

FACULTY RESEARCH FUND

Award Date: Spring 2016

Proposal Title: Using “Sight Beyond My Sight” to Understand Culture and Identity of
America’s Youth

Principal Investigator: Gabriel Tait

College of Media and Communication

Department: Media

Using “Sight Beyond My Sight” to Understand Culture and Identity of America’s Youth

In the recent Pew Research Center study, Millennials: A Portrait of Generation Next there are number startling of observations that many of America’s youth lack the wherewithal to navigate many of the challenges in their young adult life (bullying, gun violence, peer pressure from social media, lack of after school related activities, and divorce).

This research explores the ways in which youth (age 13-21) visually communicate and make sense of issues surrounding their culture and identity through the medium of photography. By utilizing the “Sight Beyond My Sight” (SBMS) qualitative participatory research methodology, the researchers hypothesize and argue that by gaining more accurate information (through photographs produced by participants) and insight (through structured and semi-structured interviews) into how participants see themselves, those who interact with them will be able to do so more effectively and ethically. Relationships that are healthy and culturally sensitive are crucial in human development--especially, during the formative years of this millennial generation. In helping participants to make meaning of their experiences, they not only learn more about themselves, but the world around them.

The study will be comprised of subsections of America's youth with organizations in three cities: Jonesboro, Arkansas (City Youth Ministries /Jonesboro Youth Carter Temple CME), St. Petersburg, Florida (Men in the Making), and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (The Pittsburgh Project). The data collection will take place over July and August 2016.