

Attachment O – “Parents of Multiracial Children”
CENSUS FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR’S GUIDE

Instructions to the moderator are in bold italics.

Background information on forms and purpose / intent of the question sections have a gray background.

Thank you all for coming. My name is _____ and I am with JBS International. JBS is a research firm and this focus group is part of a project we are doing with the Census Bureau. Today, I’d like to talk with you about your thoughts on some of the forms that may be used to collect race and ethnicity data for the Census Bureau in the future.

As you know we are audio and video recording our discussion today. These recordings will help us make sure we get what you are saying right. These tapes will only be used by researchers working on this project. Observers are here this evening to see what the focus group is like and to provide feedback to us, as moderators, about what we can do to improve. Your information will be kept strictly confidential and you may choose not to answer a question if you don’t want to.

I will be asking you to look over and complete some questions from the Census forms and then ask you a few questions about the forms. There are no right or wrong answers – we want all of your opinions, ideas and suggestions. We want all of you to feel comfortable and to participate so we have a set of ground rules to help us:

- 1 – Turn your cell phones and pagers off or to vibrate
- 2 – Be courteous and respectful of the other participants’ opinions and ideas. Remember there are no right or wrong answers.
- 3 – Be honest and know that we really want to hear your opinions and ideas
- 4 – Speak clearly and one at a time. You don’t have to raise your hand to speak.
- 5 – Actively participate because we want to hear from ALL of you.

Introduction

First, to introduce ourselves to one another, I’d like to go around the table and have everyone take a few seconds to briefly say their first name and since we are all parents, tell us a little something about your youngest child.

Snippet (XB)

Background on form for Moderator

Form XB uses the same race and Hispanic origin questions as the 2010 Census form. This form has two separate questions for Hispanic origin and race, as the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines Hispanic origin and race as two distinct concepts.

Instructions to Participants

(Moderator: Pass out first two snippets as participants are reviewing form; hold up and/or point to the form or snippet which must be reviewed and completed and ensure participants are understanding and following instructions).

This evening I will be asking you to review a Census form (***hold up laminated form***) and complete small portions of the forms, which we are calling ‘snippets’ (***hold up snippets***). The form I’d like you to review, XB, is in front of you. I would like each of you to read through this form.

Then, when you come to questions 8 and 9, please complete the snippets of questions 8 and 9 that I am passing out now. Please put your first name of your the snippets. Then, on the first snippet please answer the questions for yourself.

(Note: Pass out the first two snippets as participants are reviewing form; hold up and/or point to the form or snippet which must be reviewed and completed. Ensure that participants understand and follow the instructions).

We would like you to fill out the other snippet for and answer the questions for one of your children. Please write down the age of the child, and then complete questions 5 and 6.

(Moderator: Read through the instructions about filling out the second snippet again if necessary. You can shorten the instructions for the second snippet if you read it through a second time.)

Are there any questions about my instructions? If you have any questions about the snippet itself, please note them and we will have a chance to go over them in our discussion.

THEME 1: RESPONSE TO HISPANIC/RACE QUESTIONS

Purpose and Guidance

The purpose of questions 1 through 3 in this theme is to have participants discuss how they answered the race and Hispanic origin questions. The purpose of question 4 is to find out *why* participants answered the way they did.

If participants discuss what impacted the way they reported the race of their child, then allow this conversation to occur. For example, some parents may say that they did not see a race response category that was appropriate for identifying their child, so they did not answer the question. Other parents may say, “Her father is White and I (her mother) am Asian, but I always report that she is Asian because I raised her and she grew up with other Asian Americans.” Other parents may say, “People often think he is Black and do not perceive him as being White, even though that’s what he is. So I make it a point to identify all of his racial heritages.” In all of these scenarios, encourage this natural discussion.

The purpose of question 5 is to better understand why participants use words like “mixed” and “multiracial” and the significance they play in their child’s racial identity.

The Census Bureau strives to collect detailed responses such as Colombian, Japanese, or Samoan from respondents, but many respondents still report general terms like Latino, Asian, and Pacific Islander. The purpose of question 6 is to gain a better understanding of why participants report a general term such as Hispanic, Asian, or Pacific Islander rather than reporting a specific race or origin, and the significance they play in their child’s racial identity.

Questions

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of ALL participants unless otherwise noted. Ask all questions of first participant, then ask all questions of the second participant, etc.)

Please tell me how you completed the snippet for your child for questions 8 and 9.

1. Which box or boxes did you choose for your child?
2. Did you write an answer on any of the lines?
3. What did you write? Under which checkbox did you write your answer? Why did you choose to write on that line?
4. How did you come up with your answer?
5. ***(Moderator: This question should be asked only if respondents wrote in words like “mixed” or “multiracial”)*** “Tell me more about why you used terms like “mixed” or “multiracial.”
6. ***(Moderator: This question should be asked only of those participants who reported a general term like Hispanic, Asian, or Pacific Islander.)*** Tell me more about why you used a general term (like Asian) rather than a specific term (like Chinese).
7. ***(Moderator: If the race or races of other parent does not come up in the conversation)*** What is the race or ethnicity of the other parent? Did you report this race or ethnicity (races or ethnicities) for the child? Why or why not?

