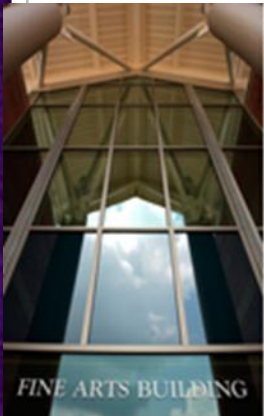


# The Ins & Outs of Participatory Action Research

Seb Prohn, Faculty Liaison  
University Participant Program  
Western Carolina University



# Presenters

Maria Paiewonsky, Institute  
for Community Inclusion,  
University of MA Boston



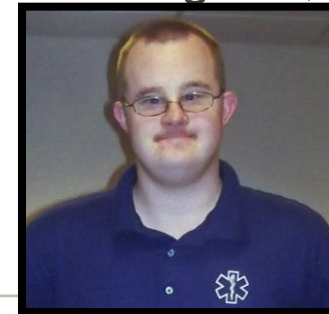
Kristen Love, Institute for  
Innovative Transition,  
University of Rochester



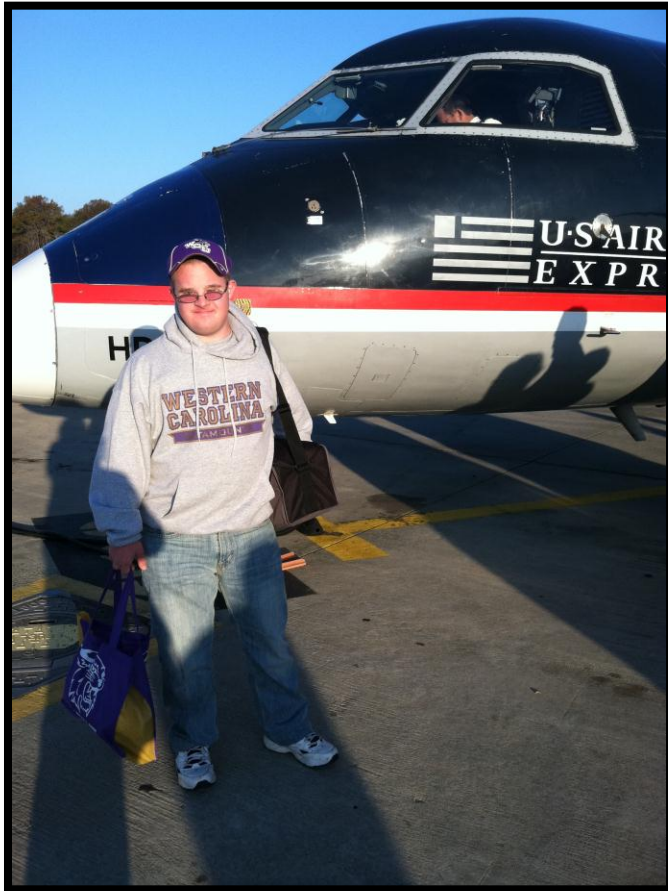
Seb Prohn, University  
Participant Program,  
Western Carolina  
University



David Maennle, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year  
Participant, University  
Participant Program, WCU



