

Dare to Compare

Post-Redesign Evaluation

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January 2013

THIS IS A POST-REDESIGN EVALUATION REPORT

After an exhibit has been renovated, redesigned, or refurbished in preparation for the Exploratorium's move from the Palace of Fine Arts to Pier 15, an interview and observation study is conducted. The purpose of the study is to identify any major issues that would require immediate attention prior to the move. This collection of redesign evaluations will serve as a baseline of information for the Exploratorium's new exhibit set at Pier 15.

Post-redesign studies like this one **are conducted quickly**, which may mean:

- small sample sizes
- expedited analyses
- brief reports

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Study Goals

After an exhibit has been renovated, redesigned, or refurbished in preparation for the Exploratorium's move from the Palace of Fine Arts to Pier 15, an interview and observation study is conducted. The purpose of the study is to identify any major issues that would require immediate attention prior to the move. This collection of redesign evaluations will serve as a baseline of information for the Exploratorium's new exhibit set at Pier 15.

General goals:

- To confirm that visitors are able to access and use the exhibit
- To confirm that visitors can build a basic understanding of the exhibit's content
- To uncover visitors' frustrations and confusions
- To understand whether visitors move on from an exhibit for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons

Exhibit Description

Visitors compare different viewpoints of a chosen individual by sliding panels that reveal strips of color. The sliding panels list key features that generally define personality, such as cooperative/competitive, calculating/compulsive, intuitive/analytical, pessimistic/optimistic, extrovert/introvert, etc. By assigning relative quantities of personality attributes, they create colorful personality portraits and lively discussion that bring to light visitors' theories of how traits and behaviors fit together—or don't.



Methods

Uncued observations and interviews were conducted. A researcher randomly selected visitors who crossed an imaginary line on the floor that stopped facing the exhibit with two feet planted and either looked at or touched the exhibit for approximately 15 or more seconds.

Uncued visitors do not know they are part of the study until after they finish using the exhibit so their behavior can be considered representative of normal use patterns. This means that some of the visitors in this study may have used the exhibit only briefly. Visitors were approached after they left the exhibit and asked if they would be willing to participate in a 7-question interview about their experience at the exhibit.

Demographics

Gender	Count (N=12)
M	5
F	7

English as a Second Language?	Count (N=12)
N	11
Y	1

Estimated Age	Count (N=12)
8-12	2
13-17	2
18-29	3
30s	3
40s	1
50s	0
60+	1

Visitor Group Composition	Count (N=12)
Adults-only	5
Adults with children	3
Adults w/ teens	4
Adults w/ teens and children	0

Findings

Holding Time

This is the time the visitor spent using or otherwise engaged with this exhibit. The amount of time a visitor spends at an exhibit is influenced by many factors and can indicate level of engagement or interest, but not as a measure on its own.

Time at exhibit	mm:ss (N=12)
Mean	3:32
Median	2:21
Minimum	1:10
Maximum	9:54

Visitor Behaviors

Visitors were observed as they used various parts of the exhibit.

Center sliders?	Count (N=12)
No	2
Already centered	2
One station	2
Both stations	6

Adjust traits?	Count (N=12)
No	0
One person	1
Both stations	11

Number of rows rated	Count (N=12)
1-3	1
4-9	0
All	11

Discuss ratings?	Count (N=12)
No	1
During	0
After	8
Both	3

Appear to be unsystematic?	Count (N=12)
Yes	1
No	11

Visitor Interest

Visitors were asked about their interest in the exhibit and why they rated from “not interesting” to “very interesting” (1 – 7).

Interest Level	Count (N=12)
High Interest (6-7)	5
Moderate Interest (4-5)	7
Low Interest (1-3)	0

Visitor responses:

H	When you start with your partner and pick a person, it is very humorous; certain aspects you agree on different points of view, others it was unique and humorous.
H	Because it is cool to compare opinions of each other.
H	Comparing two people's opinion about a third person-- a matter of perspective. Shades of color was an interesting way to show the amounts.
H	It was fun to figure out... fun to show her what I thought of her... in a playful way.
H	I am with my daughter and we picked my mother. We both know her well, but we have different relationships with her. It was interesting to see our choices, there was a greater level of agreement then I predicted.
M	Cool. What she thought about it too. It was interesting.
M	I liked it but I didn't know...
M	I like to see what other people think of this person.
M	She liked it. It was fun-- it was pretty fun comparing the two people.
M	Because my friend didn't come over.
M	I don't know. It's just fun to describe someone.
M	Because it had people introduce themselves to me. She doesn't speak English.

