

ANTHROQUEST: FOCUS GROUP STUDY SUMMARY FINDINGS

Submitted to: Smithsonian Institution

Submitted by: Communicating for Social Change

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, *AnthroQuest: Exploring Our Human Story* project received funding from the Youth Access Program to conduct four focus groups with middle- and high-school students. Groups were conducted in December 2011 – February 2012 with students attending DC public charter schools. The following key themes emerged during the groups:

- The overwhelming majority of students reported spending most of their "out-of-school" time on-line either on the computer or on mobile devices. Students reported engaging in a variety of on-line activities such as Twitter, Facebook, on-line games, YouTube, Skype, oovoo.com, celebrity-watching sites and movie/show sites like Netflix.com or Hulu.com. They find out about new sites or games through word of mouth, friends' Facebook posts, magazines, TV commercials, pop-up computer ads, game trials, game displays at stores or just googling.

- Many participants report occasionally watching *Discovery, Animal Planet, Travel* or *History* channels and, a few report visiting channels' Web sites. Programming on these channels satisfies students' curiosity about the world. All participants said that they like traveling because traveling allows them to explore and discover new cultures.

- Although all participants report that they have visited a Smithsonian museum in the past year, high-school students say that they are more likely to go to a museum on their own.

- Overall, both middle- and high-school students are familiar with the concept of culture, even though some of the male students had somewhat harder time operationalizing it.

- None of the participants were familiar with the concept of Anthropology. Once the participants watched videos explaining the concept, their reaction to the discipline was somewhat lukewarm. However, the participants responded very positively to the forensic anthropology video. Similar to the TV shows like *Bones, CSI or Law and Order*, the mystery-solving aspect captivated their attention.

- Overall, the students expressed enthusiasm for the concept of the AnthroQuest site. They believed that they are the audience for the site. The participants said that if the site were to feature games, such as mystery quests, they would be more likely come to the site on their own and/or will be interested in taking it as an after-school club. The students really liked the idea of earning badges/certificates. Finally, the students said that they would like to see extensions of the site on mobile applications.

BACKGROUND

AnthroQuest: Exploring Our Human Story is conceived as a self-directed, media-rich, online, mobile-enabled learning game experience. Once developed, it will offer youth, ages 10 to 17, particularly those from the lowest performing school districts, meaningful science and humanities learning experiences based around digitized anthropology museum collections. By harnessing and integrating the Web, social networking, gaming and mobile technologies that engage youth, *AnthroQuest* will empower young people -- and their educators and parents -- to use anthropological research and methodologies to explore what makes them uniquely human, to use their own perspectives in their learning about others, and to become better global citizens, with knowledge of, curiosity about, and respect for cultures around the globe.

In August 2011, AnthroQuest received a planning grant from Youth Access Program to conduct a formative qualitative research study among middle and high school students to inform site development and test the concept of the site with the members of the target audience. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- Explore how students experience on-line environment
- Gauge students' interest in the concept of "anthropology" and identify strategies to peak their interest
- Gauge whether students perceive the concept of AnthroQuest as an engaging experience
- Gauge perceived benefits and barriers to engaging with AnthroQuest
- Explore stimulating/engaging ways to enhance students' cultural sensitivity and global awareness using on-line/digital technologies

METHOD

During December 2011 – February 2012, four focus groups were conducted with students attending Washington DC public charter schools. Two groups were conducted with middle school students (seventh- and eighth-graders) attending Roots Public Charter School and two groups were conducted with high school students (tenth-graders) attending Thourgood Marshall Academy. At each location, one group was conducted with female students and one group was conducted with male students. Table I below summarizes study design. Each group had between 8 and 10 participants. A total of 35 students participated in the study. All participants were African-American.

All students participating in the study were given Parental Permission forms (see Appendix A) and were asked to bring signed forms prior to participating in the study. Prior to commencement of the groups, all students received and reviewed the Student Assent Form (see Appendix B). After reviewing the form, students were asked to check the box indicating that they were willing to participate in the study. As a "thank you" for participating in the groups students were offered pizza and soft drinks. In addition, at the end of each group, school staff held a ruffle for a $50 gift card. Finally, to incentivize participation among high school students, TMA's after-school-club coordinator offered students community service credits for their participation.

Table I: Study Design

	Male Students	*Female Students*
Middle School	X	X
High School	X	X

Research instruments were developed to guide the discussion (see Appendix C). Participants answered questions about their on-line behavior, their interests in museums and TV shows, their reactions to the concept of anthropology as a social science discipline, and their reactions to the concept of the AnthroQuest site. Groups lasted approximately ninety minutes.

