of quality systems had been impeded by lack of staff time and other resources

In their research, the picture emerged of companies using quality systems to satisfy funders, rather than as a “product of customer orientation or as an effective route to goal achievement.”¹⁶

Bovaird notes that inappropriate performance assessment may be “damaging, resulting in:

- unreliable information
- escalating and largely unjustified claims about achievement
- wasted resource inputs in the assessment process
- misinterpretation of performance information by funding bodies and other interested parties
- wholesale discrediting of the process in the eyes of all concerned.”¹⁷

¹³ Moy Eng, program director, performing arts, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, as cited in Keens, William, “The Value of Evaluation: Finding Approaches that Work.”

¹⁴ Cavaluzzo, K.S, and C.D Ittner, “Implementing performance measurement innovations: evidence from government,” *Accounting, Organisations and Society*, 29(3/4), pp.243-267, 2004.

¹⁵ Cairns, et al, “Improving Performance?” p.142.

¹⁶ Cairns et al, “Improving Performance?” p.148.

¹⁷ Cairns et al, “Improving Performance?” p.148.

3. Proposed models of performance measurement in the arts

Key points

Researchers have developed various models for performance measurement in the arts. The models emphasise:

- external and internal views of the organisation's performance (eg audience, funders, artists, peers, staff)
- organisation's ownership of the measurement process makes it meaningful
- employees and management must be engaged in the measurement process
- measures have to match the organisation's mission

They have also found that funding bodies have a major impact on performance measurement. Funding bodies that emphasise financial reporting lead to arts organisation reports which are heavily skewed towards reporting on financial success, rather than artistic progress.

This chapter looks at:

- models of performance measurement in the arts
- funding bodies role in performance measurement
- difficulties in assessing artistic excellence

3.1 Models of performance measurement in the arts

Researchers have developed a number of models to measure performance in the arts. Each model emphasises different key issues, such as stakeholder views, or staff engagement in the process.

Model 1: stakeholders are paramount (Turbide and Laurin)

Turbide and Laurin suggest that one way to think about why a company evaluates performance, and how, is to ask the question: who do I have responsibility to?

- my board
- funders
- community
- other artists
- my employees

These are the stakeholders whom an arts organisation might consult in working out how it has performed in relation to its organisation's strategy and performance indicators such as:¹⁸

- artistic achievement
- audience satisfaction
 - satisfaction with programming
 - satisfaction with services provided
 - audience growth

¹⁸ This is a direct excerpt from Turbide and Laurin, "Performance measurement in the arts sector: the case of the performing arts." For more details and sub-categories, see p.65.

- funder satisfaction
 - satisfaction of funding organisations
 - appreciation of donor
 - growth in sponsorship and donations
- employee satisfaction
 - time spent on project management
 - satisfaction of f/t employees
 - satisfaction of p/t employees
 - satisfaction of artists
 - satisfaction of volunteers
- financial management
 - cost control of productions
 - revenues and expenses
 - actual results vs budget
- growth and competitiveness
 - market share
 - new programming (innovation)
 - return on advertising costs
- image and reputation
 - image within the artistic community
 - image in community at large

Model 2: leadership is critical (Kushner and Poole)

A company's "effectiveness" has four elements:

- satisfying audiences, donors and volunteers
- identifying and obtaining financial and human resources
- organising resources to present art performances
- achieving the program's objectives

Kushner and Poole tested their model by collecting information from 19 performing arts organisations. They found that the most effective were those where employees were highly engaged in monitoring the organisation's effectiveness. They recommend that managers create structures which promote this kind of engagement.¹⁹

Model 3: performance evaluation as a defence (Gilhespy)

To "protect" non-profit organisations against adverse performance evaluation by funders, organisations should evaluate:

- measures of artistic excellence
- innovation
- social cohesion
- public attendance
- financial objectives

¹⁹ Kushner, R. and Poole, P., "Exploring arts organisations," *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 7(2), pp119-136, 1996.

Model 4: mission statements matter (Krug and Weinberg)²⁰

A good performance measurement system in the arts has three elements:

- contribution to mission
- contribution to money
- contribution to merit

Krug and Weinberg tested their model in eight American and Canadian art institutions and found that arts companies' decision-making would only be effective if the companies:

- expose managerial assumptions
- conduct more rigorous measurements
- fix "fuzzy" mission statements, inadequate financial systems and overly subjective (or absent) performance evaluations

Model 5: self-determination (Cairns et al)

Cairns et al emphasise staff commitment for a quality management system to work. According to the researchers, quality management needs to be "fully integrated into strategic planning processes, work plans, and organisational reviews."²¹ Effective implementation is more likely to take place in organisations with leaders who are committed to the selected system and can act as quality champions.²²

The extent to which a system is perceived as useful depends on:

- the ability of the non-profit to make a choice about adopting a quality system
- the ability to choose or negotiate the use of a system that complements existing organisational culture and systems
- the allocation of dedicated resources to implementation
- the performance improvement system needs to be context sensitive and have a clarity of purpose

Model 6: focus on customer (Tony Bovaird)

Bovaird lists core principles of a package of "total quality management" for an arts organisation as follows:

- standards are to be set by the customers/clients, not by the professionals
- there is no acceptable reason for failing to deliver customer satisfaction
- the process of serving the customer/client is often as important as the actual service delivered
- everyone in the organisation has a role in monitoring customer satisfaction and suggesting ways of enhancing it
- a quality management system must have explicit, clear standards which are monitored, reported and acted upon
- the costs (financial, organisational and social) of providing and rectifying low quality are higher in the long run than then costs of providing high quality.

