

At Youth University we are outcome focused and committed to quality improvement. For more information on our research or to find out how your class can become involved contact us at youthuniversity@brocku.ca.

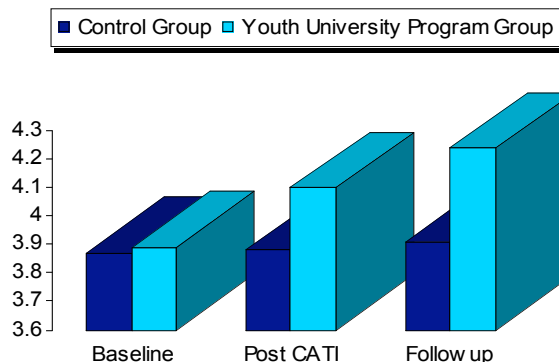
Research Shows Youth University to Promote Group Engagement

In the fall of 2005 a collaborative research project was undertaken between the *Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement* (COE-YE) and Youth University at Brock University to explore youth engagement in the context of an experiential-based community building program. Approximately 90 students from four Grade 5 and 6 classes at two schools participated in the study – two classes (one from each school) attended the program, and two classes acted as control groups. Surveys were completed by all students before the program, immediately after the Youth University program, and approximately two months later.

One of the measures under study was a composite rating of group engagement. This composite measure was made up of the following questions generated from group development research.

- I feel like I know everyone in my class pretty well
- In my class we can be encouraging of each other
- We can ask each other for help in my class
- My classmates and I can work as a team
- We get along well as a class
- I like my class
- I'm happy to be in this class
- I feel good about participating in my class
- If I had to do group work I would feel OK about working with almost anyone in my class

This graph shows the average “group engagement” ratings for each of the groups at baseline (before Youth University), after the Youth University Community Building Program, and again at follow-up two months later. Higher scores indicate greater agreement with the statements shown above (ratings ranged from 1 – *strongly disagree*, to 5-*strongly agree*).



For the Youth University group the mean levels of group engagement increased over time from a mean of 3.89 at baseline, to 4.24 at follow-up. Further, there was evidence that the difference between program group and the control groups increased over time.

It was found that students who attended the Youth University Community Building Program reported significantly higher levels of group engagement both directly after the program as well as two months later at follow-up!

Note. This project was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) through the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement (COE-YE) as part of the National Centres of Excellence Programme. Opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of PHAC. The study protocol was [approved by the COE-YE, the Research Ethics Board at Brock University, the District of Niagara Public School Board, and Niagara District Catholic School Board.](#)

