

The
 Youth
Leadership
Academy[®]

An engaging program for youth that develops social and emotional skills to reduce the incidents of bullying and discrimination and ensure safe and supportive schools for improved academic performance.



Urban Tech's Youth Leadership Academy®(YLA) Empowers Teens Through Technology & Life Skills

Being a teenager in America is not always easy. Young people today face tremendous obstacles to success. Without the tools to address these challenges, our kids don't stand a fighting chance.

Founded by the National Urban Technology Center (Urban Tech) in 1995, the Youth Leadership Academy®(YLA) enhances self-esteem and builds leadership skills among under-served young people. YLA provides a positive learning experience so that learning is valued and becomes a part of each and every day.

The YLA Curriculum is organized around seven (7) building blocks for positive youth outcomes:

Leadership

- Learning to analyze and address community problems
- Understanding the power of collaboration
- Stimulating public service and advocacy
- Inspiring youth leadership for solutions to community problems

College and Careers

- Developing long-term career goals
- Emphasizing the value of lifelong education
- Preparing for college

Work Readiness

- Learning about the workplace
- Building work readiness and job seeking skills
- Teaching effective money management and financial literacy skills

Financial Literacy

- How to manage a budget
- Tell difference between what is "needed" and what is "wanted"
- How to save and avoid debt
- How to open and manage bank accounts

Healthy Living

- Maintaining a balanced diet and regular exercise, reducing stress, and avoiding tobacco
- Raising awareness about the dangers of substance abuse
- Encouraging personal responsibility for one's sexuality
- Presenting the facts about the transmission, prevention and treatment of AIDS and STDs

Character Development

- Creating an environment for learning and sharing ideas
- Building self-esteem and trust
- Learning the value of empathy, reaching out, staying positive, and showing respect for others
- Fostering teamwork and collaboration
- Examining ethical issues and choices
- Setting personal goals and objectives

Effective Communication

- Developing active listening skills
- Practicing steps toward conflict resolution and peer mediation
- Developing effective presentation skills
- Learning restorative practices to resolve bullying, discrimination and other acts of violence

Teaching and Learning Strategies

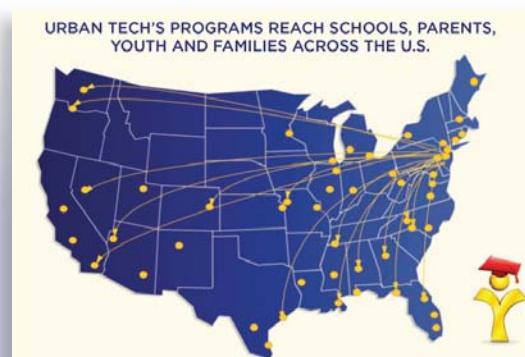
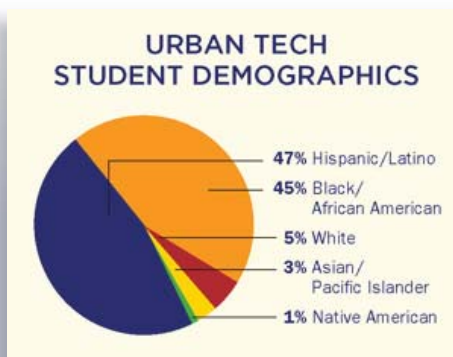
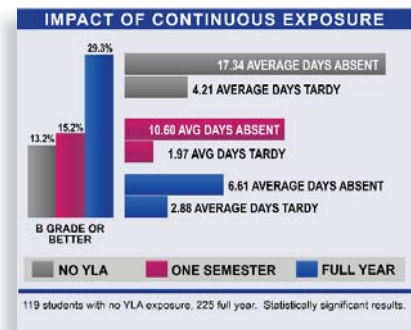
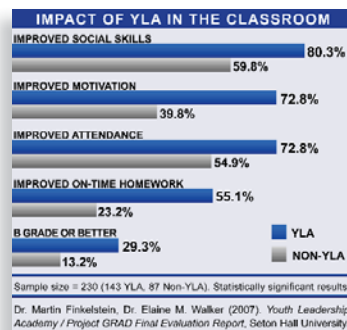
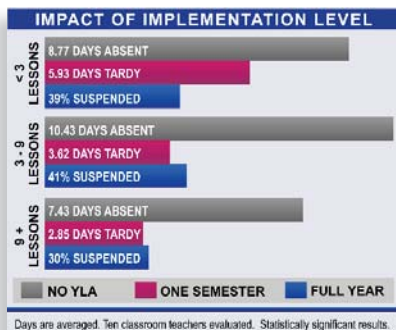
YLA is at the forefront of educational technology in both design and implementation. It uses an interactive interface and entertaining web-based applications to create a stimulating learning environment for youth and promote the image that it's cool to be smart. Urban Tech's experienced staff provides your team leaders with extensive on-site staff development on the YLA curriculum; and its web site allows easy access to curriculum guides. Graduates of the program place new value on learning, leadership and community service.

