

Exploring Community-Based Transition and Employment for Youth with IDD: A Photovoice Project

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Project PEACE

- The aim of Project PEACE is to improve transition opportunities for youth with IDD, which then promotes better employment outcomes.
- To create sustainable change, we believe it is critical to take a community-based approach to this research.

Background

- For this project, we implemented a photovoice research methodology, through which stakeholders take pictures of a phenomenon and describe the meaning behind the images.
- This method allows us to directly hear from and collaborate with youth with IDD in our community to improve transition opportunities.
- Photovoice is also a great tool for participatory action research and allows participants to communicate their thoughts and experiences in a creative, accessible way (Jurkowski, 2008).

Methods & Results

Cohort 1: Virtual

5 one hour sessions
5 youth participants aged 14-22



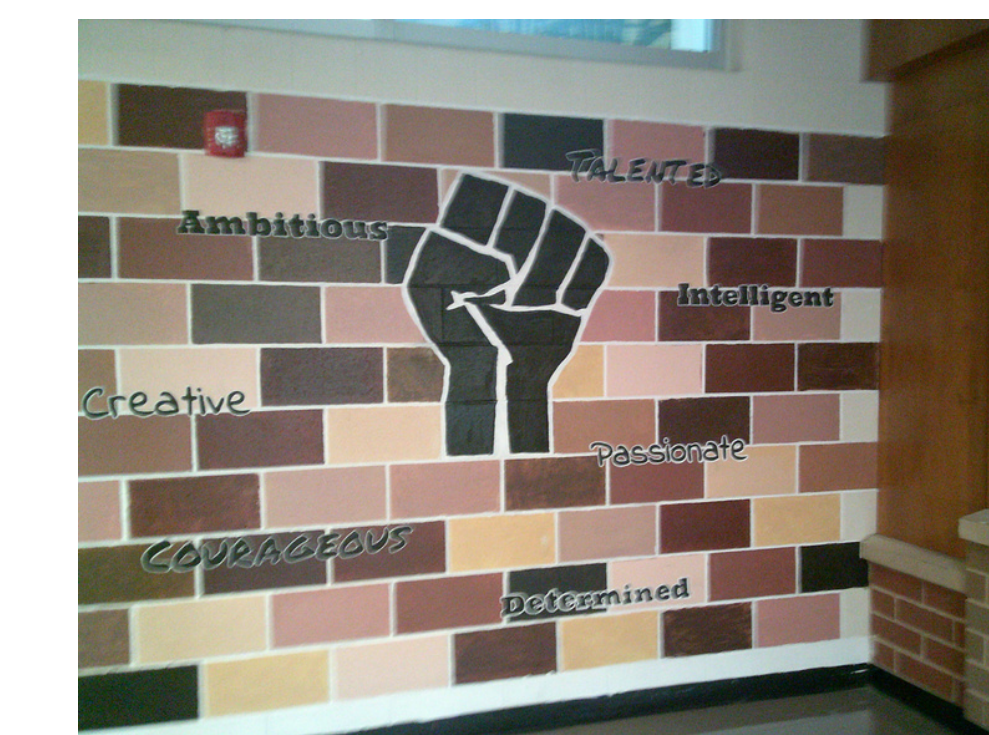
Youth: "Math is hardest, hardest subject to do."

Researcher: "So that's what the mountain represents to you...you have a hard time learning that."



2 Research Questions:

What are your employment goals?
What are your employment barriers?



Researcher: "What kind of training do you think you need to do that?"
Student: "Like, training. Like I just go to, uh, college, church and then get my accomplishments and then, then start doing culinary."

Cohort 2: Classroom

5 one hour sessions
13 students, 8 research participants aged 14-21



Researcher: "What's your favorite thing to do?"
Student: "To draw and paint for painting and art. Picture Art, paint work."



Key Takeaways

1. Community and school-based partnerships are key to conducting community-engaged research.
2. Photovoice is not only a good research methodology, but it also serves as an opportunity for career exploration, self-advocacy, and story telling.
3. Future work will include the creation of student photovoice portfolios and photovoice lesson plans for different settings.