According to Bovaird,²³ self-assessment of performance indicators is more valuable as a learning process and more reliable than external assessment, when it is done by the

²⁰ Krug, K. and Weinberg, C.B., "Mission, money and merit: strategic decision making by nonprofit managers," *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 14(3) pp325-342, 2004.

²¹ Cairns et al, "Improving Performance?" p.145.

²² Cairns et al, "Improving Performance?" p.146.

²³ Bovaird, "Performance Assessment," p.28.

people who will have to implement any changes resulting from the information. However, some regular external audit of performance indicator information is essential and some external consultancy support for performance assessment procedures may be valuable, at least occasionally.

Measuring artistic excellence

In relation to measuring artistic excellence, Bovaird notes that assessments must be done by the appropriate stakeholders according to appropriate expectations, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. For example, if the artistic activity is a work-in-development, the appropriate stakeholders to assess its merit may be the staff of the company or the peer group in the artistic community, and funders would adjust their expectations accordingly.

In measuring an arts organisation's effectiveness, Bovaird suggests measuring:

- "Throughput," which refers to the number of people affected by the activity (total audience, participants); and
- "Impact," which refers to the quality of experience given by the activity

According to Bovaird, effectiveness = throughput x average impact.

Throughput indicators:

- Audience numbers
 - Throughput of target group members
 - % of throughput accounted for by target group members
 - % of target group members who attended the activity
- Number of people indirectly affected by the activity
 - % of indirectly affected people who are target group members

Impact indicators:

- Changes in client state as a result of the experience [this is where Brown's research comes in]
 - Increased enjoyment
 - Increased cultural appreciation
 - Increased educational standards of achievement
 - Improved psychological state
- Changes in welfare if indirectly affected people
 - Increased economic growth through "happier" workforce
 - Increased employment and earnings through inward investment and tourism attracted by arts activities
 - Increased sense of pride in local area
 - Enhanced confidence (on part of non-attenders) in the availability of future arts activities
 - Enriched local, regional, national or other ethnic culture
- Levels of client satisfaction
 - % of attenders responding favourably to surveys
 - % of repeat visitors
 - Level of excess demand
 - Willingness to pay²⁴

²⁴ Bovaird, "Performance Assessment," pp.15-17.

3.2 The role of funding agencies in performance measurement in the arts

Turbide and Laurin found that funding agencies have a major impact on the way companies focus their evaluative efforts. If a funding agency over-emphasises financial and budgeting performance over measures of artistic quality, arts managers will similarly skew their performance measures to finances over mission fulfilment.²⁵

Turbide and Laurin surveyed three hundred organisations in Quebec to uncover how they managed performance. The researchers found that financial monitoring was more widespread than artistic monitoring, even though the overwhelming majority of companies noted artistic achievement as their key mission. This may be because financial monitoring is easier than artistic monitoring, and that, although respondents thought artistic achievement was their main goal, they were attracted to measuring results which were easier to understand and compare.

Turbide and Laurin also found that companies monitored performance indicators in the following order:

1. Financial management
2. Artistic achievement
3. Audience satisfaction
4. Funder satisfaction
5. Donor and promoter satisfaction
6. Employees and volunteers satisfaction

(Market competition was not explicitly monitored.)

The researchers asked companies what performance indicators they used, and found that the most popular perspective is financial, followed by artistic achievement and audience satisfaction. Only 20% of respondents measured performance related to internal processes.²⁶

3.3 Difficulties in evaluating artistic excellence

Bovaird discusses three ways in which an arts company may evaluate artistic excellence, and their limitations.²⁷

Assessed by a charismatic leader

Charismatic leadership expects *by definition* to be unquestioned. This method makes it almost impossible for a funding body to monitor artistic excellence. The funder could still decide whether the organisation's results are aligned with (the funder's) current and future objectives. However, the funder should not "pretend to influence the funded organisation; and artistic directors should not claim substantial public funding as *of right* since there is not intention of making an effort to meet the criteria of funders."²⁸

²⁵ Turbide and Laurin, "Performance measurement in the arts sector: the case of the performing arts," p. 61.

²⁶ Turbide and Laurin, "Performance measurement in the arts sector: the case of the performing arts," p.67.

²⁷ Bovaird, "Performance Assessment," p.18.

²⁸ Bovaird, "Performance Assessment," p.19.

Assessed on the basis of the stars the company can attract

This method entails relying on the opinion of so-called “high quality/best” people in the sector as to whether they lend an arts company legitimation by agreeing to perform with them. The logical extension of this approach is that the public funder could simply give the public subsidy to, for example, Carreras, Pavarotti and others and they would be allowed to allocate it to whichever companies and for whatever programs they liked.

Assessed by audience and peers

Only considering peers’ views would be too narrow, whilst only considering the audience would be too market-biased. Bovaird notes that, if a funder were to judge a company solely by audience rates, there would be no point in providing subsidy at all.

4. Measuring the “public value” of the arts

Key points

The notion of “public value” of the arts refers to the way in which everyday people might value the arts. The research into “public value” and ways to measure it may help practitioners looking for ways to assess an arts organisation’s community relevance, which is part of artistic vibrancy.

