

What Happens When Young People Teach: Analyzing Core Components, Best Practices, and Developmental Outcomes of Young People as the Teacher Programs (YPAT)

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Background

- America's schools face an unprecedented shortage of teachers (Natanson, 2022) and the plummeting interest of college students in pursuing teaching (Bill, et al, 2022).
- Policymakers have incentivized the development of programs that give high school and college students opportunities to be apprentice teachers, a role that promotes civic engagement while enabling exploration of the teaching profession (Merod, 2022).
- YPAT programs are a promising and growing approach to supporting young adult development.
- While YPAT programs have become more common and the program models increasingly varied, there is scant research on their design or their impact on the young people who teach in them (Worker, 2019).
- Studying the core components of YPAT can provide more precise insight into what makes programs work best across different contexts and settings.

Research Questions

- What are the core components and best practices of YPAT programs?
- Why do young people join YPAT programs?
- What outcomes do YPAT alumni attribute to their YPAT experiences?
- How does participating in YPAT programs contribute to young adult development and civic engagement?



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When young people teach, they grow as leaders, learners, citizens, and young adults.

Young people teach in many AmeriCorps programs, as well as in a wide range of program models nationwide.

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Research Design & Findings

National field scan of programs; interviews with program leaders exploring program design; interviews with YPAT alumni exploring the long-term impact and personal significance of teaching experiences.

FINDINGS

- The designs, structures, and delivery of YPAT programs vary significantly.
- Young people describe experiencing growth in the following areas:
 - **Leadership Development:** Enhanced initiative-taking, communication, and facilitation skills.
 - **Learning and Teaching:** Expanded insight into learning processes.
 - **Civic Engagement:** Commitment to contribute to their communities and to future generations.
 - **Young Adult Development:** Clearer vocational direction and personal agency.

Discussion & Application of Study Findings

- YPAT offers a uniquely rich developmental experience for young people.
- Final stages of development: comprehensive survey for YPAT alumni and participants to collect quantitative data on program features and long-term outcomes.
- We've created a field scan mapping the range of YPAT programs and highlighting the growth of the field.
- Working with program leaders and alumni, we've developed a core components framework.
- For the next year, we will pilot an effort to convene YPAT program leaders once a month to learn together and develop a set of practitioner resources.