

# Youth Participatory Action Research

(YPAR)



## Scholarly Literature & Resources



## Scholarly Literature

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### **Selected Annotations**

Bertrand, M. (2018). Youth participatory action research and possibilities for students of color in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(1), 366–396. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18761344>

This paper explores the potential for students of color to leverage their institutional knowledge of racism and white supremacy in school leadership roles. Bertrand (2018) argues that YPAR can provide a platform for including students of color in school decision-making processes related to educational policies and practices and for developing their leadership skills. The article begins with a review of the literature on YPAR and its impact on student empowerment and educational outcomes. The author (Bertrand, 2018) also notes that while there is a growing body of research on YPAR, there is a need for more studies that specifically examine its effects on students of color. In response, this work presents a case study of a YPAR project in which students of color worked to address issues of bullying and its intersections with racism, homophobia, dis/ability, and racism. While the students assumed leadership roles, school adults were less likely to perceive or position them as leaders, pointing to a need for future YPAR to facilitate disruptions of hierarchical power that may impede students' efficacy.

Bertrand, M., Durand, E. S., & Gonzalez, T. (2017). "We're trying to take action": Transformative agency, role remediation, and the complexities of youth participatory action research. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 50(2), 142–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2017.1301837>

This study examines change-oriented youth participatory action research (YPAR) in an after-school YPAR program for youth of color, emergent bilinguals, and youth perceived as struggling academically. Bertrand and colleagues explore how role re-mediation and transformative agency provide new lenses for understanding the complex processes that enable collective mobilization for justice. Within the YPAR program, the authors (Bertrand et al., 2017) found that engagement with critical texts, interactions between actors in and outside the space, and youths' collective knowledge production mutually influenced enactments of role re-mediation and transformative agency. The authors (Bertrand et al., 2017) encourage role re-mediation and transformative agency to guide future YPAR research and facilitation.

Bertrand, M. & Lozenski, B. D. (2023). YPAR dreams deferred? Examining power bases for YPAR to impact policy and practice. *Educational Policy*, 37(2), 437–462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904821101997>

To mitigate the lack of policy implementation informed by YPAR research, Bertrand and Lozenski (2023) provide recommendations for how YPAR can shape policy and practice by centering youths' opinions about best practices and leveraging youth organizing tools and institutionally sanctioned decision-making. They posit that it is essential to integrate power bases (e.g., to draw on coercive, reward, legitimate, expert, referent, and informational power) from the beginning of a YPAR project and to hold frequent conversations on the nature of policy change. The authors (Bertrand & Lozenski, 2023) advise researchers engaged in YPAR to fully document how YPAR efforts incite policy change and the impact these policies have. Further, to address gaps in the extant literature, Bertrand and Lozenski (2023) assert that these impacts must be contextualized and provide specifics about policy landscapes and affiliations between YPAR participants, community organizations, and universities.

Foster-Fishman, P. G., Law, K. M., Lichty, L. F., & Aoun, C. (2010). Youth ReACT for social change: A method for youth participatory action research. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 46(1), 67–83. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-010-9316-y>

Noting that youth rarely participate in *all* stages of YPAR research, especially data analysis, researchers (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010) offer the Research Actualizing Critical Thought (ReACT) method as one promoting youth knowledge production, critical consciousness, and comprehensive research involvement. The researchers drew upon 30 middle school students' PhotoVoice creations and reflections to gather feedback and inform problem identification. They found that participants were both eager and able to think critically about their realities and engage in thematic qualitative data analysis. The limitations identified included challenges managing the large quantity of data from the PhotoVoice project, which affected their data analysis process. Time constraints, varied consistency of youth involvement, and community and local organizations' limited operational capacities also affected implementation and analysis. Still, this study provides valuable perspectives about maintaining socially just educational partnerships and developing public scholarship to benefit youth.