It is important to note that focus groups are a qualitative research technique used primarily for in-depth exploration of issues, perceptions, and attitudes. Unlike the results of traditional survey research, which are usually based on randomized sampling plans, the findings from the focus groups may reflect, but cannot be generalized to, the larger universe from which participants are drawn. Even if all the participants feel the same way, it does not mean that people with like backgrounds or characteristics will share their viewpoints. However, qualitative research techniques such as focus groups provide valuable information about target audiences that can be used to inform product development.

The following findings reflect the major themes that emerged during the focus groups. Quotations from participants have sometimes been edited for clarity.

FINDINGS

The overwhelming majority of students reported spending most of their "out-of-school" time on-line either on the computer or on mobile devices. Students reported engaging in a variety of on-line activities such as Twitter, Facebook, on-line games, YouTube, Skype, oovoo.com, celebrity-watching sites and movie/show sites like Netflix.com or Hulu.com.

The majority of students said that they spend a lot of time on-line, between 2 and 8 hours a day. In the words of the students:

- "When I'm not at school than I'm on-line 24/7."
- "It is just me and my phone."
- "I never log out."
- "On a school day I spend about 2 hours and on Saturday and Sunday it is about 5 hours a day."
- "As soon as it is 'after-school-time', I'm on-line the whole time."

Almost all students reported to have access to either computers at home or mobile phones with Internet access. One student referred to her phone as a "portable Internet." Only one student said that he does not have a computer at home but he accesses computer at his mother's workplace. Among their favorite activities on-line, students report playing on-line games, checking out Facebook pages, watching videos and chatting with friends and family via Skype or similar applications. Female high-schoolers also mentioned on-line shopping. Overall, female students reported to be more active on Twitter and they were keen to share content on-line (e.g., pictures and videos). Many high-schoolers reported "swatching," i.e., monitoring feed and re- tweeting or re-facebooking when they see something they find interesting.

Boys reported that they really enjoy playing with friends "long distance." One participant offered, "You can beat different groups. It is a competition. You can play different racing games. You can play with different people around the world and talk to them on a headset." In fact, in all groups a number of participants said that they have played a game with someone from another country. Male participants mostly reported playing sports, strategy, puzzles and shooting on-line games.

Overall, participants don't spend time with parents doing on-line activities. A couple of middle school boys said that they tried to play an on-line game with their dads but as one boy summed it up, "it was bad, because my dad was totally clueless." However, many boys report playing games with their brothers or cousins either in the same physical space or virtually.
Participants said that they come to try new games and sites through friends' Facebook posts, conversations with friends, magazines, TV commercials, pop-up computer ads,

game trials, game displays at stores or just googling. High-school girls report visiting Web sites of such TV channels as Oxygen or Disney to check out the games featured on the sites. In the words of the students:

- "I was at my cousin's house and he had this little game where you had to jump over the obstacle course and it had different levels and it was a lot of fun. I got hooked."

- "When my friends say that they played a game and it was cool, I would check it out."

- "I go to Web sites like games.com and I'll see something interesting. I'll read caption lines and if they are interesting, I'll just click on it."

- "My little brother since he was four learned how to type this site into the URL box y3games.info and since then he has been playing all of these cool games and it looked like fun so I started to play too."

Middle-school participants report visiting educational sites like plato, funbrain, prealgebra and mathisfun while in school. High-school students also said that they visit educational sites as part of their class work. Very few students go to educational web site on their own time. However, they do use them to help them do homework. A couple of high-school students said that they used to visit sites like "funbrain.com" when they were younger to play games. One student summed up it up this way, "when you are at home cooling it, you don't look at educational stuff, that's not what you do." This sentiment was shared by the majority of participants.

Among middle-school students, one participant in the boys group mentioned that he does visit Air and Space museum page to play games. When they do visit educational sites, they like playing the games because, as one participant put it, "It makes learning fun. Because when you are playing a game and you get it right, you'll be happy. And then, you get hooked on it, and you want to keep playing it until you do get it right."

Many participants report occasionally watching *Discovery, Animal Planet, Travel* or *History* channels and, a few report visiting channels' Web sites. Programming on these channels satisfies students' curiosity about the world. All participants said that they like traveling because traveling allows them to explore and discover new cultures.

