

Youth Participatory Action Research

Why YPAR & T.E.E.M.

The History/Background of YPAR

- YPAR stems from a long tradition of **action research** (Herr & Anderson, 2005), **community action research** (Stoecker, 2003), and **teacher action research** (Pine, 2008)
- As an **epistemology**, YPAR honors the voices, lived experiences, and perspectives of youth (Cammaraota & Fine, 2010)
- Rather than researching *on* youth, university researchers within a YPAR context research *with* youth
- As the drivers of the research and the **experts** on the issues plaguing their community, youth researchers identify the research issue or problem.

The Philosophy Behind YPAR

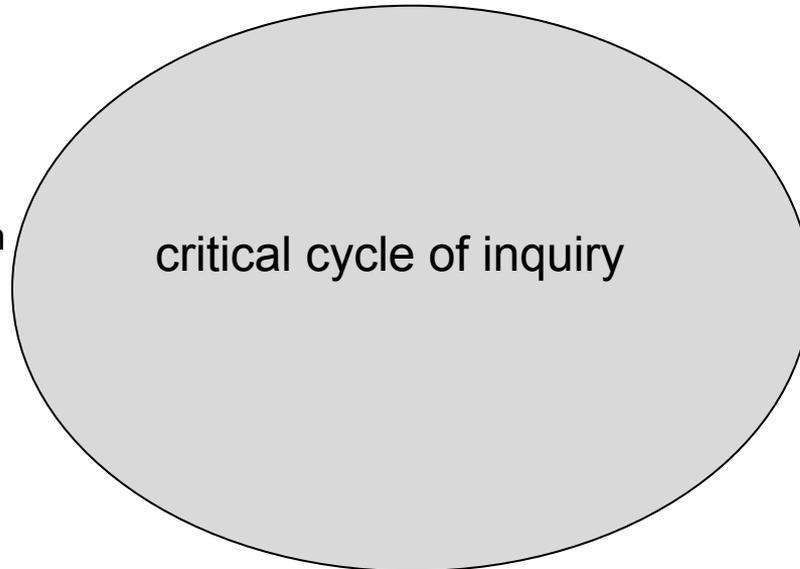
- YPAR represents a form of **critical pedagogy**
- Critical Pedagogy encompasses groups from marginalized backgrounds **understanding the social, economic, and historical inequities that have shaped their oppression.**
- Paulo Freire is considered the forefather of critical pedagogy
- He believed (1970): “To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes it possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity” (p. 47).

What is Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)?

- youth researchers engage in a critical cycle of inquiry

1. identify the research issue

4. develop an action plan



2. gather data on the issue

3. analyze the data

What is the impact of YPAR studies?

YPAR studies...

- offer **counter-narratives** to widely held dominant/mainstream views regarding “at-risk” youth (Kirshner & Pozzoboni, 2011; Poon & Cohen, 2012; Tuck, 2012; Yang, 2009)
- **highlight the voices** of populations typically silenced in disenfranchised communities (Fine et al., 2004; Fox & Fine, 2013; Quijada Cerecer, Cahill, & Bradley, 2013; Wernick, Woodford, & Kulick, 2014)
- become a space for historically marginalized students to **critically analyze structural inequalities** in schools and society (Cammaraota, 2008; Irizarry, 2011; Sánchez, 2009).

Why Youth Participatory Action Research?

Empirical studies highlight how youth researchers are impacted by YPAR. Youth researchers...

- strengthen their **academic and critical literacy skills** (Morrell, 2008)
- develop a **structural analysis** to understanding societal inequities (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008)
- engage in **critical civic participation** (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007)
- see themselves as **change agents** in their schools and **disruptors of the status quo** (Cammarota & Fine, 2008)

Pathways2Teaching vs. T.E.E.M. Scholars (as of year one)

- larger cohort
- begins junior year
- includes a field experience component
- no GPA requirement
- programming integrated into school day
- students earn college credit

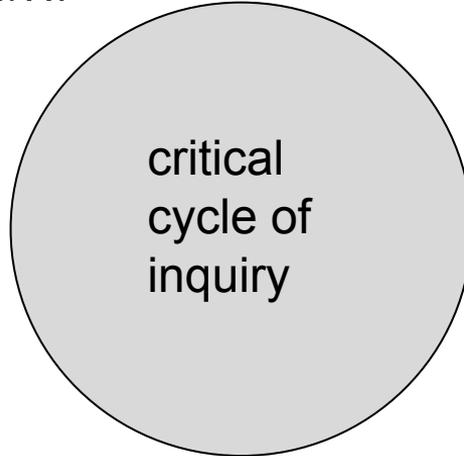
- similar mission: prepare socially conscious educators of color to close the opportunity gap
- multi-year approach
- students participate in YPAR projects
- students are exposed to foundational issues in urban education: Introduction to Urban Education vs. Summer Institute

- 10 students per/year
- GPA requirement
- pre-collegiate programming support through PEOPLE
- scholarship \$\$\$
- programming after school/summer
- no college credit

T.E.E.M. Scholars: The Classroom X Project

1. Research Issue: the opportunity gap
Research Question: What are the practices of teachers in Classroom X? What are the practices of students in Classroom X?

4. Develop an Action Plan:
Once we've determined our findings, then scholars will develop an action plan. It will involve sharing our research findings with various stakeholders in the community: families, teachers & administrators. We also seek to develop multiple products to share with various audiences.



2. Data Collection:
Scholars have identified Classroom X (Yang, 2009) as spaces with highly effective teachers who work well with marginalized populations.
 - 10 classroom observations
 - teacher interview
 - 3-4 student interviews
 - anonymous survey of all students in Classroom X

3. Data Analysis: identifying common themes across the data

Outcomes of T.E.E.M. Scholars:

- By the end of their YPAR project, students will be able to...
 - articulate the practices of highly effective teachers in MMSD through a sustained inquiry of study
 - strengthen their understanding of how race and class shapes the opportunity gap
 - develop leadership skills by sharing their work with various stakeholders and offering recommendations to improve teaching practices
 - recognize themselves as advocates of their own education
 - sharpen their academic skills by engaging in the critical cycle of inquiry
 - feel empowered that they can make a difference right now as a student leader
 - view teaching as a viable pathway to become change agents and leaders in their communities

End-of-Year Deliverables

- 1.) Identify best practices of highly effective teachers in MMSD
- 2.) Identify effective strategies for engaging students of color
- 3.) Share research findings with families, teachers and administrators
- 4.) Produce multiple products, such as a Power Point, video, blog, peer-reviewed academic journal article, and/or toolkit, to share with school-community, practitioners and researchers.
- 5.) Attend educational conferences to share our work with education and research communities

Rationale for The Summer Institute and The Showcase

- The Summer Institute provided students with the opportunity to learn about critical issues in education, specifically in Madison.
- Adhering to the overall mission of Forward Madison, our essential question for the Summer Institute included: *How does race and class shape the opportunity gap?*
- During our summer course, T.E.E.M. Scholars developed a complex and nuanced understanding about how race and class shapes educational inequality.
- The purpose of the Showcase was to highlight the content learned during the Summer Institute.

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