

Black Creativity Innovation Studio 2017

Research and Evaluation Executive Summary

Goal

This research and evaluation project was designed to develop a measure of equity in the Black Creativity Innovation Studio (BCIS) as perceived by guests, educators, staff and researchers.

Why

One of the goals of BCIS is to make innovation experiences accessible to all. Yet, research in the field of makerspaces and tinkering labs show that they are not historically accessible or responsive to audiences underrepresented in STEM fields and hobbies, which tend to be demographically dominated by white, middle- and upper-class males.

What

Equity was defined using a framework derived from research publications made by others studying makerspaces. We described equitable makerspaces as having a broad sense of playfulness, a guest-centered approach, making learning explicit, acknowledging the history of inequity in makerspaces, and having facilitators be aware of their own goals, challenges and beliefs.

Who

The following were included in the project:

- Adults and minors attending the afternoon drop-in sessions.
- Educators attending the morning group sessions.
- Staff who facilitate the experiences (volunteers were not included).
- Staff of the Research and Evaluation Department.

How

- Adults, minors and educators were given surveys at the end of their sessions.
- Staff were given surveys before and after their sessions.
- Researcher and Evaluation staff observed both group and drop-in sessions and took structured notes.

When

Data was collected during the winter 2017 BCIS programming season.

What

Data was collected from 46 adults, 21 minors and 15 educators. In addition, 28 staff surveys were collected and 14 sessions were observed by Research and Evaluation staff.

Major findings include:

- All guests rated the experience highly in almost all categories.
- Guest demographics were more diverse than general non-group attendance.
- Non-White guests reported that race mattered in their experience more than White guests. However, they also reported it in a positive way. An example quote:

“Having innovations that are Black at the entrance was great. It means a lot for our children to see...”

“My class is predominantly a marginalized group. Given recent politics, them being able to show off their capabilities was great! We need more women and men of color in STEM.”

- When staff report that they were more energetic and excited going into a session, guests reported that the session was slightly less guest-centered. This did not impact their ratings of satisfaction, however.
- We found that the observations of the sessions were not very helpful in measuring equity.

These results have been peer reviewed. They were accepted for presentation at the 2018 American Education Research Association conference.

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