Farrell Fellows Summer Internship Study

Research and Evaluation Executive Summary

Goal

The goal of this study was to learn about who attends the summer science learning sessions hosted in Chicago Public Library branches and Chicago Park District parks, and also to look for evidence of learning and how that may be related to facilitator emotion.

Why

There is minimal information on the population who attend these summer programs.

What

The Farrell Fellows Summer Internship program is an activity that takes place over approximately three weeks in the summer of 2018. Members visit libraries and parks to deliver STEM programming for children and other guests at those sites. The study consisted of asking the summer interns to fill out a questionnaire after they had completed their training and to fill a survey before and after their facilitation. During each session, a researcher would make observations of what occurred in the space. Parents attending the session were also asked to fill out a questionnaire about their child.

Who

A total of 26 interns with an age range of 16-20 participated in the study. About 90 parent surveys were collected at 14 sites.

How

Interns were given a questionnaire after their training was completed to learn more about their demographic background. Then, a researcher visited 13 sites to observe and document what was happening in the space using the Dimensions of Success (DoS) rubric for analysis. The DoS is a structured way to look for evidence of science learning in an informal learning environment. Parents filled out survey reporting on their family's demographics background and educational values. Parents were incentivized with a ticket for free Museum Entry for four people along with a parking voucher.

When

Data was collected Monday-Thursday from July 17-August 9, 2018.

Results

- Children were reported as 54% female/ 46% male.
- Children's race/ethnicity was reported as mostly Latinx (43%) and African American (36%).

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- About 40% of parents reported a high school diploma as their highest level of completed formal education.
- Children had a high interest in science (average 6 on a scale of 1-7) and a moderate interest in science involvement (average 4 on a scale of 1-7).
- Parents highly valued their child's school and science education.
- Interns reported high feelings of pleasantness, relaxation, calmness and confidence prior to engaging in activities at each library/park site.
- DoS scores from the rubric found that one lesson (Mineral Madness) showed more evidence of science learning than the other (Rainy Days).
- Teens who reported more confidence and pleasant feelings were involved in activities that showed higher scores the DoS.

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For More Information: A white paper with more details and results of this study has been prepared and is available via the Museum's web site or by request to msiresearch@msichicago.org.