Many students report that they like the educational nature of *Discovery, Animal Planet, Travel or History* channels' programming – "It is better when you can see things instead of reading them out of the books," said one participant. For a number of participants these channels are "time filler" – they turn them on or visit their sites when they are bored. And, as one student said, "Sometimes you just want to learn something new, for example, one day I was wondering what a baby zebra was called – we know baby dog is a 'puppy' – but was a baby zebra? So I googled it."

Other participants shared:

- "I do go on DiscoveryChannel.com because I want to see what them [sic!] gorillas are doing. Sometimes I do watch the Animal Planet because I like seeing them animals interact with each other."

- "I don't go to any educational sites. But sometimes when I'm at home and I'm bored, I do go to Animal Planet and watch them baby sloths."

- "I like watching *Animal Planet* and *Discovery* channel. It is fun to learn about things that you haven't seen before. You can see pandas. It gives you a closer look."

- "I sometimes go to *Animal Planet's* website because I like animals, it is kind of cool to see a video of cheetah chasing an antelope."

All participants said that they like to travel because they can observe new things. In the words of one participant, "I like to travel because you get to see new things. You look at trees around here, they are just regular. You go to Florida, you can see nice palm trees. It is cooler here and you get a different climate there." Another participants offered, "The best part about traveling that all of the things that you read in the history books … you just get to see them with your own eyes. It comes to life."

The participants gave a multitude of reasons for why they like the idea of traveling including: observing scenery; observing the way people are living; learning about government structure; seeing how people interact with each other; learning what language they speak; discovering culture's social structure; observing how other culture's fashion style is different from their own; getting away from what they see as "everyday negativity" in their lives, and trying different foods. One male participant said he'd be very curious to learn how "girls act differently from girls in our culture."

Middle school participants eagerly shared what they knew of other culture traditions and customs. For example, one student said, "In Russia or Italy they consider adding Ketchup to eggs or other food as an insult. Because it would mean that the food has no taste." Another participant offered the following observation, "Some people from different countries do different things. Like in some countries if you do something bad, they would execute you. It's not good but it is interesting…"

Although all participants report that they have visited a Smithsonian museum in the past year, high-school students say that they are more likely to go to a museum on their own.

All of the middle-school participants report visiting Smithsonian museum with their school. Only few report going to the museums on their own time with their relatives. All participants have been on a school trip to the Natural History museum. Their favorite exhibit is gems. The main reason for not visiting museums on their own was that the students felt that it was often boring. One participant summed it up this way, "it is boring and tiring and if you don't understand some of the exhibits and you have to read a lot – those passages are really long, you don't have enough time to do that. Smithsonian museums have too much text like the science museum or Native American museum." The aspects of the museum visits that students enjoy were life-size models and hands-on interactive experiences.

High-school students were more enthusiastic about visiting museums. They said that they like going to Spy Museum, National Building Museum, National Gallery of Art, Holocaust Museum, Newseum and Smithsonian Museums, including Museum of Natural History. In fact, a couple of students referenced current exhibits at some of these museums and also talked about their favorite works of art. The exhibits they like the most at the Natural History museum were gems and jewelry, taxidermy animals and insect zoo. Similar to middle-school students, high-schoolers said that they like the visual learning aspect of attending a museum. Some high-school students said that they don't mind some "text-heavy" exhibits, like the ones at the Spy Museum, because they find the subject-matter captivating.

Overall, both middle- and high-school students are familiar with the concept of culture, even though some of the male students had somewhat harder time operationalizing it.

Students in all groups had a sense of a concept of "culture." For example, when asked, "what is culture?", students offered the following explanations: background, tradition, traits, lifestyle, where you come from, your race, self-expression, everyday life, religion, arts, government, social organization, language, beauty, sum of total living passed from generation to generation, and social norms.

After a brief discussion of culture, the moderator put forward the following exercise, "Let's pretend that you have to send a package that would represent your culture to Mars. You are given a box. You can put no more than 10 items into it. What would be the items that you would put into it?" Female participants, identified such items as braids because they represent a strong African American tradition, iPhone or other "i" products because they represent a new technological frontier, picture of Last Supper or Holy Bible because it represents their religion, gaming equipment and remote control because they felt that "our culture spends so much time watching TV and playing games." Male participants on par with such items as pizza (representing food tradition), music, gaming

devices, metro (a preferred mode of transformation), also included world peace, laundry, girlfriend, and juice.