4.1 Notions of value

There are three dimensions of “value”, according to John Holden and John Knell (leading UK proponents of “public value”):

Economic value

Holden defines economic value as “the extent to which something enhances or detracts from our well-being. Something has economic value if its benefits to the well-being of society ... are greater than or outweigh its costs. Though it encompasses commercial value ... economic value is not restricted to values that are revealed through markets. The full schema of economic value incorporates commercial (or market) value; use values not captured within markets; and non-use values .²⁹”

Non-use values

“Non-use values” are “highly significant for the funding of culture, given that so much cultural value rests on the preservation of assets, practices, knowledge or locations through which it can or could be created in the future.”³⁰ Non-use, cultural value includes:

- historical value
- social value
- symbolic value
- aesthetic value
- existence value
- option value
- bequest value
- spiritual value

“If one accepts the need for arts organisations to be genuinely committed to user engagement and participation, it would be perverse if this did not lead to a more concerted effort to measure their impact, and user satisfaction, through a public value approach. Crucially, uncoupled from crude instrumentalism, and short-term assessments driven by funding rounds, **this approach might actually allow us to get closer to a real, diverse understanding of what the arts ‘do to people, what people can ‘do’ to the arts’**” [emphasis added]¹

Public Value

According to Knell, “For something to be of value it is not enough for citizens to say that it is desirable. It is only of value if citizens – either individually or collectively – are *willing to give something up in return for it*, such as money, time, or by disclosing private information (eg in return for more personalised information/services). The key things which citizens

²⁹ Holden, John, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of cultural policy*, Demos, London, 2004, p.31.

³⁰ Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of cultural policy*, p.33.

value tend to fall into three, partially overlapping categories: outcomes, services and trust.”³¹

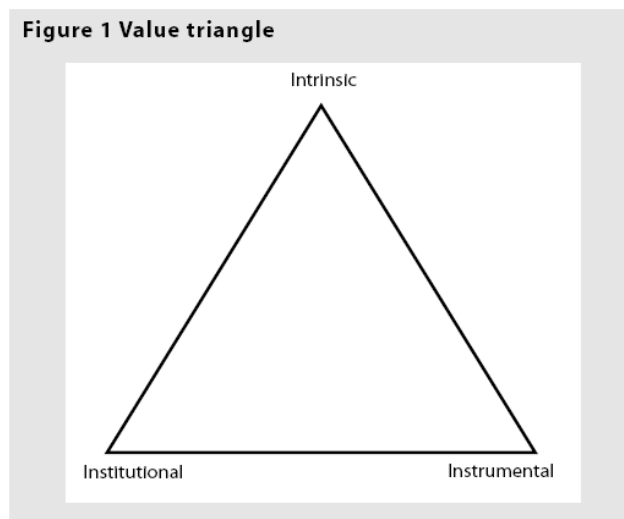
The public will attribute value to an organisation depending on:

- user satisfaction
- the degree to which an organisation is perceived to have legitimate purposes, and engages responsively with its various stakeholders

In an earlier paper for Arts Council England, Peter Hewitt suggested that arts organisations could make “more use of focus groups, consumer councils, audience reviews and ratings as part of their ongoing self-assessment...”³² Hewitt also suggested that the web could be used as a place for open discussion, but this would not be the only forum.

4.2 What the public values

Holden argues that the public values the intrinsic, institutional and instrumental value of the arts, in that order.



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Intrinsic value

According to Holden, the public, first and foremost, care about the experience they have of the arts. This refers to spiritual impact, intellectual stimulation, emotional engagement, and transcendence. Intrinsic value does not refer to ‘art for art’s sake.’ It’s about the way an individual might experience art.³⁴

Institutional value

Institutional value is the way in which an organisation creates value for the public through the ways in which it works. An organisation can create value through how they engage with their public. Institutional value can include:

³¹ Knell, John, *Whose art is it anyway?* Arts Council England, 2006. Emphasis added.

³² Hewitt, Peter, *Changing Places*, Arts Council England, 2005, p.18.

³³ Holden, John, *Cultural value and the crisis of legitimacy*, Demos, London, 2006, p 15.

³⁴ Tools for assessing the intrinsic impact of a live performance have been developed by Alan Brown and are outlined later in this paper.

“creating trust and mutual respect among citizens, enhancing the public realm, and providing a context for sociability and the enjoyment of shared experiences.”³⁵ Arts organisations, as contributors to social capital, are “creators of value in their own right....Trust in the public realm, transparency and fairness, are all values that can be generated by the institution in its dealings with the public.”³⁶

Holden posits that this is about how the public is “treated” by the arts organisation. This can include an organisation’s honesty about their performances, the quality of venues, and increasingly, the degree of public participation available.