# Flying & SoCal Mexican Food



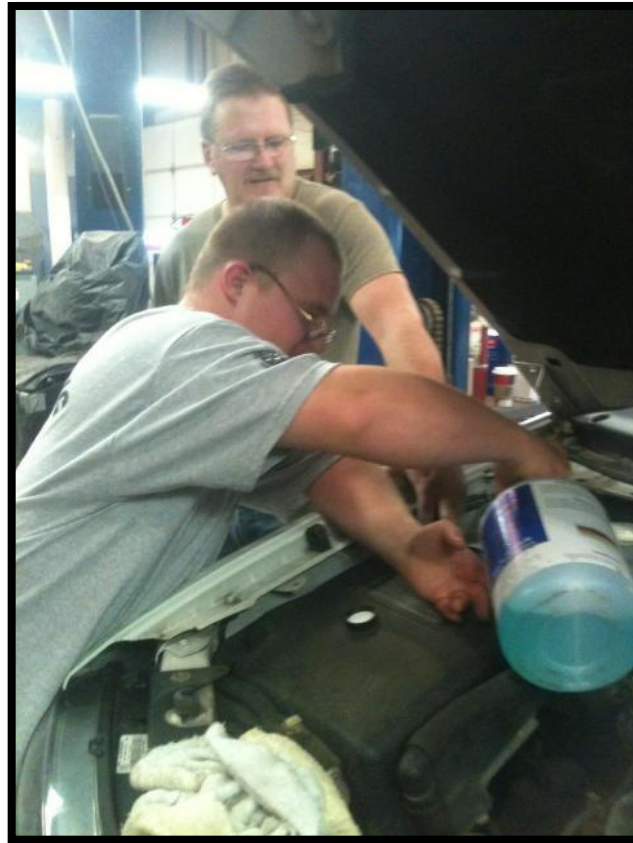


# Long Beach & TASH

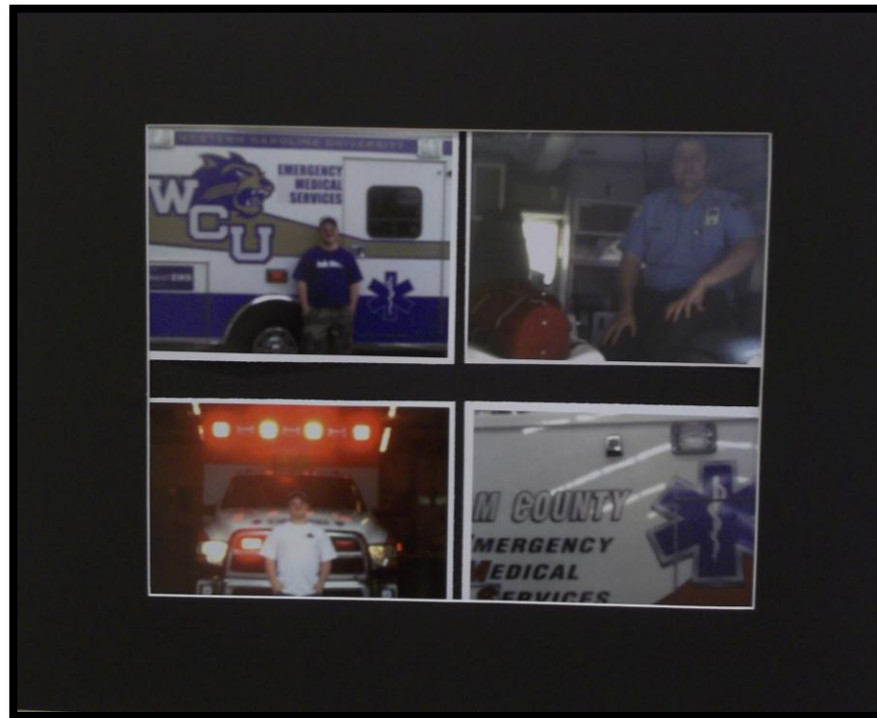


# Directing photography at work

“David has requested that this photo be shown at his PCP meeting...He is doing an awesome job at work!”



# Sharing Favorite Campus Experiences



*I like it much, EMT (Emergency Medical Technician), helping people sick and hurt and in wrecks... Learn a lot up here. WCU.- David*

Why inclusive research?

# Inaccessible research with individuals with ID

- Researchers often don't reduce complexity when explaining research content or purpose.
- Methods (surveys, interviews, focus groups) modifications are limited.
- Limited transportation options to engage in research activities that are designed to be participatory and ongoing.
- Feeling that opinions are ignored by professionals.



# Recommendations

- Teach participants the research process
- Develop easy to understand approaches to seek consent
- Use multiple and intensive data collection strategies
- Presume participants' credibility
- Use plain language
- Produce dissemination materials that are universally accessible and meaningful

What is PAR?

# Participatory Action Research

- “a research approach that consists of the **maximum participation of stakeholders**, those whose lives are affected by the problem under study, in the **systematic** collection and analysis of information for the **purpose of taking action and making change**” (Nelson, Ochocka, Griffin & Lord, 1998)

# Participatory Action Research

PAR



Expertise

- Participants are experts of environs and experiences
- Lacked by 'outsiders'

Knowledge

- Co-created
- Amplified
- Usefulness

Values

- Self-determination; democracy; social justice; collaboration; equity

Actions

- Participants formulate problems; construct solutions; collect & analyze data; disseminate; plan



Our efforts to make PAR accessible  
and meaningful.