None of the participants were familiar with the concept of Anthropology. Once the participants watched videos explaining the concept, their reaction to the discipline was somewhat lukewarm. However, the participants responded very positively to the forensic anthropology video. Similar to the TV shows like *Bones, CSI or Law and Order*, the mystery-solving aspect captivated their attention.

When the moderator asked "Are you aware of any social science disciplines that study human life and society?", all participants said "no." Then, the moderator asked, "Have you ever heard the term 'anthropology'?" In two of the groups the participants thought that it was a study of "bugs" and "insect life." One high-school participant volunteered that anthropology was "study of human interaction."

The moderator showed students short-videos posted on YouTube explaining the concept of anthropology. The video shown to the middle-school students was produced by Minnesota Humanities Center, it was titled "What is Anthropology?" The video was about 1 minute 25 seconds long. The video introduced various branches of anthropology using voice-over-photography. After middle-school groups were completed, researchers identified another video that they felt did a better job introducing the concept of anthropology. It was produced by MacEwan College in Canada. The video was titled "Major in Anthropology." It was narrated by a young man and used photo-montage in the background. This video was about 3 minutes 20 seconds long. After watching the videos, students demonstrated an understanding of anthropology as a discipline. They felt that anthropology offered them an opportunity to learn about other cultures. However, their interest in anthropology was somewhat lukewarm. When asked by the moderator about some things that they found interesting about it, a couple of students offered:

- "It deals with who I am."
- "I'm interested in how humans are affected by the society."
- "I'm interested in how society evolves over time"
- "I'm interested in cross-cultural comparison"
- "Multiculturalism, art and linguistics"

The moderator also showed participants a forensic anthropology video narrated by Dave Hunt, Collections Manager at the National Museum of Natural History. The video told the story of a 19th century boy buried in an iron coffin. The video was produced by the Natural History Museum's Anthropology Outreach Office. All participants were visibly interested in the story. They stopped all chatter and really focused on the screen. When asked what their first impressions, one student offered: "Wow, y'all this is so freaking [sic!] interesting! I was really into it. Because they are able to date something like from

1851 and figure out the clothes, and the way he was able to trace this boy's family, and I wonder if I could ever trace my family history back, that would be really interesting."

Comments below like the ones below were heard time and time again in every group:

- "It was really interesting how they found DNA and how they went to the next generation."
- "It was really cool how the iron casket could preserve clothes and how all of it can help you answer the question about the boys identity."
- "It is amazing how they used different kinds of sciences to establish identity of the person."
- "This is really interesting – it is visual, it uses simple language."
- "It is amazing how you can establish someone's identity, identity of the person who have died almost 200 years ago!"

Earlier in the focus groups, moderator asked students whether they watch shows like *Bones*, *CSI* and *History Detective* because these shows use forensic science. Students in all of the groups said that they do and they like these shows. One participant explained, "Because they [the shows] make you wonder what will happen next. It makes you use your brain." The students said that they liked "the mystery about it;" a number of students mentioned that they enjoy the mystery solving process. As one participant put it, "I like *CSI* because I like how they sometimes show things that you can't really imagine and because they show you how they solve the crimes. How they put together the pieces." And, another student offered, "For me it is interesting how the scientists amass evidence, how they analyze the data and use empirical forensics for solving problems." After watching the forensic anthropology video, the students connected the "mystery-solving" aspect that they like about the TV shows to the work of forensic anthropologists. Some found it exciting. They picked up on various methods and disciplines involved in solving this type of mystery. All said that they would be keen on participating in a similar type of a project.

Overall, the students expressed enthusiasm for the concept of the AnthroQuest site. They believed that they are the audience for the site. The participants said that if the site were to feature games, such as mystery quests, they would be more likely come to the site on their own and/or will be interested in taking it as an after-school club. The students really liked the idea of earning badges/certificates. Finally, the students said that they would like to see extensions of the site on mobile applications.

When presented with the demo of AnthroQuest middle-school students had a somewhat harder time than high-school students grasping how the actual site is going to look like. However, all participants watched the story of the Mongolian girl with interest. They reported learning a lot of new information – about the girl's family life, the people's

relationship with deer and importance of deer to their livelihood. One student noted, "This is the story about people who are basically are about to become extinct, right?" Some of the respondents, especially middle-schoolers, found the flash cast itself a bit too long to sustain their attention, some said it was "long-winded." They thought that it might be "cool" to show a video like that during a social studies class. The students said that the video cast aspect of the site was really attractive to them because they don't have to read the information; they appreciated the storytelling approach the video offered. They also liked the story because it transported them to another place/culture and allowed them to experience it.

