826 NATIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE

PLACE-BASED PROGRAMS (IN CENTERS)

826 PLACE-BASED PROGRAMS (IN CENTERS)

PLACE-BASED "3RD SPACE"

- Emotionally/physically safe space
- Multiple positive, supportive relationships with talented, caring, enthusiastic adults (volunteer/staff)
- Program structure

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

- Opportunities to share artistic work (writing) and accomplishments publicly

CULTURE OF CREATIVITY

- 826 as creative space to explore, especially through writing
- Freedom from judgement
- Lab environment
- Risk-taking, diversity, experimentation and whimsy welcome

HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE

- One-on-one attention from adult volunteer(s)
- Time in structured setting
- Institutional support

→ **Homework Done**

→ **HABITS OF MIND**

Improved self-confidence in academic performance

Sense of accomplishment in academic performance

Development of student persistence and discipline (personal responsibility)

Peer support

→ **Classroom teacher's improved perception of student efforts and capacity**

→ **Parental Support**

- Parents are supported in their efforts around homework
- Parents have more time for positive interaction with children

→ **IMPROVED ACADEMIC SKILLS**

Writing, reading, math, etc.

WRITING (in after-school program, field trips, and workshops)

- One-on-one attention from adult volunteer
- Promotion of self-expression
- Promotion of cultural and community identification
- Builds writing confidence and skills

→ **Norming**

- Writing as an individual practice
- Writing as a social activity/experience

→ **Voice**

- I have something to say

Self-Efficacy

- I know how to say/write it (skilled)

→ **Identity**

Students self-identify as writer/journalist

Community

- Increased sense of "belongingness" to 826 writing community
- Students feel connected to friends, adult supporters, and a supportive institution

→ **Classroom teacher's improved perception of student efforts and capacity**

→ **IMPROVED WRITING SKILLS**

CONSISTENT (DAILY) READING TIME

→ **Norming**

- Reading as a practice
- Reading as a social activity/experience

→ **HABITS OF MIND**

Student reads to learn

Student reads for enjoyment

Improved disposition regarding reading

Peer support

→ **Classroom teacher's improved perception of student efforts and capacity**

→ **IMPROVED READING SKILLS**

PARENTS HAVE

- Increased pride in their children
- Increased awareness regarding the importance of education
- Increased hopes for their child's future

INCREASED STUDENT PERFORMANCE

- Increased performance on language arts assignments
- Increased performance on writing assignments
- Increased homework completion and understanding
- Increased readiness for new lessons in school
- Improved self-confidence in academic performance
- Increased self-efficacy
- Improved ability to express oneself

TEACHERS HAVE

- Increased ability to meet curricular standards
- Increased joy in teaching
- Increased sense of support by 826 regarding building student literacy

826 NATIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE

SCHOOL-BASED & TEACHER-INITIATED PROGRAMS

826 SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

"3RD SPACE"

- Emotionally/physically safe space
- Multiple positive, supportive relationships with talented, caring, enthusiastic adults (volunteer/staff)
- Program structure

ARTS PROGRAMMING

- Writing-based, project-based arts programming/curriculum brought into classroom
- Powerful experience for students
- Expanded options for teachers modeled by program
- Student opportunities to share artistic work/accomplishments publicly

CULTURE OF CREATIVITY

- 826 as creative space to explore, especially through writing
- Freedom from judgement
- Lab environment
- Risk-taking, diversity, experimentation and whimsy welcome

PROGRAMS

(by order of avg. dosage)

BOOK PUBLISHING

10 – 30 hours/year

IN-SCHOOL WRITING WORKSHOPS

Periodic 1-hour sessions, 4 weeks/year

SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS TO 826 FOR WRITING WORKSHOPS

2 hours/year

→

Students feel supported by adult mentors

Peer support/reciprocal learning

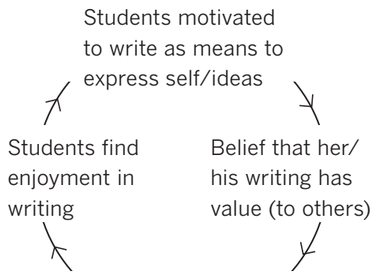
- Students supported as writers/learners by peers

Norming

- Reading and writing as a practice
- Reading and writing as a social activity/experience

→

HABITS OF MIND



Identity

- Students self-identify as writer/journalist

Community

- Increased sense of "belongingness" to 826 writing community
- Students feel connected to friends, adult supporters, and supportive institutions

Voice

- I have something to say

Self-Efficacy

- I know how to say/write it (skilled)

→

Students

- Develop skills to express selves in written word
- Identify as member/part of a writing/arts community