**Seb: Western Carolina University**

# Photovoice

*visual representations both depend on and produce social inclusions and exclusions*  
Rose, 2007

## What is photovoice?

- **Recording** experiences via photography
- Photographs **promote dialogue**
- Participants **convey** experiences, interests & concerns to broader audience.



*I am learning how to walk to classes and how to be a...I don't know... a grown up, I guess. Anna, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Participant*

# Why use Photovoice in PSE research?

- Photography **concretizes** more abstract modes of expression (Booth & Booth, 2003)
- **Engages** people with limited social and communication abilities”(Jurkowskii & Paul-Ward, 2007)
- Talk no longer has to stand in for complex experiences that words have difficulty capturing (Larsen, 2008)
- Photographs can **reveal realities** that researchers and the public are unable or unwilling to access” (Wang, 1999)



*I'm doing the same thing that any other student does- doing homework, getting assignments done when they are due... I might do it a little differently...but I'm still getting it done. Andy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Participant*



# Providing student support

- What is a story? Practice telling one's college story.
- Technical training, pictures & direct application; mitigate camera damage & loss (carrying case is essential)
- Photograph etiquette/ethics training
- Practice and feedback
- Brainstorm prior to photography; use images to create a list of reminders for low literacy



Training topics: holding a camera; lens obstruction; centering; background distraction; lighting; flash; zoom; camera etiquette; 'themes'; storytelling

If you are outside, make sure the sun is behind you when you take a picture.

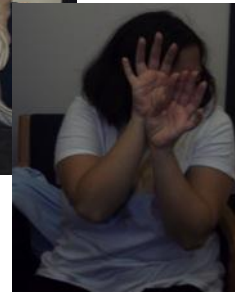
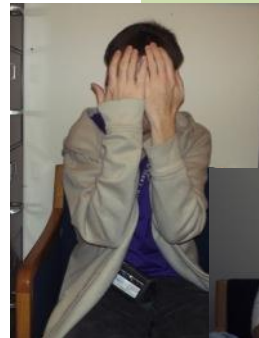


Is it OK to take anyone's picture?



What should you do before taking anyone's picture?

Using Flash



# Practicing technique

As a team



Go outside



with your cameras



and

take 4 pictures each of things that say WCU or have a catamount



Show me you know how to ZOOM and take good pictures.

Show me your pictures. Then we'll practice taking people pictures.]





*[In] Intro to CJ (criminal justice), right now we are learning about police and civil rights. It's kind of interesting; we talk about different cases and different topics..."*

Photograph & Quote  
by Alexa, 1<sup>st</sup> Year  
Participant





# Installment in WCU Showroom



Kristen: new York

# Methods

## Mock & Love (2011)

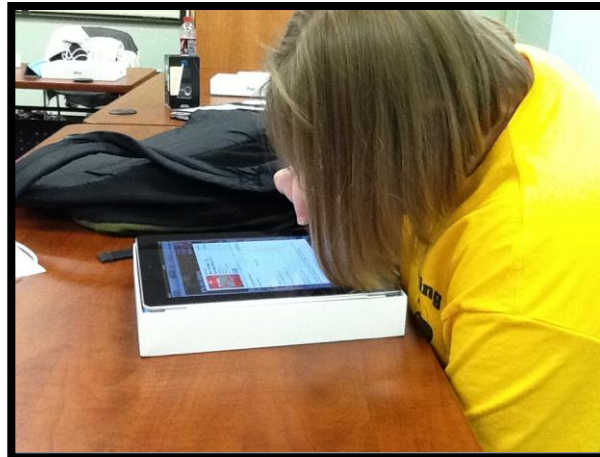
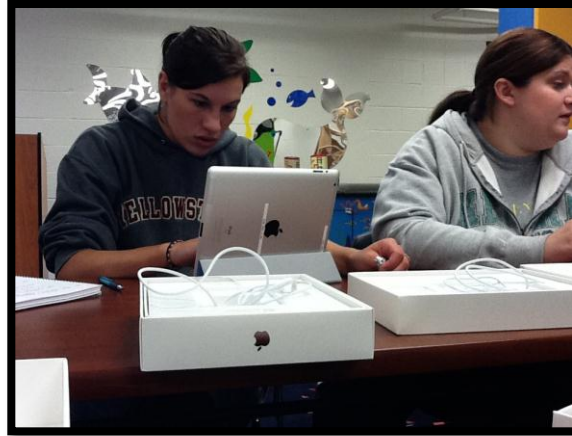
- 3 focus groups
- Media project activity - 7 weeks
- Follow up interviews
- Staff interviews