The students said that they liked the sense of adventure that the site promises. All students, but especially boys, liked the idea of a quest. They said that the site offers an opportunity to "open your mind to new experiences and different cultures" and that it allows one to see the world while in "your own habitat." They also liked the interactive elements of the site.

As noted earlier, all students saw themselves as the site's audience. Some felt that anyone who is interested in history or other cultures would find the site interesting. Many said that they would visit it on their own time. And, many said that they would be interested in participating in an afterschool club based on the site, especially, if it would focus on their passions. High school students said that they would use the site as assistance with homework in history or geography. Participants in all groups, and especially high-schoolers, were enthusiastic about possibility of earning badges (like certificates that they can put on their resume or college application or get prizes like going behind the scenes of Smithsonian collection) for skills they demonstrate on the site that carry certification by the Smithsonian.

Students were given a list of possible site features and asked to check features they would like to see incorporated in the site. Bullet points below tally up the results (N=35). A note of caution, results below only represent opinions of 35 students who participated in this study.

- "Click on a globe or choose an object to navigate through space and time to learn about the cultures of the world" was one of the most favorite features of the site (91%). However, the majority of students (65%) were interested in learning about their own culture/culture roots. Slightly more than half (54%) indicated that they would be interested in learning about cultures different from their own.

- The overwhelming majority (88.6%) liked the ideas of digital stories about cultures according to specific themes. The topics of most interest included: art (85%), food and drink (80%), music and dance (77%), family (74%), self-adornment (74%), war and conflict (66%), language and writing (66%), death and burial (60%), religion and ritual (57%), and shelter and architecture (54%). Their least favorite topics were recreation (40%) and time (31%).

- The overwhelming majority also liked the following three features: "Save images, videos and music clips from the site and that you upload yourself in a scrapbook" (83%); "Create your own digital story about your culture" (80%), and "See your name appear as having completed the Challenge and as having become a specialist in the skills you used to solve the Challenge" (80%).

- Other potential features were ranked as follows:

    - Learn and use scientific techniques that anthropologists use to answer questions (66%).

    - Compare these themes across cultures through time and space (63%)

    - Watch videos of anthropologists describing how they have learned what they know about the cultures in question and what they are still trying to figure out (60%)

    - Earn points for travelling through space and time and experiencing the stories (60%)

    - Share scrapbook with other explorers by posting on the globe (54%)

    - Have comments recognized by the community (Voted Up) (51%)

    - Share items of interest from your explorations through Facebook/Twitter (51%)

    - Receive recommendations based on your interests (48.6%)

    - Join discussions in a forum about the stories (43%)

- Almost all participants liked the feature called "Accept challenges to solve mysteries related to objects in the Smithsonian collections" (94%)

- Their most favored aspects of the "Challenge" feature were:
    - See your name appear as having completed the Challenge and as having become a specialist in the skills you used to solve the Challenge (80%)
    - Look at cultural items (ex. objects of everyday, videos of dancing, recordings of song or speech, written observations, interviews) to understand what different groups value, their relationship with their environment, and their relationship with others (74%)

- Examine very old remains and primate (ape) behavior to help understand how humans became the way we are (74%)
- Win big points for completing the Challenge (71%)
- Look at human remains to fill in gaps in history, representing those not well represented in history (67%)

- Their least favorite aspect of this feature was sharing wins and progress over Facebook (46%). This, perhaps, was due to the fact that only half of the middle-school participants were on Facebook.

Overall, the participants wanted to see more animation, more interactive features, short video clips, bright colors, celebrities, interface that changes frequently and more games. Some suggested the use of avatars or creating games that would cater to their particular interests (e.g., fashion, sports). If the site offered an opportunity to interact with people from other cultures, the participants thought it would be great to see a mobile application that would capture the feed. And, many participants said that if the site had a mobile application they would download it.

Here are some suggestions made by students:

- "I think you should put some avatars in and do a game like the girl [the Mongolian girl in the video clip] lost her reindeer and the avatar can help her find it."

- "Make it a competition – who would solve mystery first."

- "Introduce some social networking elements, like instant chats so you can talk to other people on the quest."

- "Allow players to collect points to go from one adventure to another adventure so the adventure never ends."

- "The game should allow you to go and visit the place in the past and the current times."

- "Like Google maps it should allow you explore things in and around a particular geographical location."