It is also about the “rootedness that culture provides,” which Holden talks about in terms of “a sense of place and geographical location, where cultural infrastructure can anchor local identities, and in a sense of belonging to a community, either a geographical community, or a cultural community of interest.”³⁷

According to Holden,

“this concern for increasing broad public goods, this care and concern for the public, is expressed in ways both large and, seemingly, small: a commitment to showing the whole of a collection in a fine building at one end of the scale, to serving hot drinks at the other. But it is through recognising these values, and, crucially, *deciding for itself* how to generate them, that the moral purpose of an organisation becomes apparent, and where organisational rhetoric meets reality.”³⁸

Instrumental value

This refers to the impacts that the arts might have for social or economic goals, such as reduced recidivism, social inclusion, health and wellbeing. According to Holden, these outcomes of the arts are of little interest to the public, although they may be of value to policy-makers.³⁹

4.3 Public value and “The Arts Debate,” UK

Based on the idea of public value, the Arts Council England (ACE) began a major project to reform its arts funding approach. In 2006-07, it began the process with a comprehensive public consultation to find out what the British public “valued” about the arts. This was called the “Arts Debate.” It tested and developed Holden’s triangle of value.

ACE commissioned a series of public fora and focus groups, the public, artists, arts managers and other stakeholders, who were asked “what people value about the arts.” The final findings were that the arts were important to people in England in three ways:

- Capacity for life – bringing understanding, expression and others’ perspectives
- Experience of life – giving pleasure, entertainment, relaxation or solace

³⁵ Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of cultural policy*, p.17.

³⁶ Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of cultural policy*, p.17.

³⁷ Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of cultural policy*, p.17.

³⁸ Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of cultural policy*, p.17. Holden gives a number of examples of where this type of value is being measured by organisations such as the BBC: see p.18.

³⁹ See the appendix to this paper for an excerpt from Holden, *Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of cultural policy*, in which he attempts to outline measures for the various forms of value.

- Powerful applications – providing an outlet for emotions, and thus health, self-confidence and social cohesion

The “Arts Debate” showed that Holden’s triangle of value was limited. In reality, all sorts of people can value all sorts of dimensions of the arts. Public and professionals alike appreciate the multiple values of the arts.

4.4 Community relevance as part of artistic vibrancy

According to the proponents of “public value” research, arts organisations must measure relevance to their community as an integral part of their artistic vibrancy. “Community” includes:

- artform community (peers)
- local community (city, State or country)
- community of interest (teachers, students, workers)

One of the main findings of the ACE “Arts Debate” was that there was a “strong sense among many members of the public of *being excluded from something that they would like to be able to access.*”⁴⁰ The Australia Council-commissioned Saatchi report “Australians and the Arts” reported a similar finding.

Currently, some arts organisations engage in “bad” crossovers which they tolerate for funding purposes, in an approach which presupposes that the public essentially exist to be exploited: “crossovers sell, and however compromised they may be, they are a means to a higher end.”⁴¹ Holden and Seabrook challenge companies such as the so-called heritage companies such as symphony orchestras, opera and classical ballet companies. They argue that sometimes, such companies are “pretending to maintain standards but are really just preserving status.”⁴²

Holden presents the notion of the “malign” vs the “beneficent expert:” a malign expert is someone who uses their knowledge to exclude rather than inform or share a cultural product. The challenge for arts organisations is to use expert opinion in an engaging rather than exclusionary way.

Another facet of this is the notion of “democratising the arts.” This is Knell’s idea that, “in an increasingly democratic and demanding age, artists have to establish the value of what they do through a conversation with their audiences, peers and stakeholders.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Holden, John, *Democratic Culture: opening up the arts to everyone*, Demos, London, 2008, p.12.

⁴¹ Holden, *Democratic Culture: opening up the arts to everyone*, p.12.

⁴² Seabrook, John, author of *Nobrow*, as cited in Holden, *Democratic Culture: opening up the arts to everyone*, p.14.

⁴³ Leadbetter, C, *Arts organisations in the 21st century: ten challenges*, Arts Council England, 2005.

5. Intrinsic benefits of the arts

Key points

“Intrinsic benefits” of the arts include the spiritual, cognitive and emotional and social benefits of an arts experience for an individual. They are an important part of the artistic vibrancy equation, helping to assess the actual impact of art on audiences.

Several researchers emphasise the “intrinsic benefits of the arts” when measuring an arts organisation’s performance. This chapter looks at the key research in this area.

5.1 Intrinsic benefits of the arts: RAND corporation

“What draws people to the arts is not the hope that the experience will make them smarter or more self-disciplined. Instead, it is the expectation that encountering a work of art can be a rewarding experience, one that offers them pleasure and emotional stimulation and meaning.”

McCarthy et al, *Gifts of the Muse*.

The RAND corporation commissioned Kevin McCarthy et al to look at the “intrinsic benefits of the arts.”⁴⁴ In the *Gifts of the Muse* report, Kevin McCarthy et al argue that instrumental and intrinsic benefits shouldn’t be artificially separated.

According to McCarthy et al, the intrinsic benefits of the arts are satisfying in themselves, and lead to the development of individual capacities and community cohesiveness that are of benefit to the public sphere. Art is a

“...communicative cycle in which the artist draws upon two unusual gifts – a capacity for vivid personal experience of the world, and a capacity to express that experience through a particular artistic medium....Unlike most communication, which takes place through discourse, art communicates through felt experience, and it is the personal, subjective response to a work that imparts intrinsic benefits.”⁴⁵

5.2 Intrinsic benefits of the arts: Alan Brown

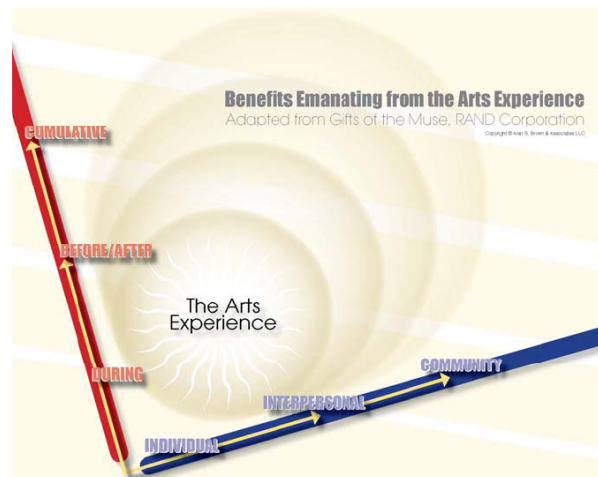
Researcher Alan Brown built on the RAND report to devise a basic scheme of the benefits of an arts experience.