# Media Project Activities

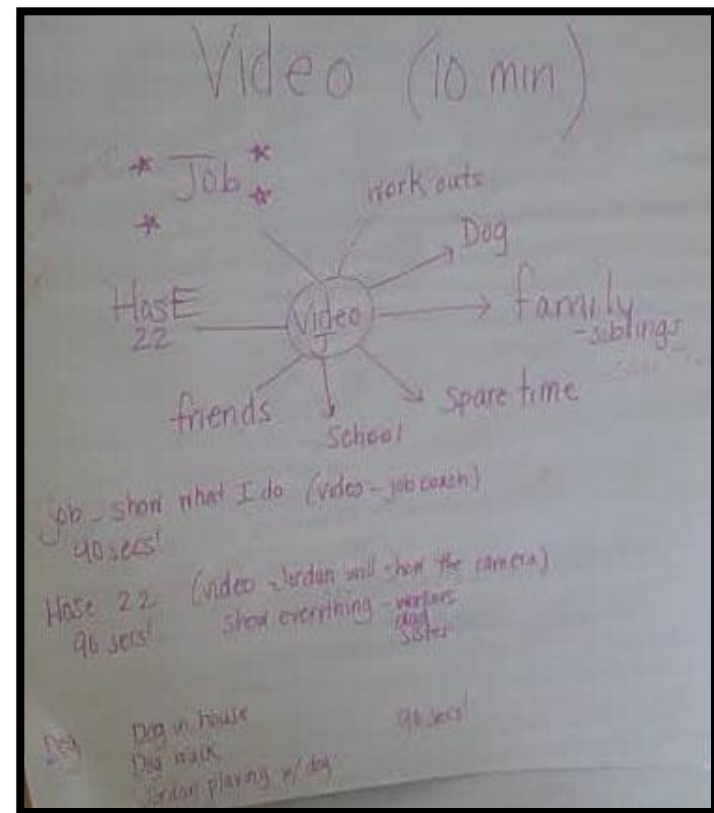
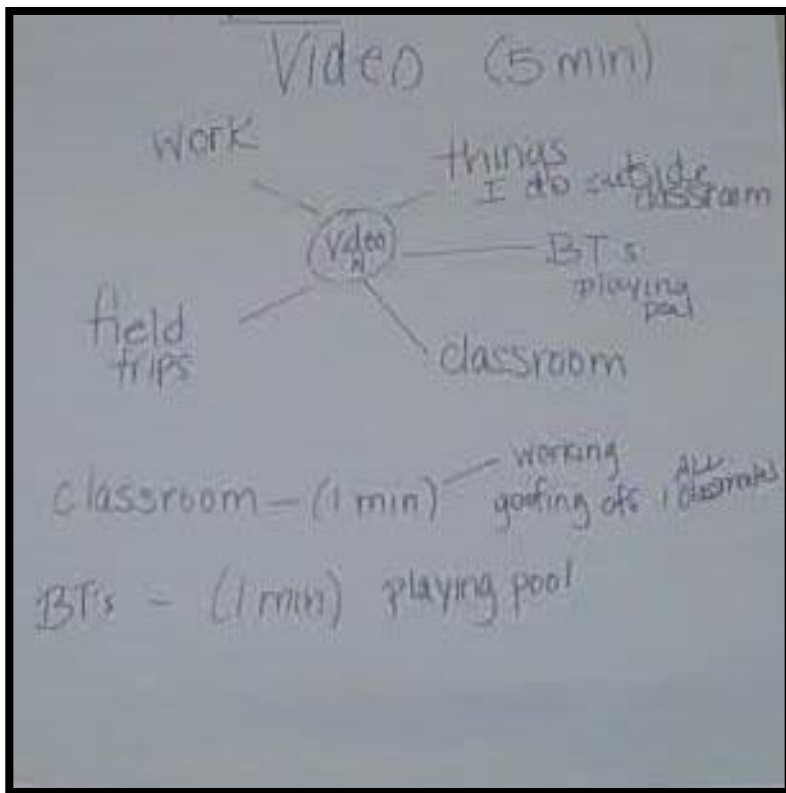
Week 1	Focus group session
Week 2-3	Learn iPads and cameras for media projects
Week 4	Concept mapping
Week 5-6	Taking pictures and second focus group
Week 7	Publishing projects and third focus group

# Learning the iPads and Cameras





# Concept Mapping



# Student Focus Groups

## Mock & Love (2011)



1

- Describe a typical day at college?
- How do those activities make you feel?
- In the next 5 years, where do you envision yourself?