Participants learn how to:

- Set goals and assess outcomes
- Strengthen critical life skills through multimedia-rich animation and interactive exercises
- Build computer skills such as using the Internet, working with spreadsheets and word processing, and developing multi-media presentations
- Communicate their ideas using PowerPoint presentations, collect and analyze data using spreadsheets and access the vast resources of the Internet for research using browsers and search engines.

Proven Results

Independent evaluation of YLA has shown that the simulation improves student performance - helping to develop the critical thinking skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Schools have shown increases in graduation rates, reading scores, and math scores after the introduction of YLA into their curriculum.




Innovative Ways to Reach Youth


Recognizing that young people learn in many different ways, YLA has developed an exciting new multi-media rich curriculum that uses animation, interactive exercises, music and simulation.


YLA is delivered through a smart interface that looks like a TV show and involves teens like a video game. YLA creates a unique learning environment that allows participants to analyze, explore and respond to issues and store their work in an online portfolio.


Here is how it works...





 **On the Reel** is the animated short that starts off each module, in which “The Crew” of virtual teens provide examples of how to sidestep the pitfalls of adolescence by understanding the consequences of their decisions.


 **Break It Down** replays portions of the animation that the YLA Team Leader uses to facilitate group analysis and discussion. This activity teaches teens to identify problems, assess risk, draw conclusions, and communicate effectively.

 **Write to the Point** allows participants to express their individual views in an electronic journal to reinforce the lessons learned in prior sessions. Students use their critical thinking skills while strengthening their language and reasoning skills.

 **We Got Game** takes the lesson to a physical plane, allowing students to act on the topic and to integrate the lesson experientially through floor games and role-playing. Participants learn to trust and work collaboratively in groups.

 **Final Answer?** is a TV-style quiz game that measures retention without feeling like a test. It allows for evaluation and assessment of participants.

 **Glossary** provides definitions of unfamiliar words that appear throughout the text in the interface. This enables the exploration and use of new language.

 **Hot Link Library** encourages further study of the topic by providing links to relevant content on the World Wide Web. Participants integrate history, geography, economics, and language arts into the Life Skills modules.