- "It would be cool to play with people in other countries."

- "Have lots of videos and constantly updated content."

- "Have cartoons."

If the site were to be marketed the participants wanted to see it promoted via pop-up ads, TV commercials, celebrity endorsements, game ratings, links through sites they frequent (e.g., Disney Channel, PBS Kids), and word of mouth.

APPENDIX A

Parental Permission Form

About the Research Study

Please read this document carefully

Purpose
On behalf of Smithsonian Institution, Communicating For Social Change has asked your child to participate in a research project that will help us gain an understanding of children's educational gaming preferences. The group discussion will last approximately 90 minutes.

Confidentiality
We will keep everything your child tells us private. We will not use your child's name in the study report.

There may be times when federal or state law requires disclosure of study data (e.g., through a court subpoena). This is extremely unlikely, but if it ever happens, we will make every effort to protect your child's personal information.

Information Collected
We will record your child's comments and opinions about the questions we ask him/her. We will use the information your child and other children in the group provide to help make our program better.

Waivers
We will audiotape group discussion in which your child will participate. We will use your child's voice and anything he/she says on tape, but NOT his/her name. We will only use the tapes to analyze the research findings. We will never show the tapes in public or to sell our services.

Benefits
Being in the study gives your child a chance to share his/her thoughts about their interests and education, and participation will help create an educational program that could benefit many people.

Risks and Discomforts
We do not expect the study to be risky or uncomfortable for your child. She/he may take a break any time she/he wishes; the child should just let the discussion leader know that she/he would like to do so.

Freedom to Withdraw
Your child may stop participating in the group at any time and pass on any questions she/he does not want to answer. If your child does stop the study, we still ask the child

not to tell anyone about the discussion. If your child chooses to leave the study, he/she can still participate in the ruffle to win $50 gift card.

More Information

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Dr. Anya Karavanov at 202.422.8942, or by e-mail at akaravanov@communicating4change.com. For questions regarding your child's rights as a participant in this research, please contact Dr. Doug Herman, Institutional Review Board Chair, at 202.663.8844 or by e-mail at hermand@si.edu.

Informed Consent

By signing this form, you agree that you have read and understood the information provided to you about your child's participation in this study.

Signed: _____ Date:_____

Name (please print) _____

You have a right to keep a copy of this form. Please let us know if you would like a copy.

APPENDIX B

Child Assent Statement Prior to Focus Groups

Earlier you indicated that you are interested in participating in a group discussion, otherwise called focus group, about your interests in electronic games. Please read the following document carefully, it provides some details about the study. Would you like to read the document yourself or would you like me to read it to you?

Hand the child the form or read the form to the child.

About the Focus Group

Please read this document carefully

Purpose
On behalf of Smithsonian Institution, Communicating For Social Change asked you to participate in a research project that will help us gain understanding about your interests in electronic gaming. The discussion will last approximately 90 minutes.

Confidentiality
We will keep everything you tell us private. We will not your full name in the study report.

Once you agree to participate, we will keep your identity and the information you supply confidential and share it only with people who have agreed to keep it confidential, such as project staff and study sponsors. All data will be recorded with code numbers in place of your name. A data file that links you with your code number will be kept in a password-protected file that only project manager can access. Audiotapes will be secured in a locked file cabinet, kept until the end of the project, and then erased. Paper copies of data will be kept in locked cabinets or drawers. There may be times when federal or state law requires disclosure of study data (e.g., through a court subpoena). This is extremely unlikely, but if it ever happens, we will make every effort to protect your personal information.

Information Collected
We will record your comments and opinions about the questions we ask you. We will use the information you and other students in the group provide to help make our program better.

Waivers
We will audiotape today's session. We will use your voice and anything you say on tape but NOT your name. We will never play the tapes in public or to sell our services.

People who are helping the researcher with the project are going to be observing the group discussion behind a one-way mirror. Like the researcher, the observers will keep your identity and the information you supply confidential.

Benefits
Being in the study gives you a chance to share your thoughts about your interests and education/careers, and your participation will help create a program that could benefit many people. This program will assist students within your community and may help them better succeed in the future.

Risks and Discomforts
We do not expect the study to be risky or uncomfortable for you. You may take a break any time you wish; you should just let the moderator know that you would like to do so.

Freedom to Withdraw
You may stop participating in the group at any time and pass on any questions you do not want to answer. If you do stop the study, we still ask you not to tell anyone about the discussion. If you choose to leave the study, you can still participate in the ruffle to win $50 gift card.