According to Brown, the benefits of an arts experience can be best understood as an intersection of benefits at the individual, interpersonal (social benefits such as bonding with friends and family) and community level, which occur during the experience, before/after the experience and the benefits which accrue over time.

⁴⁴ McCarthy et al, *Gifts of the Muse*.

⁴⁵ McCarthy et al, *Gifts of the Muse*, p.xv.

Figure 1. Benefits Emanating from the Arts Experience
Adapted from *Gifts of the Muse*, RAND Corporation



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According to Brown, all the benefits which the RAND corporation *Gifts of the Muse* study identified can be captured between these two axes. These benefits are:

The “imprint” of an arts experience

This refers to the benefits which an individual receives during and immediately after an arts experience, such as captivation, spiritual awakening and aesthetic growth. Many factors influence the “imprint,” such as:

- The participant’s “readiness to receive” the art
- Quality of the experience, affected by factors such as the nature of the art, abilities of the artist, temperature in the concert hall.

Personal development

This is the growth, maturity, health, mental acuity and overall development of the person (eg character development, critical thinking and problem-solving). These sorts of benefits would normally accrue only after repeated experiences.

Human interaction

This refers to the benefits that improve relations between friends, family members, co-workers and others. Benefits could include enhanced personal relationships, family cohesion and expanded social networks, and are major motivators of participation.

Communal meaning and civic discourse

This includes benefits such as the communal meaning arising from mass participation in a holiday ritual, and those benefits which grow over time, such as preserving cultural heritage or supporting diversity.

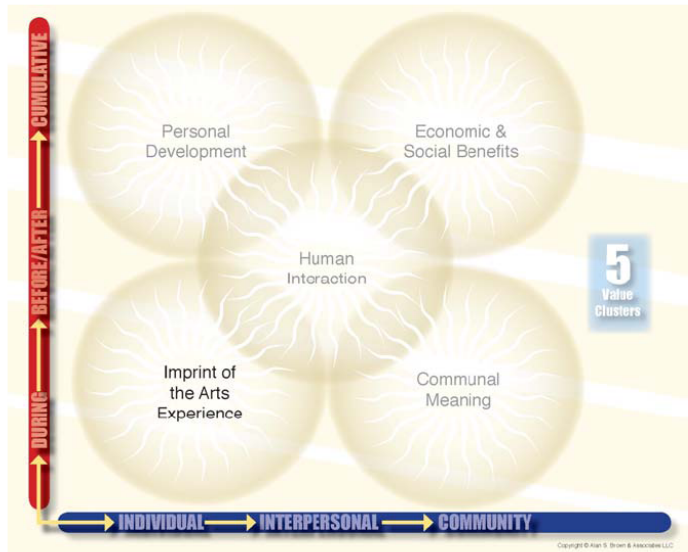
- Economic and macro-social benefits. These are second and third order benefits from sustained participation in arts, such as economic impact and civic pride or social capital.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Brown, *An architecture of value*, www.wolfbrown.com, 2006, p.19.

⁴⁷ Brown, Alan S, *An architecture of value*, p.19.

Brown adapted a second figure from the RAND report to illustrate these clusters of benefits.

Figure 2. Five Clusters of Benefits
Adapted from *Gifts of the Muse*, RAND Corporation



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Figure 3. A Map of Arts Benefits
Adapted from *Gifts of the Muse*, RAND Corporation



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Brown also noted the many factors which may affect value, including the way people participate in the art experience. He refers to five modes of arts participation identified in

⁴⁸ Brown, *An architecture of value*, p.20.

⁴⁹ Brown, *An architecture of value*, p.21.

*The Values Study, Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation.*⁵⁰ These different modes of participation will lead to different benefits. They are:

- “inventive” arts participation: engages the mind, body and spirit in artistic creation
- “interpretive” arts participation: self-expression, individual or collaborative.
- “curatorial” arts participation: selecting, organising and collecting art for one’s artistic sensibility
- “observational” arts participation: arts participating that you select or consent to do, motivated by an expectation of value of some kind
- “ambient” arts participation: experiencing art, consciously or unconsciously, as part of the world around you

⁵⁰ Brown, Alan S & Associates LLC, *The Values Study, Rediscovering the Meaning and Value of Arts Participation*, <http://www.culturandtourism.org>, commissioned by An-Ming Truxes, arts division director of the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, July 2004.