2

- Why did you choose to take this picture?
- Tell me what you see in this picture?
- Why do you think this event is important to you?
- How do you feel about this picture?



3

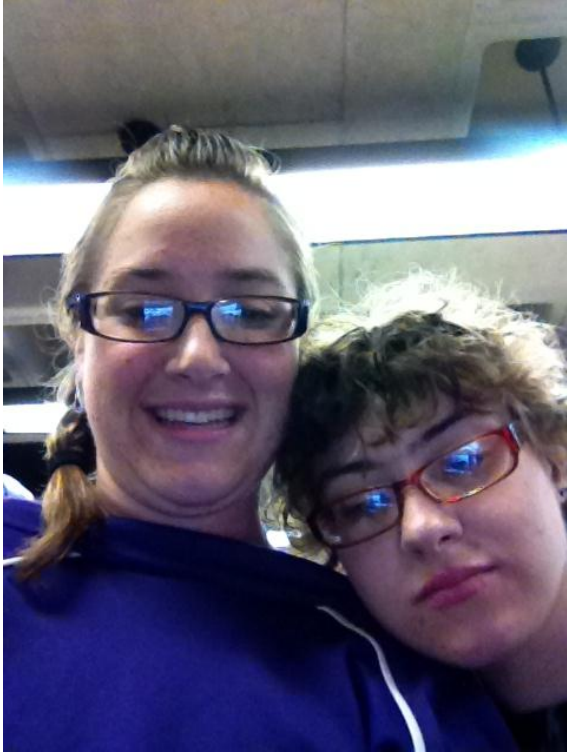
- What do you think about the theme?
- Do you see any other examples where \_\_\_\_\_ occurs?
- What other things do you see occurring with your projects?

# Student Follow Up Interviews

Mock & Love (2011)

1. What is your favorite/best thing that you have done on the campus?
  - a. How did those events or interactions make you feel about yourself?
2. What did you learn about yourself now after going to college?
3. How do you think going to the college has changed you as a person?
4. If you were to tell someone about your college experiences, what would you say?

# Taking Pictures of Friends and Mentors



# Maria: Massachusetts





## Massachusetts Inclusive College Partnerships

### Roxbury Community College

- Revere (Revere High School)
- Boston (Boston Adult Technical Academy, Boston Day and Evening Academy, West Roxbury Academy, English High School)

### Bunker Hill Community College

- Boston Public Schools (Madison Park Technical High School, Charlestown High School)

### UMass Boston

- Boston (Dorchester Education Complex; Madison Park)

### Bridgewater State University

- Brockton Public Schools
- Carver Public Schools
- Marshfield Public Schools
- North Attleboro Public Schools
- Weymouth Public Schools
- Whitman-Hanson Public Schools