More Information
If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Anya Karavanov at 202.422.8942, or by e-mail at akaravanov@communicating4change.com. For questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research, please contact Dr. Doug Herman, Institutional Review Board Chair, at 202.663.8844 or by e-mail at hermand@si.edu

After the child read/heard the above information, ask:

INFORMED ASSENT:

Now that you have read/heard more information about this study, would you still like to participate in the group discussion?

Yes ____

No ___

APPENDIX C

Exploring Our Human Story: A Pilot Planning Project

ANTHROQUEST

FOCUS GROUP TOPIC GUIDE

I. Introduction (3-5 minutes)

START AS CLOSE TO ON-TIME AS POSSIBLE — DO NOT WAIT FOR LATE ARRIVALS

A. <u>Introduction:</u> Welcome, importance of participation, description of focus group.
MODERATOR: *THIS IS NOT VERBATIM*

Hello. Thank you for coming to our meeting today. My name is {NAME} and we are doing research to learn more about your feelings about **<u>on-line games</u>** (not console games, not PS3 players or X-boxes). The idea is to have a conversation with lots of give and take. Your answers to the questions I ask cannot be right or wrong. They are your opinion and your opinions are important. I hope that you will feel comfortable enough to share what you truly think and feel.

I'm interested in all of your comments — both positive and negative. Please don't worry about hurting my feelings with anything you might say. I'm not directly involved in the issues we'll be talking about, so it helps me to do a good job if you tell me what you honestly think and feel.

B. <u>Procedures:</u>

MODERATOR: *THIS IS NOT VERBATIM*

- Mention microphones, mirrors, observers, audio-taping, videotaping, and confidentiality (in keeping with the consent forms)
- I want this to be a group discussion, so you don't need to wait for me to call on you. Please speak one at a time, so that the tape recorder can pick up everything.
- We have a lot to cover, so at times I may change the subject and move ahead. Please stop me if you want to make an additional comment before I move forward.
- Your contribution today is very important. If, during this focus group, you feel uncomfortable or upset by the topic, please let me know. If for any reason you are not comfortable with a question, you do not have to answer.
- Does anyone have any questions?

[IF PARTICIPANT IS UNCOMFORTABLE, OR IF YOU FEEL THERE IS DISCOMFORT, ASK WHY, AND THEN LET THEM LEAVE — BE SURE THEY

UNDERSTAND THAT THEY CAN STILL QUALIFY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RAFFLE.]

II. Warm-Up and Self Introductions (10 minutes)

Before we get started, I'd like to learn a little more about you. Let's go around the room and everyone take a turn telling the group:

- Your first name and a couple of words that best describe you (e.g., music crazy; Wii expert)

    - Let's play a quick game – let's pretend that you have to send a package describing your culture to Mars. You are given a box. You can put no more than 10 items into it. What would be the items that you would put into it? Please jot down your thoughts on a piece of paper in front of you. MODERATOR: Ask for volunteers to share their lists.
    - PROBE: Why did you put this item on the list?
        - How does this represent your culture?
        - How does this represent your culture's values?
        - What does it say about your culture's relationship to your environment?
        - What does it say about your culture's relationship with other cultures?

III. On-line Activities/Educational Sites (10 min)

- How much time do you spend online?

- What are your favorite things to do online? Be specific. [MODERATOR: WRITE DOWN THE LIST ON A FLIP CHART]

- We have a list of online activities (web surfing; using social networking sites; video watching) here on the chart. **VERY BRIEFLY:** What makes these activities your "favorites"?

- How do you usually come to try a new site or game? Please give me a specific example.

- Do you spend time online with your family? With your friends? What do you usually do? What kind of sites do you visit?

- Do you ever visit sites that could be considered "educational" (e.g., Discovery, National Geo) -- where you might be learning some new facts or learning more about

some particular social issue? What were they? What are some things that you like about them? Dislike about them?

- What, if anything, can make them fun?

- Have you ever used educational sites in a classroom? What were you looking up? Was it a fun experience?

IV. Anthropology (25 minutes)

- By the show of hands, how many of you like to travel? What are some things that you like about traveling? How many of you would like to have a chance to go and visit another country? Why would you like to do it? What are some things that are of interest to you when it comes to traveling?

- Have you ever watched documentaries about other countries/cultures? (e.g., something on National Geographic or Discovery channels) In the past or present? What, if anything, are some things that you found interesting about these? Why? Why not?