6. Assessing artistic vibrancy

Key points

There is some research into how to assess specific elements of artistic vibrancy, including:

- Audience engagement and stimulation
- Community relevance
- Innovation and excellence

6.1 Measuring audience engagement and stimulation

In 2008, Brown conducted a research project to measure the intrinsic impacts of a live performance on audience members. This project was a landmark study, the first to test and demonstrate the utility of real measures of artistic impact.⁵¹

Audience members were presented with a simple pair of questionnaires to measure their readiness-to-receive the art (in-venue, just prior to curtain) and the intrinsic impacts received from the performance (sent home with the audience member and mailed back).

The following key constructs were used:

“Readiness” constructs

- Context index: a composite picture of how much experience and knowledge an individual has about the performance and the performers.
- Relevance index: an individual’s comfort level with the performance experience
- Anticipation index: the individual’s psychological state immediately prior to the performance along a continuum from low to high expectations.

Impact constructs

- Captivation index: the degree to which an individual was engrossed and absorbed in the performance.
- Intellectual stimulation index: mental engagement, including personal and social dimensions: “cognitive traction.”
- Emotional resonance index: intensity of emotional response, degree of empathy with the performers and therapeutic value in an emotional sense
- Spiritual value index: an aspect of experience that goes beyond emotional/intellectual engagement and assesses the extent to which the respondent has a transcendent, inspiring or empowering experience
- Aesthetic growth index: the extent to which an individual was exposed to a new type or style of art, or aesthetically stretched
- Social bonding index: the extent to which the performance connected the individual with others in the audience, allowed him/her to celebrate cultural heritage or learn

⁵¹ Brown, Alan and Novak, Jennifer, *Assessing the intrinsic impacts of a live performance*, commissioned by 14 Major University Presenters, www.wolfbrown.com, January 2007.

about cultures outside of his/her life experience and left him/her with new insight on human relations.

Brown proved that intrinsic impacts derived from attending a live performance can be measured. The study confirmed that:

- different types of performances create different sets of intrinsic impacts
- an individual's "readiness-to-receive"⁵² a performing arts experience influences the nature and extent of impacts

Intrinsic impacts

Captivation

According to Brown, captivation is the "lynchpin" of impact. Attendees idealise the state of getting lost in the performance, or "going to another place." Brown empirically proved his hypothesis that factors which influence captivation include:

- Artistic quality of performance, the nature of the work of art itself
- Situational factors such as the temperature in the theatre, comfort of seating, lighting in the hall and composition and character of the audience itself (eg experience level, ability to empathise with the artist or the content)

Intellectual stimulation

42% of the study respondents left the theatres with unanswered questions that they would like to ask the performers or creators of the work. This raises the question for companies as to how they can satisfy their curiosity, and where they can go after a performance to discuss their questions, as means for deepening engagement with the audience.

A large majority of respondents discussed the meaning or merits of the performance afterwards, although only 19% had what they termed an "intense exchange." As companies turn to engagement strategies to deepen audience involvement, they may wish to use this as a useful outcome measure.

Emotional resonance

The study demonstrated that emotional resonance can be measured directly after a performance using a simple set of questions. Evidence of emotional resonance was elicited through questions around the strength of emotional response, the extent to which a respondent empathized with the performer/s and if the respondent felt the performance was emotionally therapeutic.

Spiritual value

Three questions were used to assess the intrinsic spiritual impacts of a performance, addressing the degree to which a performance was uplifting or inspiring, extent to which the respondent had a transcendent experience and extent to which the respondent left feeling empowered.

Aesthetic growth

Aesthetic growth allows for progressively deeper engagement of audiences and is the primary means of awakening new interests and unlocking additional demand. It is central to a company's long-term audience development agenda and should be a key impact area for measurement.

⁵² The audience member's expectation of an enjoyable experience was the single best predictor of a satisfying experience.

The study demonstrated that aesthetic growth occurs when:

- the works of art are new or unusual; and
- when the audience member is new to the art, regardless of whether the art is new or unusual.

Social bonding

The study found that presenters create social bonding when they:

- expose audiences to new cultures
- enable audiences to participate in their own cultural heritage
- when audiences leave the performance with a widened perspective on social issues and a deeper understanding of human relations.

6.2 Measuring the audience experience

Jennifer Radbourne et al have conducted research with audiences to uncover how the audience experience itself can be used as a measure of quality in the performing arts, and a predictor of re-attendance.⁵³

Radbourne et al found that audience experience can be measured using the following:

- knowledge/information transfer or learning: providing audiences with information to help them better understand the performance⁵⁴
- risk management: managing audience member's perception that the performance will not meet their expectations⁵⁵
- authenticity and performer interaction: the "truth" within the arts event, which includes technical standards and a sense of "emotional" truth⁵⁶
- collective engagement: the sense of being engaged with the performers and other members of the audience⁵⁷

If audiences' expectations about the above are met, they are likely to return to the arts organisation.

6.3 Measuring innovation, excellence and audience engagement

At "Measure for Measure," a seminar held in Birmingham in 8-9 February 1990, Richard Crossland of the Arts Business Ltd identified a variety of financial, workplace and access and quality indicators.⁵⁸ Innovation, audience and quality indicators included:

Innovation

- % of work created within 2 years
- Commissions per district artistic project
- Number of first regional performances/appearances
- % budget spent on new work

Audience response

⁵³ Radbourne, Jennifer et al, "The Audience Experience: measuring quality in the performing arts," *International Journal of Arts Management*, 11(3) Spring 2009, 16-29.