THEME 2: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SNIPPET

Purpose and Guidance

For question 1, we would like to obtain any feedback on instructions or wording on the form.

Cognitive testing has shown that some respondents do not see the instruction to “mark one or more boxes” on the race question. The purposes of questions 2 and 3 are to determine if participants saw the instruction to “mark one or more boxes” in the race question and whether

they understood and followed this instruction.

Examples are used in the race and Hispanic origin questions to help clarify categories for respondents and to encourage respondents to report their detailed race and origin. The purpose of question 5 is to get feedback on the use of these examples and how they impacted one's response.

Questions

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)

1. How did you feel about the instructions or wording on this snippet?
**** If respondents say that the instructions or wording were confusing or unclear, probe:***
Which words or instructions were confusing/unclear? How could it be improved?
2. How many races did you think you could mark for question 9?
3. Did you see the instruction to mark one or more boxes for question 9? How do you feel about this instruction?
4. ***(Moderator should point out the examples if necessary. Examples are used with Other Hispanic, Other Asian, and Other Pacific Islander categories.)*** Look at the examples used for both questions. Do you think having these examples helped you in completing the form?

****If respondents say yes probe:*** Could you tell me more about that?

THEME 3: RESPONSES FOR SELF IN SNIPPET

(Note: Since we are focusing on the child, the other household member is “self” in this context.)

1. How did you answer the Hispanic and race questions for yourself?
2. Was this the same or different from what you did for your child? Why?

Second Snippet (X3)

Background on form for Moderator

Form X3 is a combined race and Hispanic origin question, containing both check box response categories and write-in lines for each of the OMB race and ethnicity groups (White, Black or African American, Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander). The Census Bureau is also permitted to use “Some Other Race” which is included on this form. Detailed examples for each race and ethnic group precede the write-in

lines.

THEME 1: RESPONSE TO HISPANIC/RACE QUESTION

Purpose and Guidance

The purpose of questions 1 through 3 in this theme is to have participants discuss how they answered the race and Hispanic origin questions. The purpose of question 4 is to find out *why* participants answered the way they did.

The purpose of question 5 (Whether participants marked different checkboxes or wrote in a different response) is to help us understand why this did or did not occur.

Questions

Please turn over your second snippet and put them with the first ones. (***Moderator passes out snippet X3***)

Now we are going to move to a different snippet labeled X3. Please review and complete this snippet. Complete it as though you are filling out your census form for your child and it is the first form you have been given; in other words, don't reflect on the previous form.

Please be sure to report for the same child that you answered for on the previous snippet.

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of ALL participants unless otherwise noted. Ask all questions of first participant, then ask all questions of the second participant, etc.)

Please tell me how you completed the snippet for this question for your child.

1. Which box or boxes did you choose for your child?
2. Did you write an answer on any of the lines?
3. What did you write? Under which checkbox did you write your answer? Why did you choose to write on that line?
4. How did you come up with your answer?
5. Is this the same or different from what you marked and wrote on the previous form (XB)? If different, please explain why?

THEME 2: THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SNIPPET

Purpose and Guidance

For question 1, we would like to obtain any feedback on instructions or wording of the form.

The purpose of question 2 and 3 are to determine if participants saw the instruction to “mark one or more boxes” in the combined question and whether they understood and followed this instruction.

The instruction to the X3 combined question reads “mark one or more boxes AND write in the specific race(s) or origin(s).” This instruction combines both OMB concepts, race and origin. The purpose of question 4 is to see how participants interpret “race or origin.”

Cognitive testing revealed that some respondents interpret “origin” as place of birth or ancestry, therefore we want to understand how the focus group participants are defining race and origin on this form. If participants discuss their understanding of the term “origin” to mean place of birth or ancestry, encourage this conversation to develop.

Questions

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)

1. How did you feel about the instructions or wording on this form?
**** If respondents say that instructions of wording were confusing or unclear, probe:***
“Which words or instructions were confusing/unclear? How could it be improved?”
2. How many races did you think you could mark on this snippet?
3. Did you see the instruction to “mark one or more boxes AND write in the specific race(s) or origin(s)? How do you feel about this instruction?
4. What does the term “race” mean in this question? What does the term “origin” mean to you in this question? Do they mean the same thing or different things to you?

General Questions

THEME 2: SNIPPET PREFERENCES

Purpose and Guidance

The purpose of this theme is to determine if participants prefer one snippet over the others and if so, why.

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of ALL participants.)

1. Thinking back on all the snippets, which do you prefer and why?
 - *Wording?
 - *Instructions?
 - *Boxes and write in space?