- Have you ever watched TV shows like CSI, Bones or History Detectives? What do you like about these shows? What do you not like? What would you like to watch more of in these shows?

- Do you like going to art, cultural or natural history museums? Why? Why not? What makes it fun?

- Have you been to any DC art or natural history museums in the past couple of years? What exhibit did you see that you liked the most? What stuck out for you? Why did you go? Would you go on your own to this type of museum again? Why? Why not?

- Are you aware of any social science disciplines that study human life and society? What are they?

- Have you ever heard the term "anthropology"? What does it mean to you – how would you explain it to someone who has never heard of it? PROBE: Does it sound like a science? Does it sound like something you would study in social studies class?

- I would like to show you a short video and ask you a few questions about it. [Show video clip.]

- What is your initial reaction to the concept of anthropology as explained in the video? PROBE:
  - What are some things that you think you might find "interesting" about it? Why? What parts of it are less appealing to you? Why?

  - Anthropology can shed light on why we do certain things in our own cultures and how that behavior compares to other cultures. What are some things that you might be interested in learning more about? Probe: Music? Vampires? Neighborhood? Football? Fashion? (Moderator: Write down the list)

    DEMONSTRATE/EXPLAIN HOW EACH OF THE TOPICS OF INTEREST MIGHT BE AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY (i.e., Where do certain types of music come from—roots of music? How did your neighborhood come to be and how do changes in your neighborhood reflect changes in American society? How long has the concept of vampires been around and what do different cultures think about vampires? Why is football played the way it is? Why do we wear certain clothes and how do fashion trends develop and fade away?)

  - I would like to show you another short video that deals with a particular branch of anthropology, called "forensic" anthropology. After you take a look, I'll ask you a few questions about it.
    - What do you think about this video? What are some things that you found interesting about it? Why? Would you be interested in participating in this type of "mystery solving"?

  - Now that you have seen a couple of videos and we had a chance to talk about them a bit, what is your opinion of this discipline called "anthropology'? If it were to be offered as an elective for your science studies – would you sign up for it? Why? Why not?

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5 MINUTE BREAK FOR KIDS

V. AnthroQuest (35 minutes)

- Now, I would like to shift gears a bit and talk about this idea that we have for creating a website for young people your age. The idea is to present anthropology in fun and engaging ways by allowing players to explore the world and various cultures across time, using the collections and expertise of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

- Let's watch a quick presentation that shows a little about the game that will be a part of the web site and how we think we might design it [SHOW PRESENTATION WITH EMBEDDED CLIP OF MONGOLIA VIDEO AND INUIT FASHION CLIP]
- [MODERATOR: AFTER THE PRESENTATION, HAND OUT WORKSHEETS WITH KEY COMPONENTS AND CONTENT CONCEPTS LISTED.]

- Now I would like you to look over this list we just handed out. Please take a minute to go over the list and check the items that you would like to see on the site. MODERATOR: Ask for volunteers to share their lists. PROBE:

  - What is your overall reaction to the idea of a site like this? What are your likes? What are your dislikes?

  - Which concepts/ideas did you like? Why did you like these?

  - Which concepts/ideas did you dislike? Why did you dislike them?

  - As presented here, how old are the kids who would come to this site? you are they your age? Someone younger? Why?

  - Do you have any suggestions for making this site more fun for someone like you to explore? For you to want to play this type of a game?

  - What are some "must haves" for you in a site like this?

  - If the site did have all of the things we just talked about, can you see yourself spending time on a site like this at home? Why? Why not? IF NOT: What would/could make a site like this more interesting for you?

  - Can you see yourself spending time on a site like this at an afterschool club? Set up as a project – playing/exploring together with a student from another country? Why? Why not?

  - Can you see yourself spending time on a site like this in your science class? Why? Why not?

  - Would a site like this have a life beyond the immediate online presence? i.e. – Facebook? Mobile apps? How would you use those in the context of this site?

  - Would it be interesting for you if you could earn badges [like a certificate that you can put on your resume or college application or get prizes like going behind the scenes of Smithsonian collection] for skills you demonstrate on the site that carry certification by the Smithsonian?

- Do you think that you might be more interested in science if you could learn about it through a site like this? Why or why not? Does the focus on cultures make learning science seem more interesting or relevant? Why? Why not?

- Do any of you have any other thoughts that you'd like to share about anthropology or the concept for this game?

Thank you!