⁵⁴ Radbourne, et al, "The Audience Experience," p.19.

⁵⁵ Radbourne, et al, "The Audience Experience," p.20.

⁵⁶ Radbourne, et al, "The Audience Experience," p.20.

⁵⁷ Radbourne, et al, "The Audience Experience," p.21.

⁵⁸ Arts Business, *Measuring the arts*, London, Arts Business, 1991.

- % of strat. sample satisfied with arts provision
- Average score on scale 0-9 for “enjoyed” in respect of specific arts experience
- Average score on scale 0-9 for “stimulated” in respect of specific arts experience
- % of strat. sample attending <1 per year, 2-6 per year, >6 per year

Quality (of whole product, or elements such as design, dramaturgy, performance)

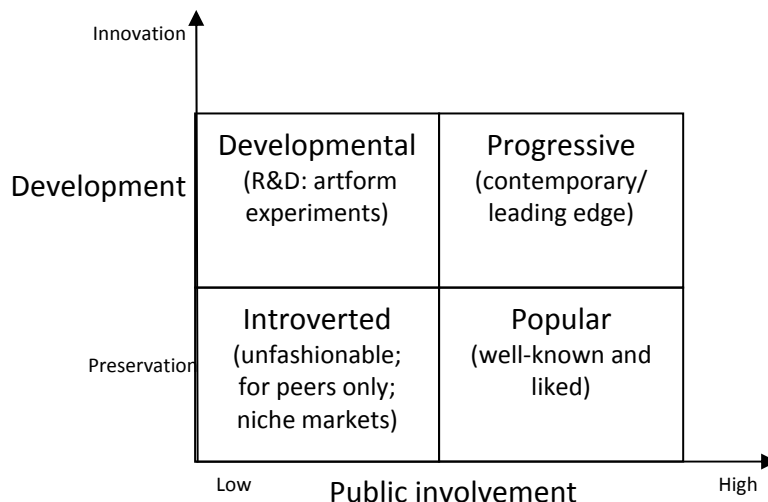
- Score (0-9) “imagination”
- Score (0-9) “execution”
- Score (0-9) “impact”
- Score (0-9) “appropriateness”
- Cohesiveness of artistic concepts (0-9)
- Enjoyment (0-9)
- Overall execution (0-9) divided by difficulty (0-9)
- Number of assessors saying “OK”
- Score on checklist of mutually agreed elements of work

6.4 Measuring innovation and preservation in the artform

Dom Henry of BDO Binder Hamlyn also gave a presentation at the “Measure for Measure” seminar, in which he discussed the “practical development of indicators” for the measurement of artistic impact.⁵⁹ In his address he identified the following non-financial performance indicators:

- Number of attendances, performances, venues
- Geographic and demographic artform profile
- Public opinion and awareness
- Critical acclaim
- Preservation of an artform
- Community development
- Commercial development

He went on to demonstrate a possible way of grouping indicators.



⁵⁹ Arts Business, *Measuring the arts*.

According to Henry, an artwork can cycle through these phases, from developmental to progressive, to popular to preservation, and in each phase, the level of public involvement vis-à-vis the development of the artform or work would shift. For example, a work which is developmental might have low public involvement but high level of innovation. An artist or company could plot their works on this type of graph to see where most of their work falls and to see if their works are in the positions they would like, according to their mission – eg a mix of developmental and popular work, or a weighting of progressive works, depending on the company’s mission.

An arts funding agency could similarly use this type of graph to plot if the sector has enough activity in each of these quarters.

6.5 Measuring community relevance

Holden suggests ways a funder could measure an arts organisation’s value to the community. For example, a funder could look at:

- Well-being: the number of communities showing a positive relationship between funding and social cohesion. This could be measured using data on participation rates and diversity; and case studies measuring social cohesion before and after funding.
- Recognition of value within the community: Community feedback could be measured through opinion polls, focus groups, unsolicited communication.
- Learning: increase in engagements with education sector, which could be measured through feedback from schools, evaluations of any links with enjoyment of education, delivery of learning outcomes.

6.6 Artistic quality in an opera company

Sabine Boerner has done extensive research into audience’s quality judgment of opera.⁶⁰ Boerner established a definition of performance quality in an opera company, splitting the musical (quality of orchestra, chorus, soloists, sound and tempo) and staging dimensions (quality of acting, staging, action, place, figures, atmosphere, genre).⁶¹

Boerner successfully tested a questionnaire to uncover audiences’ judgment of the quality of opera. According to Boerner, audiences assess an opera performance quality through an assessment of the individual aspects (eg soloists) and congruency aspects (eg the fit between staging and music dimensions). The most important aspect in an audience’s judgment of quality is the fit between the staging, acting and music of the opera, followed by the quality of the acting and staging and then the quality of the choir.

6.7 Measuring audience reactions to live performances

A three-year Australian study by Prof Katherine Stevens and Renee Glass developed an Audience Response Tool which records the emotional and cognitive responses, in the form of qualitative and quantitative ratings, to live performance.⁶²

⁶⁰ Boerner, Sabine et al, “Evaluation in music theatre: empirical results on content and structure of the audience’s quality judgment,” *Empirical studies of the arts*, 26(1) 2008, 15-35.

⁶¹ Boerner, Sabine, “Artistic quality in an opera company: toward the development of a concept,” *Nonprofit management and leadership*, 14(4), Summer 2004, pp425-436.

