

**Pick a program type
you work on. Sit at
a table with others
who also work on
that program type.**

The 5.5 biggest mistakes we've made when thinking about program impact — and what we've learned from them

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My background

- Part of team that started US education program in 2010
- Now at Wiki Education Foundation
- Just focus on education program
- Think a lot about impact :)

Discussion Question:

**Why is it important
to think about
impact?**

Mistake #1

**We tried to have
one program to do
too many things.**



OMG ALL THE THINGS

- Engage subject matter experts!
- Improve Wikipedia content!
- Add more editors to Wikipedia!
- Fix the gender gap!
- Improve Wikipedia's reputation in academia!
- Provide student learning outcomes!

Solution #1:

**Focus on one
primary goal.**



Primary goals drive programmatically decisions

- * If your goal is improving student learning, you might ask students to add false information to Wikipedia to see how fast it gets reverted. (But this harms Wikipedia.)
- * If your goal is improving Wikipedia, you teach students how to edit effectively; learning about Wikipedia is a byproduct but not your primary goal.

Discussion Question:

**What is your
program's primary
goal?**



Mistake #2

We created a large network of volunteers and thought that would be the only way to increase our impact.

Solution #2

**Consider many
ways to scale before
deciding on one.**

Things to consider

- At what point do you need a staff person to manage volunteers?
- At what point is staff time more effective than volunteers?
- Is there technology investments that could make your program more effective?
- What are activities that are the most fulfilling for your volunteers?

Discussion Question:

**How could you triple
the number of your
program participants?**

Mistake #3

We ignored that only one target group justifies the existence of an encyclopedia: the reader.

Solution #3

Define your theory of change for how you're helping readers.

Discussion Question:

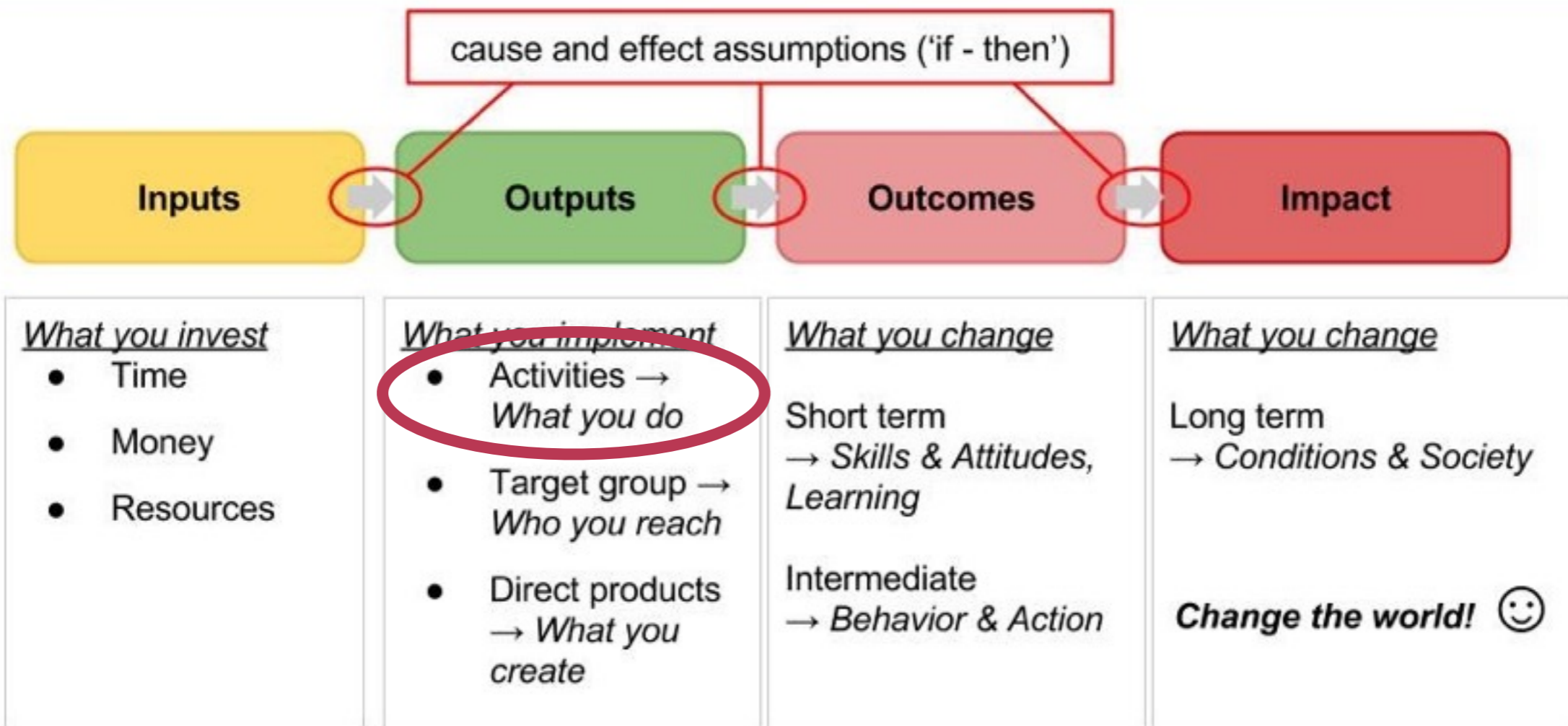
What is your theory of change for how you're helping readers?