### Quinsigamond Community College

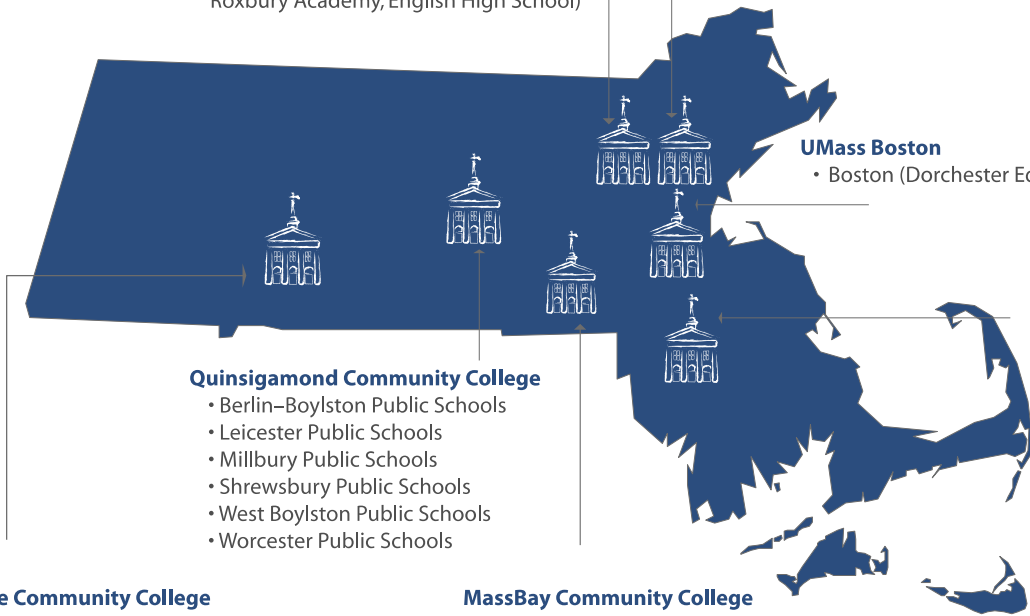
- Berlin-Boylston Public Schools
- Leicester Public Schools
- Millbury Public Schools
- Shrewsbury Public Schools
- West Boylston Public Schools
- Worcester Public Schools

### Holyoke Community College

- Agawam Public Schools
- Monson Public Schools
- Northampton Public Schools
- South Hadley Public Schools
- Ware Public Schools
- Westfield Public Schools

### MassBay Community College (Wellesley Hills Campus)

- Newton (Newton South High School, Newton North High School)
- Cambridge (Cambridge Rindge & Latin)
- Boston (West Roxbury Academy)



# Two student cohorts

- Worked with two cohorts of students 1-2 times a month over the course of two semesters to complete all phases
- Location of work: colleges, high schools, town libraries
- Students took over 300 photos or videos
- Posted on Voicethread; over 200 comments

# Assume role of research facilitator

To promote and sustain engagement of participants, the researcher assumes the role of research facilitator. In this position, the research facilitator:

- (a) establishes and encourages relationships between all participants,
- (b) promotes effective communication strategies and supports,
- (c) enables productive work from all members, and
- (d) ensures that all members benefit from the process (Stringer, 2007; Wadsworth, 2006).

# PAR Toolkit



- Camera, pocket video camera, or digital recorder
- Printed directions for selected camera or recorder
- Extra batteries
- Printed directions to change the batteries and recharging
- Permission form for taking photos
- Contact information for the research facilitator
- Flash drive to store all the images

# Data collection guidelines



- What places do you go to on the college campus?
- What do you do there?
- Describe your best day at college
- Describe the hardest day at college.
- Any advice for younger students?



# VoiceThread

The screenshot shows the VoiceThread website interface. At the top is a navigation bar with links for 'voicethread', 'About', 'Products', 'Support', 'Browse', 'Create', 'MyVoice', and a user profile for 'maria.paliewonsky@umb.edu'. Below the navigation bar is a large video player area. On the left of the video player, there is text: 'Express your presence with incredible simplicity. **M/5 Commenting** will transform the way you discuss media.' A yellow arrow points from this text to a play button icon in the center of the video player. The video player itself shows a cartoon character in a kitchen, with a yellow circle around a hand holding a knife. To the right of the video player is a technical drawing of a mechanical part, with a yellow arrow pointing to it. Below the video player are buttons for 'Collaboration Solutions', 'Business', 'Pro', 'Higher Ed', and 'K-12'. At the bottom of the page are three promotional boxes: 'voicethread UNIVERSAL Redefining Accessibility', 'NOW AVAILABLE VoiceThread Mobile' (with a smartphone image), and 'PENNSTATE Client Profile: Teaching and Learning with VoiceThread at PSU'. The footer contains a 'Home' link, 'About', 'Products', 'Support', 'Universal' links, and a copyright notice: 'Copyright © VoiceThread LLC 2007-11 Terms of Use'.

voicethread About Products Support Browse Create MyVoice maria.paliewonsky@umb.edu

Express your presence with incredible simplicity.  
**M/5 Commenting** will transform the way you discuss media.