Visitor Frustration or Confusion

Visitors were asked to tell us if there was anything confusing or frustrating, what the source of the frustration was, and whether or not it made them want to leave the exhibit and move on to another one.

Source of visitor frustration or confusion*	Count (N=12)	# that wanted to move on
Another person interfered	1	0
Some expressions I don't know what they mean...	1	0
Partner did it differently	1	0
Nothing Frustrating or Confusing	9	--

*Totals may add up to more than N = 12 because visitors gave more than one response.

Visitor Understanding

Visitors were asked what they think the exhibit was about with the goal to determine whether or not they have a basic understanding of the concepts presented and to identify possible areas of misunderstanding. We acknowledge that this study has a small sample size and that these findings illustrate trends and may not be representative.

It appears that visitors DO have a basic understanding of concepts presented.	X
It appears that visitors DO NOT have a basic understanding of concepts presented.	

Visitor responses:

- About seeing how much you know about an agreed upon person... their personality. What you think you know and to compare it.
- Perception.
- Seeing the differences and similarities of partners comparing and contrasting personalities.
- Mind tricks, descriptions and details.
- Each of us have different perceptions about people. We view people through a window of perception. It may or may not be true. Comparing a person highlights the realities of each window.
- Telling the difference between what you think of the same person.
- To see how much we notice each other, to see how we talk about each other -- it's also a picture of what we think we are like in our heads.
- Compare how different people see things. It was fun. We had good laughs.
- I didn't read it, but its about comparing and contrasting perceptions of a mutual friend, and seeing the differences of that mutual friend.
- How you see a person.
- I live in Japan. The chakra coloring system is similar to the coloring system used. I thought that was kind of cheesy.
- Human perception, social psychology.

Visitor Reasoning for Leaving the Exhibit

The goal of this question is to explore how open or closed-ended the exhibit seems to be for the visitor. Visitors tend to leave exhibits for intrinsic reasons, such as feeling bored, or finished with the experience, or for extrinsic reasons, like having to go to lunch or being distracted by another exhibit. Leaving for intrinsic reasons could suggest a more close-ended exhibit experience.

Reasons for moving on to the next exhibit	Count (N=12)
Intrinsic	5
Both	3
Extrinsic	4

Visitor responses:

Intrinsic	After doing it multiple times.
Intrinsic	<i>Once we were done with it. We tried it once.</i>
Intrinsic	<i>After I finished looking and comparing with my daughter, we talked briefly and then we were done.</i>
Intrinsic	<i>Because we were finished. I didn't know what it was, then I did it.</i>
Intrinsic	<i>Because of the language barrier. I can't translate some of those words in Japanese, so I guess I had anxiety about it.</i>
Both	<i>Whether another exhibit was open or not. [Anything else?] I wondered if we understood the exhibit very well.</i>
Both	<i>Just over it. My friend didn't come over to look at it.</i>
Both	<i>Because I was finished and I wanted to see other things.</i>
Extrinsic	<i>The time. Someone's behind you; you don't want to take up too much time.</i>
Extrinsic	<i>To do this [points to center of attention exhibit].</i>
Extrinsic	<i>To see what else is here. It's really interesting. I like seeing things we haven't seen before or learning something new.</i>
Extrinsic	<i>My daughter said, "Let's go and see what's in the cinema."</i>

Conclusions

Based on this small sample, we conclude that the redesigned exhibit does not require immediate remediation. This evaluation did not identify sufficient impediments to visitor use, engagement or basic understanding.

APPENDIX: Graphic Panel

dare to compare

You and your partner may describe the same person in very different ways.

Try this:

- Agree with your partner on the same person to describe. Now each of you stand at one of the two stations.
- Start with all panels centered. Each of you slide the panels out to show how much these characteristics fit the chosen person. (Very playful? Slide the panel all the way. A little playful? Slide the panel just a bit.)
- Now compare these personality portraits. How did your descriptions of this person differ?

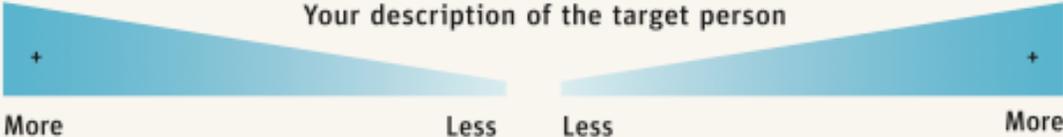
What's going on?

Counselors, teachers, and other professionals use words like these to describe people. This exhibit lets you play with ideas about personality and think about different ways of seeing the same person.



Find a partner!

Your description of the target person



Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Emily Leighton for observing, recruiting and interviewing visitors for this study.

This material was created with funding provided by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect their views.