Mistake #4

We measured
activities.



Basic elements of Logic Models

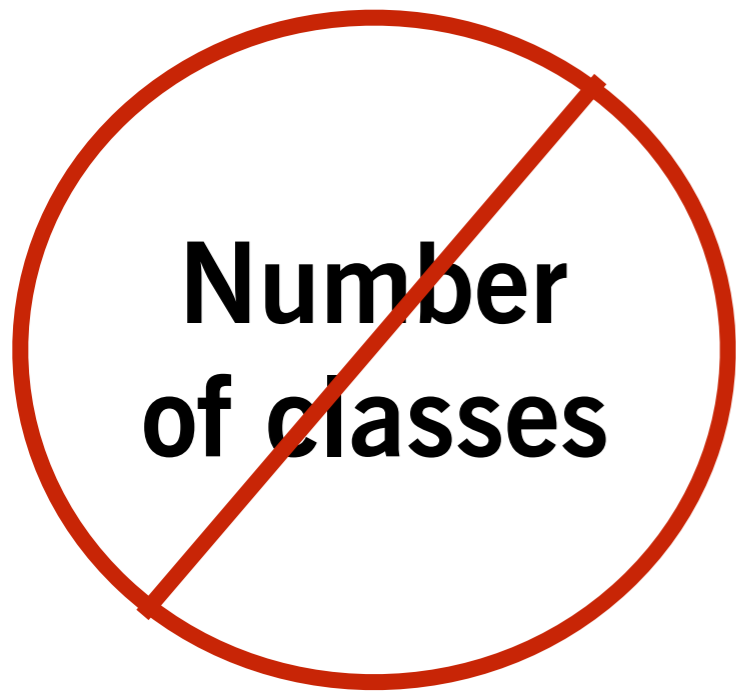


slide credit: Jaime Anstee

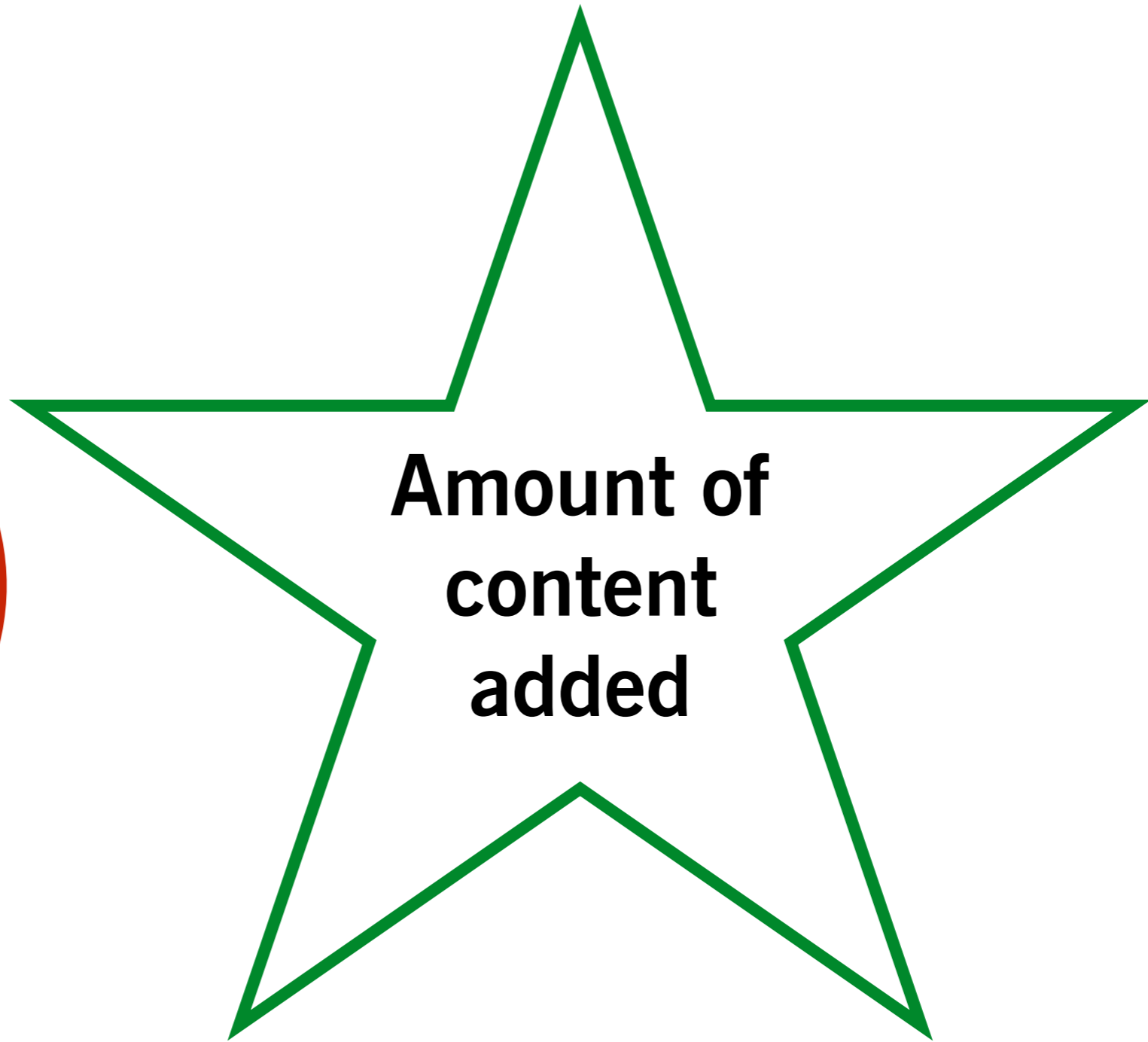
Solution #4

We measured
outcomes.





**Number
of classes**



**Amount of
content
added**

Discussion Question:

What are you measuring? How can you measure outcomes?



Mistake #5

We believed reporting impact to funders is harder with Wikipedia programs.

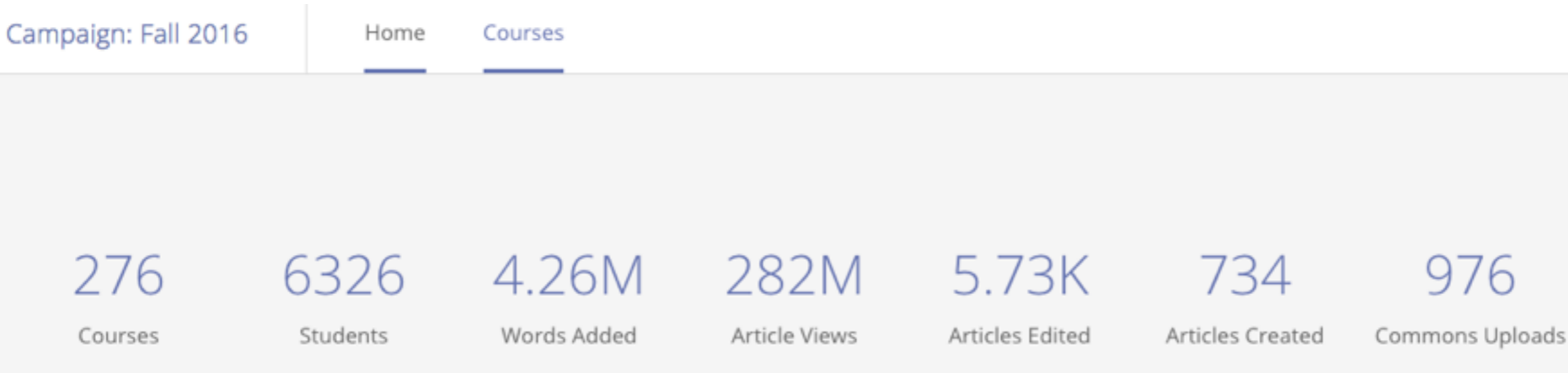


Solution #5

**Funders care about
impact to the world:
Content, readers.**



Use the Dashboard!



Discussion Question:

**How do you report
impact to funders?
How could you do
better reporting?**

Mistake #5.5

We were convinced that communicating and collaborating with other organizations in our field would improve our impact.

Solution #5.5

**Make sure
collaborations make
sense.**



Discussion Question:

What partnerships are you pursuing? How do they help your primary goal?



What other mistakes have you made when thinking about program impact?

What have you learned from them?