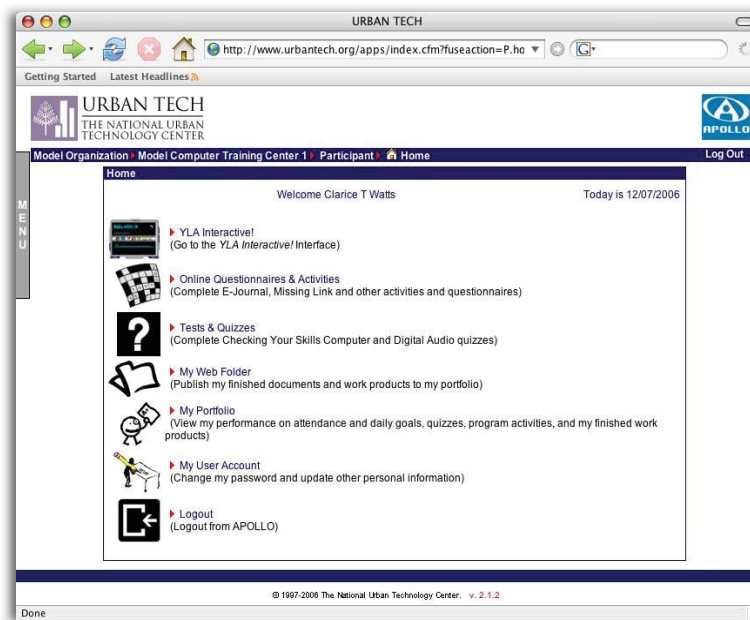
Tracking and Evaluation



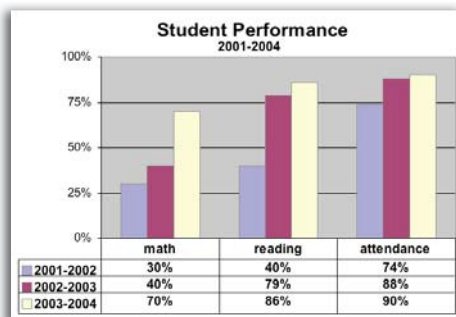
APOLLO (A Portfolio of Life Skills and Learning Outcomes) is an online, student-centered tool for enrolling youth and tracking individual outcomes. Whether you are an educator, program sponsor, school principal, youth program administrator, parent or mentor, APOLLO empowers you to see program outcomes and access real student work with a few mouse clicks. You can now explore the richness of students' work without relying solely on a numerical assessment of the student's accomplishment.

APOLLO gives instructors the means to assess, intervene and provide options for improving student learning during the program. It measures both quantitative and qualitative outcomes and tracks the performance of YLA participants in the following ways:

- E-Journal
- Daily Pulse
- Online Student Web Folders
- Online Competency Tests
- Pre/Post Quizzes
- Self-Assessment Questionnaires
- Digital Student Portfolios
- Graphical Reports



APOLLO yields highly reliable data because data collection of participant progress and program outcomes is automatic, online and real-time. Parents and other caregivers are empowered to participate in YLA by having access to view student portfolios and support students in the program.



APOLLO can help you to provide the outcomes data that donors require in order to justify continued funding for your programs, obtain new support to expand the activities or extend the reach of your programs, as well as build the credibility of your existing programs and your organizations' reputation for serving the community.

Available Modules

Each of the following modules can be taught individually in class sessions or together as a comprehensive curriculum.



Bullying Prevention YLA focuses on reducing the incidents of bullying and discrimination by providing participants with the information they need to understand bullying, the learning activities that enhance their relational skills, and the tools to create an anti-bullying environment in schools and communities. This module is designed to help young people develop empathy and mindfulness, understand the impact of bullying behaviors on others and the importance of bystanders in the bullying cycle.



Team Building Participants create an environment for sharing ideas and building relationships that are essential to working and living together in a community. They examine the way teams work - learning what motivates people, understanding the value of diversity, and analyzing the dynamics of high performance teams. The curriculum addresses issues related to reaching out to others, taking positive risks, building trust, and practicing good judgment.



Self Discovery Participants examine their interests and talents. With this knowledge they set both short and long-term goals - to accomplish what they want in life. Participants learn to advocate for themselves. This module helps young people discover their own personal learning style and offers suggestions for using this knowledge to improve their performance in school.



Personal Appearance Participants learn the importance of personal appearance, body language, and good hygiene as they apply to different situations. They learn the value of employing healthy grooming habits like brushing teeth, washing hair, caring for nails and applying deodorant. Participants learn the difference between having an individual style in a personal, casual setting, and dressing appropriately for a professional setting, and how to assess the value in both.