Teachers

- Improved perception of student efforts and capacity

PARENTS HAVE

- Increased pride in their children
- Increased hopes for their child's future

INCREASED STUDENT PERFORMANCE

- Increased performance on language arts assignments
- Increased performance on writing assignments
- Increased assignment completion and understanding
- Improved self-confidence in academic performance
- Increased self-efficacy
- Improved ability to express oneself

TEACHERS HAVE

- Increased ability to meet curricular standards
- Increased joy in teaching
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826 NATIONAL THEORY OF CHANGE

DEFINITION OF SOME KEY TERMS

PROGRAM INPUTS

Among the foundational elements of the program that ground the experience of participants, the Theory of Change includes:

826 centers as a "third space"

826 centers are a "third space," separate from both school and home, but playing a supportive role to both of these domains. The key, though, is that 826 centers provide a non-stratified environment—very much unlike their school environments—in which the social norm is one of emotional and physical safety. Instead of teachers—who represent power within the school hierarchy—there are staff and volunteers who are caring and supportive adults whose goal is to help each child have the experience of success.

Moreover, 826 is not a home environment either. Although, the work students do in 826 centers is designed to improve self-esteem and create a floor of emotional safety, which may indirectly affect how students' parents view them, and ultimately affect their home environment. Unlike parents or teachers, the role is that of volunteers and mentors, not judges, arbiters or disciplinarians.

Culture of creativity

826, by design, is a creative space, and the ethos of 826 centers is to encourage creativity. Within 826, there is a "culture of creativity," driven by a set of norms. These include: experimentation and risk—taking for student writing, and honoring diversity of opinion and race/ethnicity/culture. The tone of 826 is set by its playful storefronts that essentially communicate "Whimsy is welcome."

Habits of Mind

There is a great deal written about the notion "habits of mind." According to Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick, the phrase means "having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems, the answers to which are not immediately known: dichotomies, dilemmas, enigmas and uncertainties".[1] In our 826 TOC models, we view habits of mind as "dispositions" that provide the foundation for skill development.

For example, in our TOC for place-based programs, we posit that there is a strong link between improved academic skills (e.g. reading, writing and math), and the following habits of mind:

- Development of student persistence and discipline (personal responsibility)

- Improved self-confidence in academic performance

- A sense of accomplishment in their academic performance

Habits of mind intersect and reinforce one another. In another example from this TOC model, we posit that there is a link between improved disposition towards reading, students learning to read and students reading to learn. These habits of mind intersect and lead to improved reading skills.

Likewise, in our TOC model for school-based programs, we posit that there is a link between 826 programs that create the foundation for students developing "habits of mind"—including believing in the value in writing, enjoying writing and finding that writing is a means to express oneself.

Improved teacher perception of student efforts and capacity

We posit that as students are improving their habits of mind, which then leads to improved academic skills, teachers will begin to perceive shifts in student behavior and performance. This improved teacher perception will reinforce students' habits of mind and skill development.

Writing as an individual practice and as a social activity—and the emergence of voice

As students are exposed to different writing experiences, they learn to develop their own voice as writers. But we posit that this process of developing one's voice is both an individual experience, as well as a social experience.

Students participate in varying writing exercises where they find their own voices and they are supported to believe they have something important to say. They also collaborate on writing projects that reinforce the importance of collaboration, as students see their writing in the context of a larger writing project that promotes their work and the work of their peers. In publication projects, students participate more formally on collective endeavors and view themselves more deeply as part of a small writing community.

Moreover, this collaborative self-identity is taken one step further for those who participate on editorial boards, as it formalizes the joint responsibility of a writing product.

Students identify as a writer

For any students who participate in an 826 writing project, they begin to develop a sense of identity as a writer. The type of writer may vary and include poet, short story writer, journalistic writer, playwright, screenwriter. We posit that the work of learning how to write as part of an 826 program leads to increased writing skills. Once again, as teachers perceive the shift in student skill levels and self-efficacy, their perception of them shifts as well.

Increased sense of belonging to an 826 writing community

We posit that students who participate in 826 programs begin to feel a connectedness to the 826 community. For those who participate solely in the homework assistance component of 826, they feel linked to a community that happens to be housed in a very exciting and creative space. We could argue that the culture of creativity affects students' perception of the nature of the 826 community. For those who participate in any of the 826 writing programs, they feel linked to the community as a writing community, which is reinforced through feedback from volunteers and staff, as well as by being a part of book publications and celebrations.

We posit that students who participate in 826 programming develop the practice of writing and develop their voice as writers, and that intersects with student identification as a writer, and leads to improved writing skills.