Victoria H. Gertel Esposito, PhD

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Senior UX Researcher and Cognitive Psychologist with 10+ years of experience leading mixed-method research across enterprise and e-commerce ecosystems. Expert in translating behavioral science into strategic insights that inform product roadmaps, improve operational efficiency, and optimize customer-facing digital experiences. Trusted cross-functional partner to Product, Design, and Business leadership in Fortune 50 environments, driving data-informed decision-making across the product lifecycle.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Sr. UX Researcher

Lowe's Companies, Inc. | July 2022 – Present

- Led 6+ end-to-end mixed-method discovery research initiatives across the product lifecycle for enterprise and e-commerce platforms, influencing roadmap decisions for features serving 50M+ monthly users and 1700+ store locations.

- Partnered with cross-functional stakeholders (Product, Design, Engineering, Business) to define research roadmaps aligned to OKRs, enabling data-informed prioritization across multiple product spaces.

- Designed and executed 40+ usability, concept validation, and workflow optimization studies (moderated and unmoderated), identifying friction points that improved task efficiency, increased sales conversion, strengthened customer likelihood to recommend, and reduced cancellation rates.

- Developed 5+ journey maps and service blueprints to visualize end-to-end associate workflows within store fulfillment systems, uncovering gaps between system capabilities and user mental models that directly informed product redesign.

- Synthesized qualitative and quantitative data into executive-level insights and strategic recommendations, influencing leadership decisions including a full redesign of an enterprise application used by store associates nationwide.

- Elevated research maturity by mentoring 2 junior researchers, upskilling 5 designers in evaluative research methods, and establishing research best practices to scale insight generation within an agile environment.

- Designed and implemented an AI-powered research repository (custom GPT), improving insight discoverability, enabling cross-study synthesis, and reducing duplicated research efforts across teams.

Graduate Research Scientist

The Pennsylvania State University | August 2016 – May 2022

- Led and conducted 4 end-to-end primary research projects using mixed methods, culminating in 4 datasets with 25+ data points from 320 participants and contributing to 6 peer-reviewed publications and 9 conference presentations.

- Designed and executed complex behavioral experiments using survey methods, time on task, task success rating, and other cognitive neuroscience and psychology methods to study cognitive processes underlying language processing.

- Recruited and managed 500+ research participants (ages 18–80), ensuring ethical compliance, effective screening, and positive participant experiences.

- Established standardized research protocols and mentored 6 junior researchers to improve data quality, reproducibility, and research efficiency across projects.

- Managed and oversaw more than $20,000 in federal research funding across 6 years for 7 projects, including expenditure reports in accordance with institutional finance standards.

RESEARCH METHODS & TOOLS

Methods: Discovery research, usability testing, concept validation, user interviews, card sorts contextual inquiry, personas, journey maps, UMUX, SEQ, TCR
Analytics: R, RStudio
Platforms: UserTesting, Dscout, Maze, Optimal Workshop, Qualtrics
Collaboration: FigJam
AI Tools: ChatGPT, Copilot

EDUCATION

2022 **Ph.D., Cognitive Psychology** – The Pennsylvania State University
2018 **M.S., Cognitive Psychology** – The Pennsylvania State University
2016 **B.S., Integrative Neuroscience, Minor in Anthropology** – Binghamton University