Keddie, A. (2021). The difficulties of 'action' in youth participatory action research: Schoolifying YPAR in two elite settings. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 42(3), 381–393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2019.1696747>

This study utilizes a political and sociocultural lens to discuss YPAR contexts, their possibilities, and potential problems in implementing YPAR's action component. Keddie (2021) examines data gathered from YPAR projects in two predominantly white, elite, independent schools within the United States. At one school, a predominantly Black group of girls examined microaggressions. At the other, students addressed restrictive cross-gender dorm visitation policies. Researchers found that schools greatly benefited from increased critical consciousness; however, sociocultural and political dynamics impeded both projects' action plans. While Keddie (2021) notes that school-based YPAR comes with tensions, schoolifying YPAR can maximize schools' ability to support the "actioning" of YPAR projects by accounting for contextual factors and positioning students, teachers, and researchers as collaborative social change activists. The author concludes by reflecting that the ongoing challenge is how schools can engage with controversial topics and mobilize against various forms of privilege.

Vaccarino-Ruiz, S. S., Gordon, D. L., Langhout, R. D. (2022). Toward the democratization of knowledge: Using photovoice, social biography, and the "five whys" in YPAR with children. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 28(3), 440–448. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000457>

This study investigates using PhotoVoice, social biography, and the "five whys" to scaffold critical dialogue. Vaccarino-Ruiz et al. (2022) utilized the "five whys," which ask participants to turn defined problems into "why?" questions. Among participants (six Latinx children ranging from 10-11 years old), the "five whys" facilitated critical thinking skills as youth engaged in structural analysis to address the root causes of identified social problems. Vaccarino-Ruiz et al. (2022) found that social biography sparked critical dialogue wherein youth drew upon their family stories and historical knowledge. In conjunction with the "five whys," social biography proved helpful for democratizing knowledge by countering prevalent beliefs that children cannot be sociopolitical problem solvers. The authors (Vaccarino-Ruiz et al., 2022) also address how biographical methods can enhance liberation psychology research and fulfill the need to honor testimony, historical remembrance, and collective social action.



## Selected Youth-facing Organizations

YPAR Organization	Web Link	Useful Links/ Thoughts
Community Tool Box	<a href="https://ctb.ku.edu/en">https://ctb.ku.edu/en</a>	<a href="#">Justice Action toolkits</a>
Crossroads for Youth	<a href="https://crossroadsforyouth.org/">https://crossroadsforyouth.org/</a>	
Detroit Area Youth Uniting Michigan	<a href="https://alliedmedia.org/post/online-learning-bill-of-rights">https://alliedmedia.org/post/online-learning-bill-of-rights</a>	Online learning bill of rights and <a href="#">zine</a> are good options for products for youth to express their demands
Directory of youth development organizations in Michigan	<a href="https://www.causeiq.com/directory/youth-development-organizations-list/michigan-state/">https://www.causeiq.com/directory/youth-development-organizations-list/michigan-state/</a>	
Innovations for Youth	<a href="https://i4y.berkeley.edu/">https://i4y.berkeley.edu/</a>	“News” section has a lot of promising/interesting reporting on how people are engaging in YPAR, especially culminating experiences: <a href="#">Youth x researcher published article</a>
The Michigan Center for Youth Justice (MCYJ)	<a href="https://www.miyouthjustice.org/">https://www.miyouthjustice.org/</a>	List of <a href="#">current projects</a>
People in Education	<a href="https://www.peopleineducation.org/trash-life-1">https://www.peopleineducation.org/trash-life-1</a>	“Trash life” student film is very cool!
YES: Youth Empowerment Solutions	<a href="https://prc.sph.umich.edu/projects/yes/">https://prc.sph.umich.edu/projects/yes/</a>	
The Youth Connection	<a href="https://www.theyouthconnection.org/">https://www.theyouthconnection.org/</a>	Offers different training for youth <a href="#">Accomplishment page</a>
Youth Leadership Institute	<a href="https://yli.org/">https://yli.org/</a>	Resources on <a href="#">education justice page</a>
The WhyPAR Podcast	<a href="https://youthresearchlab.org/whypar">https://youthresearchlab.org/whypar</a>	