

Researcher/Educator Greetings – Example Discussion Questions

Introduction

“Greetings” are short meetings between museum educators and research assistants that occur at the beginning of each shift that researchers are conducting a study on-site.

Early-Semester

Questions to explore with “Novice” research assistants

- Can you tell me about the different conditions (the different situations that kids will be in so you can compare)?
 - Do you run the study differently depending on the child’s age?
 - How does each part of your study relate to your research question?
 - Why were these particular stimuli, questions, and/or tasks selected?
- When you observe how the kids respond, what are you looking for (what are you measuring, and how)?
- What is your hypothesis (how do you think kids will react in these different situations, and why)?
- Can you tell me a little about other research done on this topic?
- Why did you/your lab decide to study this question?
- How is this research applicable to everyday life?
- What do you say to parents while you are going through the consent form with them?
- How do you introduce your study when talking to the parent of a participant (e.g. explain what you will ask the child to do, make it clear you are doing research not just playing a game)? How do you introduce your study when talking to the parent of a child who is an educational opportunity?
- Today, instead of running me as a participant, can you go through the study with me as you would with a child who is an educational opportunity?

Mid-Semester

Questions to explore with “Experienced” research assistants

- [Updates to the study]: How is data collection going? What are you finding so far? Are children performing as you predicted? Are there any changes in procedure, instructions, or conditions?
 - Are you having trouble keeping children interested in the study (getting children to complete the study)?
 - How would you explain to parents what you do with the information you are collecting (e.g. data analysis, drawing conclusions, writing papers)?
- Have you faced any recruitment challenges? What are those challenges?
 - How do you approach and handle groups of children (e.g. school groups, camp groups, friends)?

- If you have more than one active study, do you run multiple studies on the same day? How do you handle recruiting for and running multiple studies in the same space on the same day? (Studies may have different age groups, stimuli, and research questions.)
- What recruitment strategies work best for you when recruiting participants?
- How do you vary recruitment strategies based on the needs of the visitor?
 - Do you usually approach parents or children first? Do you approach parents and children the same way?
 - Do you change the way you recruit visitors depending on where you are in the space?
 - Do you change your approach depending on the age of the child you are hoping to find to participate?
 - Do you use the same strategies for educational opportunities and participants?
 - If you are recruiting a potential participant then realize that they do not fit your study criteria (e.g. not in the age range, not with a guardian, etc.), how do you transition into talking about your study as an educational opportunity?
- How do you handle situations where the child and parent have different interest levels in participating in the study?
- Tell me about an interesting/unexpected response from a child while working with the Living Lab. Why was it so interesting?
- Tell me about an interesting conversation you've had with an adult during your Living Lab experience. Why was it so interesting?

Late-Semester

Questions to explore with "Veteran" research assistants

- [Updates to the study]: Have you been able to draw any conclusions from the data you've collected? Are these conclusions based on your personal observations or data analysis? Do you have some ideas about what question(s) you/the lab might explore next?
 - Do your results support your hypothesis? (Were your conclusions surprising? If they were, why?)
 - How do your results fit in with the current understanding of your research topic?
- What is challenging about describing your work to the public?
- What questions do adults ask about this study?
- What impact has working in the Living Lab had on you? On your research?
- How would you describe your experience participating in the Living Lab this semester?
- What personal attributes helped you work successfully with the Living Lab?
- What skills has working with Living Lab helped you to develop? How?
- How does the design of your study fit in with the museum environment (e.g. type of stimuli, research topics/applications, etc.)? How does this make it easier or more difficult to run through the Living Lab?
- What were the best and most challenging parts of running research through the Living Lab?
- What is one thing you know now, that you wish you had known when you started doing research with the Living Lab?