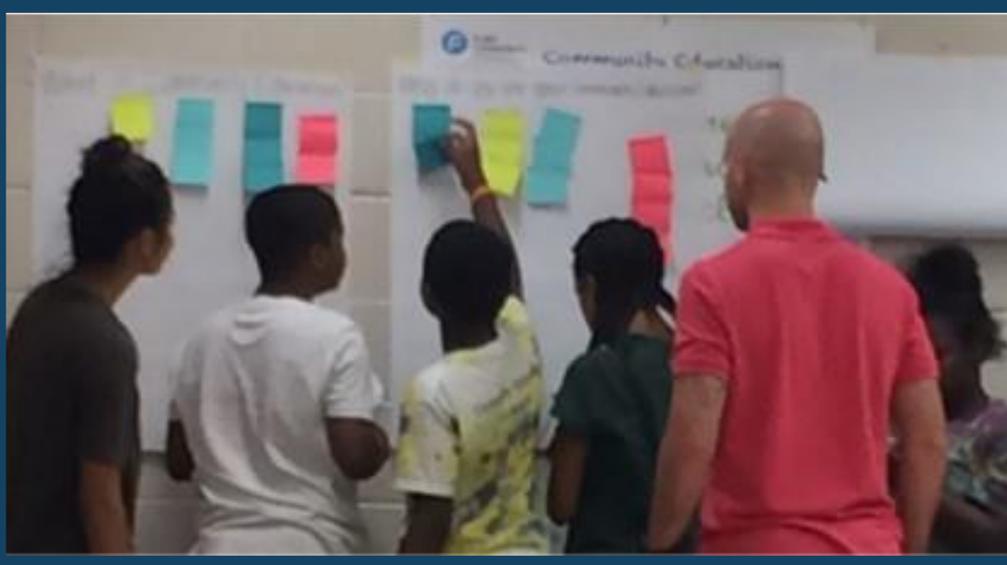




Integrating Youth in Community Based Participatory Research

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Meaningfully engaging youth in research, evaluation, and practice can have important benefits for positive youth development, support, and organizational improvement. However, people and organizations that work with youth experience pragmatic and resource challenges. In response to

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“Our findings demonstrate Youth GO as a promising approach for collaboratively engaging youth in research and evaluation.”

these challenges, we examined the value of Youth GO as an emerging participatory qualitative method to engage youth in collecting and analyzing data that is relevant to their experiences.

Methods

We compared Youth GO against traditional focus groups, using a comparison trial. We examined both across three aspects: (1) implementation fidelity, 2) costs to implement the approach,

Highlights

Youth GO is a participatory method that is easy to implement and is well perceived by youth and adults.

Practitioners may find Youth GO a helpful alternative to more traditional feedback approaches like focus groups and interviews.

and (3) perceptions of the approach from youth participants and adult facilitators, including their ability to facilitate youth-adult partnerships, satisfaction, and acceptability.

Results

Our findings indicate Youth GO is an effective, resource efficient, and positively received approach for engaging youth in community-based research, evaluation, and practice.

- Youth GO was implemented with higher fidelity than focus groups.
- When compared to a traditional focus group, Youth GO requires significantly fewer resources; Youth GO ranged from 1.4 - 1.7 times cheaper in implementation costs and required about 10.5 less hours for data processing.
- Youth participants and adult facilitators perceived both Youth GO and focus group conditions equally, across the domains of youth-adult partnerships, satisfaction, and acceptability.

HOW DID A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE INFORM YOUR WORK?

As researchers, we value working collaboratively with community-based stakeholders and ensuring that those most impacted by research and evaluation are meaningfully engaged. Youth GO can be useful for Community Psychologists that wish to engage youth within the needs, constraints, and resources of community-based work. This study contributes to a growing field of developing participatory methods accessible across diverse settings to empower youth as leaders and decision-makers within their communities.

What Does This Mean For?

Practice: Youth GO is a helpful tool for practitioners that work with youth in community-based settings (e.g., out-of-school time programming, afterschool spaces, non-profits, community centers, etc.). Youth GO can be applied to explore questions, problems, and/or solutions with youth. For example, Youth GO can be applied to needs assessments, program evaluation, or to engage youth in program planning.

Research and Social Action: This study contributes to a growing field of rapid qualitative methods that can be applied to enhance opportunities for youth involvement in social change efforts.

Research: We need to continue to explore the feasibility and sustainability of methods within these contexts to ensure that resource constraints are no longer a barrier to meaningful youth participation and engagement within research, evaluation, and practice settings.

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