- *Examples?
- *Categories?
- *Layout?

2. Do you think any of the 3 snippets are better for multiracial respondents?

THEME 2B: RECOMMENDATIONS

Purpose and Guidance

The purpose of this theme is to obtain any recommendations that participants may have for improving the forms, especially with respect to helping multiracial respondents and interracial families provide more accurate information.

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)

1. Do you have any recommendations on the forms that you believe would help people provide more accurate information, especially multiracial respondents and interracial families? Also, to make people feel more comfortable answering?

THEME 4: SITUATIONAL IDENTITY

Purpose and Guidance

For some parents, the context in which they are asked to identify the race of their child can influence their answer. That is to say, they may answer the question differently in different situations and contexts, and depending on who is asking, and how they are asking. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to better understand how participants answer questions about their children's race in conversations and on forms.

These questions are extraordinarily important for multiracial respondents and parents of multiracial children, so encourage discussion and ask these questions of most participants.

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of MOST participants.)

1. Have there been situations where you have been asked about your child's racial background in conversations?
 - * **If yes**, in what kinds of situations have you been asked? How do you answer?
2. When you are asked to identify your child's race or races on forms, do you answer the same or differently than when you are asked in person?
 - * **If participants answer differently, probe:** Please explain why. What influences the way you answer these questions?

THEME 5: AWARENESS AND FLUIDITY

Purpose and Guidance

For some people, race and ethnicity are fluid concepts and their racial or ethnic self-identification may change over time. The purpose of questions 1 to 3 is to gain an understanding of 1) when parents first became aware of questions about their child's racial identity, 2) when and how parents talked with their children about their racial identity, and 3) how/why their child's racial identity may have changed over time.

For questions 1 through 3, participants may talk about how their own parents, siblings, extended family, or friendships influenced and continue to influence the ways they view their child's racial identity. They also may talk about how their neighborhood composition is shaping their children's racial identity. They also may talk about how people perceive their children or how their children's physical traits shape their identity. Encourage this discussion by asking others if they have had similar or different experiences. Try to get most of the participants to be take part in this discussion.

The goal for questions 4 and 5 is to further explore this theme. For example, some parents' thoughts about their child's racial identity may be influenced by how they and their children are viewed and treated in society. For example, if a person considers themselves to be White and Samoan, but people constantly refer to them as only Samoan, or perhaps they have been discriminated against for being Samoan, then the person may begin to view themselves as Samoan and not White (or both).

Question 6 has a similar intent. Many people that immigrate to the United States are not familiar with the racial categories used in the United States, therefore they may have thought of themselves as one race in the country that they were born in and then may change their identification based on their experiences in the United States. In many countries race is more fluid and is described in terms of many gradations along the color spectrum compared to the United States, where conceptions of race are largely influenced by our long history of race relations between Whites and Blacks.

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of MOST participants.)

1. As we have been discussing today, all of these forms are asking you to identify your child's race or races. I'd like you to think of some of the earliest instances in which you thought about your child's racial identity. Please describe one of these experiences and why/how this is an important memory for you and/or your child.
2. Do you believe your child's racial identity has changed over time? How so? For example, early childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, now?
3. Have any other of your life experiences had an important impact on your child's racial identity? How so?

4. Does your child more closely identify with one of the races you reported or do they strongly identify with all the races you reported?
5. Do you feel that people may wonder “what” your race or races your child is? What race or races do people typically think your child is? Why do you think that is?
6. How many of you have lived in another country, for example, if you were born or lived in some place other than the U.S.? Did you identify your child’s race differently there than you do here? If so, how did it differ? When you came here, did you identify your child’s race differently?

THEME 6: “RACE” & “ORIGIN” CONCEPTS

Purpose and Guidance

As mentioned previously, the instruction to form X3 combines the concepts of race and origin. We want to better understand how people are interpreting the race and origin concepts and look at other possible terms to use on the forms. The purpose of questions 1 is to see how participants interpret the term ethnicity.

Cognitive testing has shown that some respondents interpret the term “origin” as place of birth. The purpose of question 2 is to see if participants interpret any of the questions as asking for place of birth and if so, why.

(Moderator: These questions will be asked of SOME participants.)

Questions

During our discussion of the X3, we talked about the use of the terms “race” and “origin.” Now, I’m going to ask about a couple of other terms.

1. What does the term ‘ethnicity’ mean to you? Does it mean the same thing to you or something different than ‘race’? Does “ethnicity” mean the same thing or something different than “origin?”
2. Do you think that any of these questions on any of these forms is asking about where you were born? *If so, Which ones and why?*

Wrap up by JBS – i.e., Additional comments? Questions? Ideas? Suggestions?

Moderator: Thank the participants for their time and provide instructions for collecting participation incentives.

MODERATOR INFORMATION

Focus Group Moderator: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____ Time of FG _____