

Frequently Asked Questions

About research and program evaluation on Academic Youth Development: Improving Achievement by Shaping the Culture of Algebra Classrooms

A program of the Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin

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Our evaluation of AYD is ongoing. Our current plan is to ask each cohort of students (and teachers) if they are willing to participate in our evaluation effort. When students submit their application to participate in AYD, they also are asked to submit a consent form (signed by both the student and their parent or legal guardian) for them to participate in our evaluation of AYD. For context, here are some frequently asked questions around the research and evaluation component of this initiative.

Question: Why are you doing research and evaluation of the AYD program? And who or what, exactly, is getting evaluated?

Answer: We conduct program evaluation to learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of AYD so that we can improve the program and our implementation strategies. Note that by *evaluation* we mean evaluation of the program and its implementation—not of the students and teachers participating in the program!

Question: What is the current AYD research and program evaluation work?

Answer: There are three main components to our current AYD research and program evaluation:

- 1) A preliminary formative study on how attitudes and beliefs around teaching and learning change for both teachers and students as participants in AYD;
- 2) An investigation of how these attitudes and beliefs are related to participants' use of the AYD resources; and
- 3) An exploration of how teacher attitudes and beliefs are related to their students' attitudes and beliefs.

Question: Do students and teachers have to participate in AYD research and evaluation to participate in the AYD program?

Answer: No. Participation in the research and evaluation effort is completely voluntary and is separate from participating in the AYD program. Teachers only participate in research and evaluation if they sign a consent form, and students only participate if both the parent (or legal guardian) and the student sign the consent form.

Question: If I as a student or teacher participate in the AYD research and evaluation, what will be required of me?

Answer:

First, a consent form must be signed by a parent or legal guardian as well as by the student. A teacher must sign a consent form as well.

Then, on the first and the last day of the summer bridge experience, students take an online survey about ideas taught in AYD. On the first day of staff development, teachers take a survey about ideas taught in AYD; then they take a similar survey at the end of the summer bridge experience.

In addition, in some sites, a university researcher will interview students and teachers to learn more about what participants liked and didn't like about AYD, and to collect feedback from participants to help us improve the program.

Question: How much of my time will the research and evaluation take?

Answer:

For students, about 15 to 30 minutes for each survey on the first and last day of the summer bridge experience; this time is built into the class schedule.

For teachers, about 15 to 30 minutes for each survey on the first day of the teacher professional development and the last day of the summer bridge experience.

For those students who are interviewed, we will need an additional 5 to 10 minutes of their time to talk one-on-one with a university researcher. These interviews will be conducted so that students do not miss any instructional time.

For teachers who are interviewed, we will need an additional 15 to 30 minutes of their time to talk one-on-one with a university researcher, before or after class.

Question: Why do I have to sign a consent form? What is its purpose?

Answer: For a researcher to collect any information from students or teachers, The University of Texas at Austin requires that all potential participants be aware that they are participating in a research/evaluation study. This is called **informed consent**. Only students who have a parent or guardian sign a consent form, and who sign this consent form themselves, can take the AYD surveys and/or be interviewed by a university researcher.

And the same holds true for teachers who respond to a survey and or interview questions—first they must sign a consent form that shows they have informed consent about the study.

No data is collected or reported for individuals who do not return completed consent forms.

Question: What steps will be taken to protect my privacy if I sign the consent form and participate in the study?

Answer: We do not publish information that reveals the identity of any individual—or any information that could be traced to an individual—who is participating in the study.