⁶² Stevens, Catherine, Glass, Renee et al, “Methods for measuring audience reactions,” *Proceedings of International Conference on Music Communications Science*, Sydney, December 2007. A copy of the Audience Response Tool is available on request.

The researchers have also developed a “portable Audience Response Facility” (pARF) which is a programmable, hand-held PC which samples data on a person’s responses as a performance unfolds. The pARF can be used to record from audience members of live or recorded performances of dance, music, theatre or new media. Physiological measures such as heart rate, breath rate or skin conductances can also be recorded.

The researchers also used a technique involving the recording of eye movements (eye fixations and saccades) of observers as an indirect, moment-to-moment index of cognition. This technique was used to test for differences between experts and novices watching a contemporary dance performance. Experts were found to have “rapid perceptual processing guided by expectancies and schemata in long-term memory.”⁶³

⁶³ Stevens and Glass et al, “Methods for measuring audience reactions,” p. 8.

6. Examples of measuring artistic vibrancy

Key points

A number of funding bodies and arts organisations have developed their own approaches to measuring artistic vibrancy. These examples might be useful for those looking at developing their own system of meaningful measurement.

7.1 Case studies of artistic self-assessment

Various performing arts organisations around the world have their own methods of assessing artistic vibrancy. These range across guest artist reviews, staff committees, peer and community panels, and critical appraisals to re-jig works.

Please see the separate publication on the Australia Council research hub website, *“Tell me honestly...”: case studies of artistic self-assessment in performing arts organisations* for details.

7.2 Arts Council England’s new approach to artistic assessment

ACE is currently developing tools to help arts organisations conduct self-assessment. ACE has introduced a new framework for assessment in response to the Brian McMaster report, “Supporting Excellence in the Arts,” which was released on 21 January 2008. The new framework includes:

- Self-assessment: companies will be required to make a clear artistic statement and then conduct an honest and rigorous assessment of performance against the objectives, including peers, audience views, quantitative and qualitative measures.
- “Artistic activity reports” of companies by peers: these reports are a kind of “quality assurance” mechanism for ACE to test the validity of self-assessment findings, as well as a de facto way to test the relevance and potentially also the “public value” of a company’s work. ACE will establish a diverse “pool” of reporters who will act like “mystery shoppers;” companies will not know which performance s/he would be attending. The reports will not be anonymous.
- Occasional in-depth appraisal of an individual company’s work: ACE will instigate occasional in-depth appraisals of individual companies by a team of peer reviewers. This will be done where a company is in difficulty, or where it has had a change in leadership and needs to re-think its strategy. It could also be requested by a company which believes it is doing well, in order to collect evidence to argue for further funding.
- Sector reviews by ACE and peers: ACE will conduct sector reviews, which might look at a particular artform, or cross-artform theme such as digital capacity. The scope could be national or international, depending on the nature of the enquiry.

7.3 Scottish government’s approach

The Scottish government employs independent, expert assessors to review the artistic standards of Scottish “national performing companies.” The Scottish government draws independent assessors from around Europe. The government contracts them to attend at

least two-thirds of a season, including mainstage and regional activity.⁶⁴ The position lasts for two years.

Assessors write performance appraisals, which go directly to the government. This ensures that their assessments are as frank as possible. The government then gives the reports to the company. The government also attempts to bring the peer reviewers together to talk about their reviews.

The Scottish Arts Council also has a “Quality Framework” for its funded arts organisations which they can use in their self-assessment and to develop their applications for funding. The Framework encourages organisations to assess their:

- artistic leadership
- public engagement
- governance, management and finance

It asks questions such as:

- Do you have a clear, shared artistic vision?
- Does the Board discuss artistic issues?

⁶⁴ This initially included educational activity too. A subset of specialist education peer-reviewers has since been assembled from opera and educational communities around the UK.

7. Guides to performance measurement for arts organisations

A number of funding agencies and philanthropic foundations have released guides to assist arts organisations with performance measurement, including self-assessment. Several are listed below.

[Quality Framework](#), Scottish Arts Council

[Assessing excellence: a guide to using self-assessment to achieve performance improvement in the public sector](#), Cabinet Office UK.

[A Little Book of Evaluation](#), UK.

[Measuring impact: a guide to resources](#), National Council for Voluntary Organisations, UK.

[Quality and impact tools](#), Proving and Improving.

[Self-assessment Workbook](#), National Council for Voluntary Organisations, UK.

8. Background to this paper

The Major Performing Arts Board (MPAB) of the Australia Council for the Arts monitors the artistic vibrancy, financial sustainability and audience access. The Board requested the Australia Council to conduct research to better understand what artistic vibrancy means, how arts companies currently measure their own artistic vibrancy, and models of best practice in assessing artistic vibrancy.

Meaningful Measurement forms part of this research. In addition, the Australia Council has prepared:

- an artistic vibrancy discussion paper, which establishes a working definition of artistic vibrancy for discussion with the major performing arts sector
- a “tool for self-reflection,” which is intended as a tool for arts organisations to assist in the process of artistic self-assessment (forthcoming)
- “*Tell me honestly: case studies of artistic self-assessment in performing arts organisations*” is a paper which present good practice case studies of arts organisations’ artistic self-assessment processes

The above resources are available on the Australia Council Research Hub <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au>

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