

Vision 2027: Supporting Youth Engagement in the Skilled Trades



A group of Students and a mentor with boxes they built at a Vision 2027 event. Photo provided by Junior Achievement-Northern and Eastern Ontario.

Background

There are not enough young people entering the trades to replace retiring workers, leading to a labour shortage in these critical sectors.

Junior Achievement-NEO (Northern and Eastern Ontario) is a not-for-profit seeking to address this problem through their Vision 2027 youth education programming.

Average age of Journeypersons in specific trades in Peterborough (2019)



Retrieved from: Work Force Development Board

Methods

Literature Reviews- Establishing background information on the barriers to the trades and the best and worst practices for addressing those barriers.

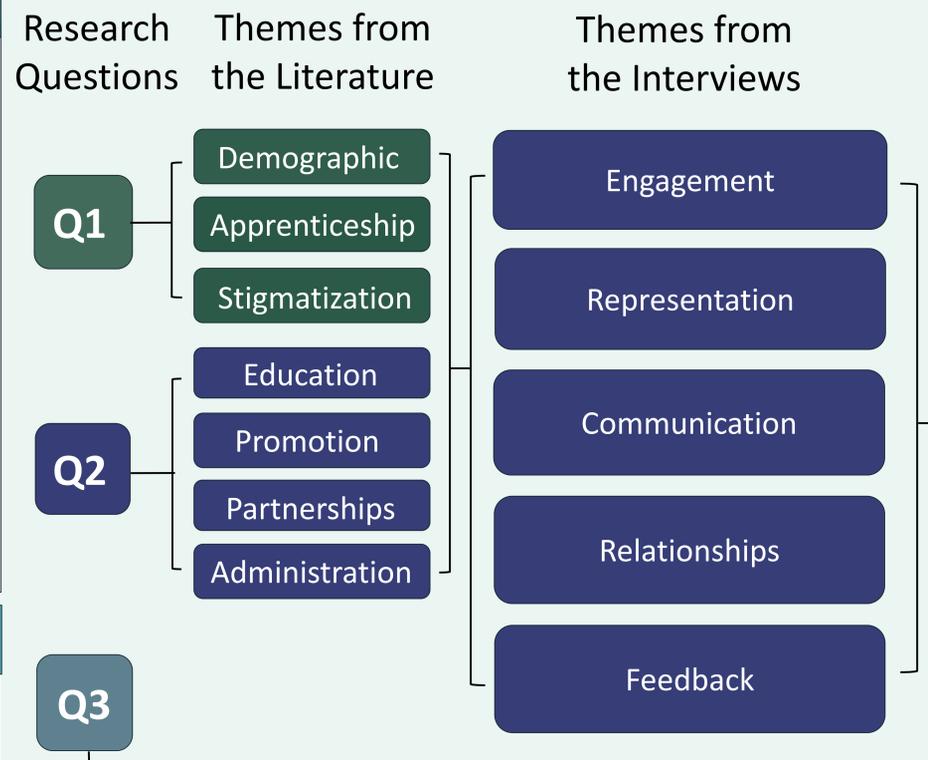
Semi-Structured Interviews- 10 interviews with program facilitators, mentors, a financier, and an educator across four different organizations.

Coding Transcripts- To extract themes and suggestions.

Research Questions

1. What are the barriers to pursuing the trades that young people face in the Peterborough area?
2. What are the best and worst practices for addressing the barriers to entering the trades?
3. To what degree does the Vision 2027 project support increased youth engagement in the trades?

Project Overview



Scan this QR code to be taken to the JA-NEO webpage

“Without tradespeople who are willing to get dirty, work in the cold, and in the rain, and in the snow, we wouldn't have buildings, hospitals, roads, we wouldn't have anything.”

-Program Facilitator

Results

Through the literature reviews we extracted three themes related to barriers to the trades in Ontario, including demographic-specific barriers, barriers related to the confusing apprenticeship system, and barriers related to the stigmatization of trades occupations. Regarding how best to address these barriers we asked four groups of people who had experience with various trades engagement programs at different levels. From the responses, we were able to extract five themes for which we could base our evaluation of the Vision 2027 program and provide suggestions. These themes include community and student engagement, representation, clear communication, building and maintaining relationships, and feedback mechanisms. We are currently still working on our evaluation of Vision 2027 and our suggestions.

Discussion

We believe that there is further opportunity for research on this topic. For example, this research could be repeated with other types of interviewees to achieve a wider understanding of the best and worst practices for engaging youth in the skilled trades through a program setting.

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