Conflict Resolution YLA participants explore conflict resolution styles that achieve positive results, and use problem-solving techniques in emotionally charged situations to achieve mutually satisfying outcomes. Participants are taught to isolate the cause of a problem, communicate their feelings in neutral language, negotiate solutions, and be willing to compromise. Participants explore the effects of tone of voice, body language, and personal responsibility. They engage in participatory activities such as role-playing and improvisation, which broadens perspective and sharpens listening skills.



Community Building Participants examine the possibility of positive change in a community starting with the vision of an individual, or small group, and causing a ripple effect of energy and action throughout a large network of people who want to make a difference. The module aims to get participants interested in civic involvement and service, which is often at odds with the perception that being "cool" means not caring about anything. Participants learn more about their community and work together to build a vision for a community in which they will be better able to live, and learn.



Healthy Habits Participants engage in experiential learning that addresses the multitude of factors which influence habits and lifestyle. Participants improve their knowledge, attitudes and behavior by getting the facts about foods that add nutritional value versus those that add “empty calories.” They conduct self-assessments to discover whether they need to increase their physical exercise or change their diet to achieve optimum health for a lifetime. Positive attitudes toward health are reinforced in the curriculum through group discussions and interactive exercises. Participants also set their own goals for healthier lifestyles and learn about the effects of cigarette smoking.



Budgets and Banking Participants learn how to manage money wisely, distinguish between necessities and luxuries and understand the benefits of saving over time for specific, well-planned purchases. Teens are instructed in basic financial concepts, such as the importance of having a savings account and developing a budget to monitor income and expenses. Topics also include basic banking services and personnel, managing credit card spending and avoiding accumulating debt. In this module participants examine the reasons behind their spending and the influences that advertising and image have on behavior.



Educational Planning Participants learn about the benefits of finishing high school and planning for education and career; how to identify available options for post-secondary education; how to recognize relationship between education, careers and lifestyles; develop effective study habits and time management skills; learn on-line resources for SAT and Act preparation.



****Personal Relationships** This module helps teenagers develop healthy, rewarding relationships. Participants build the skills to identify their own values, feelings and attractions, understand the outside influences that affect their behavior, and then apply their interpersonal skills to realize mutually respectful and healthy relationships. They will begin to discern the different levels of intimacy that relationships assume and the risks and responsibilities that come with them. This module is intended to provide skills to support teenagers in the difficult decisions they will make about sex in their young lives.



****STD/AIDS Awareness** This module encourages teens to take action to protect themselves and their communities against the public health threats of STDs and AIDS. Participants investigate topics such as the life-threatening consequences of irresponsible sexual activity, examine their own behavior and health risks, and learn to make healthy decisions grounded in personal and social responsibility. Participants become aware of the long-term health risks associated with sexually transmitted diseases, different ways disease is transmitted, and the physical symptoms of STDs and AIDS.



****Substance Abuse Prevention** Participants build the critical thinking skills necessary to assess risk and the consequences of using drugs and alcohol, take steps to increase their self-control and self-esteem, develop coping skills for relieving stress and anxiety, and build positive, healthy attitudes despite the negative and unhealthy influences they may face. Through the activities in this module, participants come to see the value in becoming “powers of example”, or role models, to fulfill their own dreams and make a difference in their community.

****More appropriate for grades 7–12.**



About the National Urban Technology Center

The National Urban Technology Center (Urban Tech), a not-for-profit educational corporation, transforms lives through the power of technology by giving youth the capacity for positive behavior and academic success. Urban Tech achieves its mission by teaching students essential life skills, and by training and coaching parents and educators to support social and emotional learning. Urban Tech works with schools, community-based organizations, youth development centers, religious organizations, and social service agencies.

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