Collaboration Solutions Business Pro Higher Ed K-12

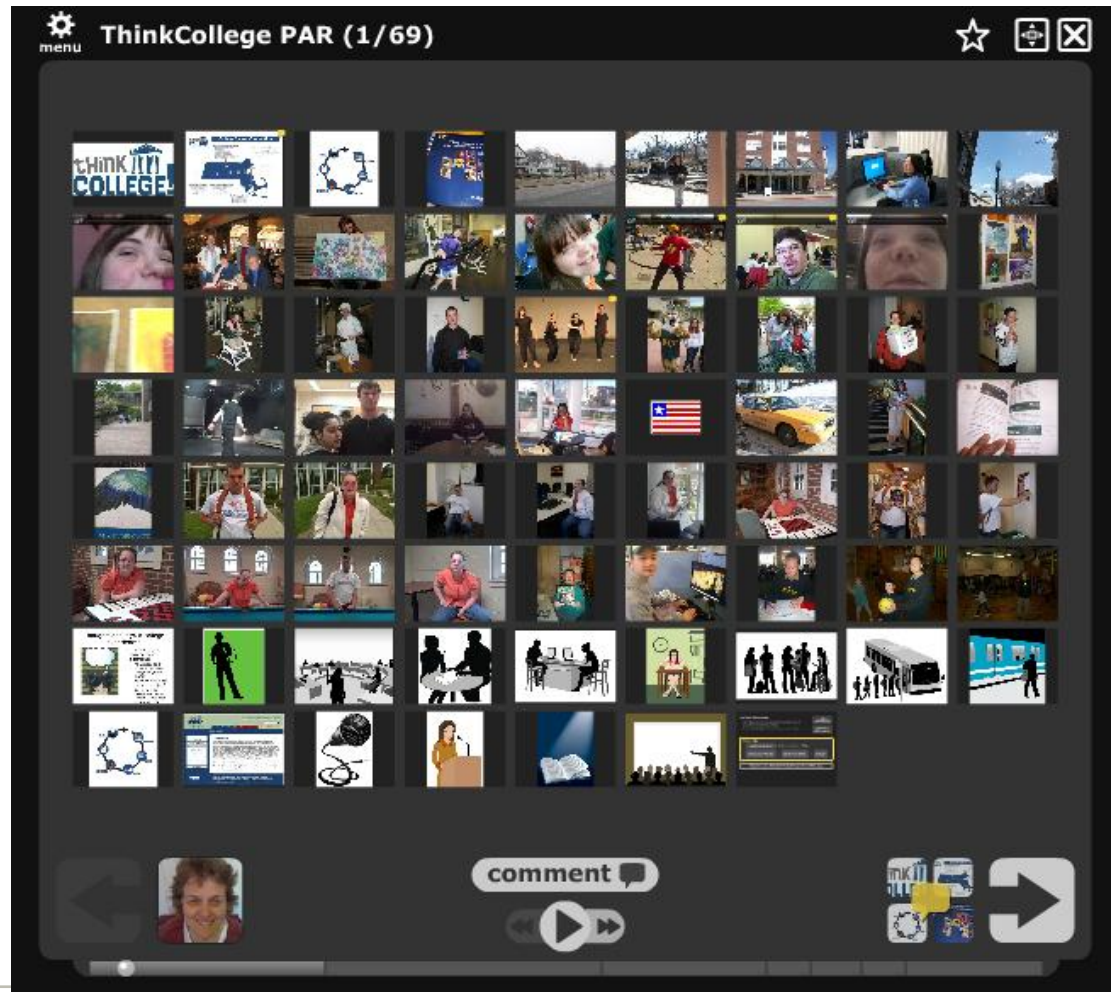
voicethread UNIVERSAL Redefining Accessibility

NOW AVAILABLE VoiceThread Mobile

PENNSTATE Client Profile: Teaching and Learning with VoiceThread at PSU

Home About Products Support Universal Copyright © VoiceThread LLC 2007-11 Terms of Use

# Think College Student Research on VoiceThread



# PAR Benefits

# PAR Benefits for Students



*I was a little bit scared because I went to the bottom, but I knew my friends were there. They were teaching me how to stand up and jump in without being afraid.* Ashley, 1<sup>st</sup> Year Participant

- Improve identity and confidence (Booth & Booth, 2003)
- Capacity/skill building & sense of ownership (Jurkowski, 2008)
- Build capacity for advocacy (Kramer, Kramer, Garcia-Iriarte, Hammel, 2011)
- Involvement and self-determination influence one another (Wehmeyer, et al., 2011)
- Conceptualize and reflect on college experience.
- Stories are a resource- access to resources

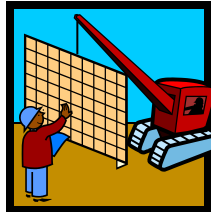
# PAR Benefits for PSE Research

- Consistent with ethos of inclusion
- Revealing perceptions & diverse understanding develop PSE programs
- “counterbalance the power differentials typically held between researchers and people with intellectual disabilities.” (Kramer, Kramer, Garcia-Iriarte, Hammel, 2011)
- Build awareness/ challenge views of incompetence



# Recommendations

# Develop easy to understand consent forms



UP



## **How long with this evaluation project last?**

The project will last at longest through the spring 2013 school semester.

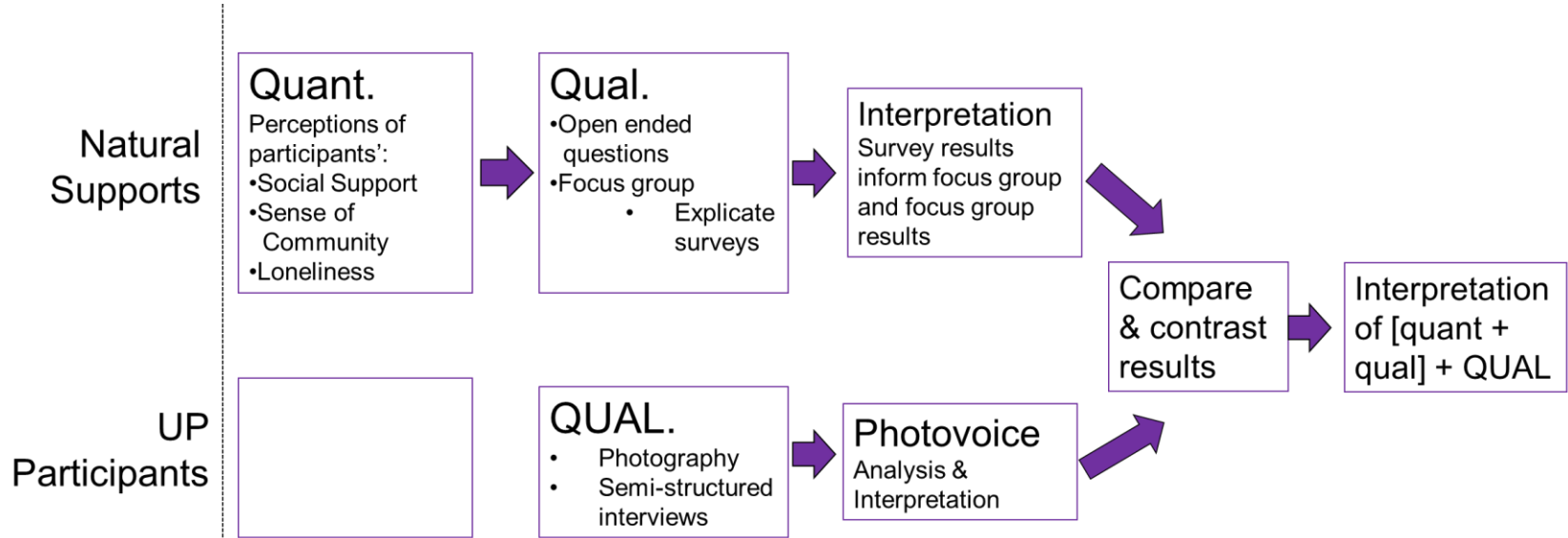
## **What are the benefits and risks of partnering in this evaluation project?**

If you want printed copies you will receive copies of your photographs. You will learn about doing research in the college environment. You will be able to tell your own stories related to your photographs, express your feelings and opinions that will help make the UP Program and WCU best support present and future UP participants. The main risk is that someone will recognize you in the photographs.

## **Will I be paid for participating in this evaluation project?**

You will not be paid for participating in this evaluation project.

# Sample Mixed-Method, Participatory Design



# Analysis Paralysis

- Just get started.
- Don't fixate.
- Start small
- Make improvements with each iteration.
- Partnerships in planning & research. Include students!

# UP.WCU.EDU

- Please reference the UP website for further information
- Feel free to contact Seb with any questions or comments

Seb Prohn, UP Program Faculty Liaison & Outreach  
Coordinator

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828.227.2712