Observer Guidelines

A brief note to our examiners:

Thank you for participating in our usability tests. Your participation is truly central to the proper evaluation of our system design.

We have established a few best-practices to follow while conducting the usability tests. Although these are indeed suggestions, we strongly encourage you to follow them as closely as possible to pull the maximum amount of valuable information from each user. Thanks in advance for cooperating.

1. Abandon personal biases and opinions concerning system qualities or deficiencies.
   - avoid words implying ease of use such as "only", "just", and "simply"
   - do not tell the user how to execute the given tasks, but rather the action that they should perform
   - if a user seems to be doing something particularly atypical, do not correct them - see if they repeat the given action, then inquire
2. Try to be as unobtrusive as possible.
   - avoid leading questions and use simple language
   - note-taking should never distract the user, if you feel you need to write something down, try to wait for a natural break
   - do not affirm or give feedback regarding task execution – provide minimal guidance if they really need it
3. Reassure the user that the system is being tested, not them
   - try talking to the user casually for a couple minutes just to make them comfortable with you
   - specifically point out that the prototype is NOT a final design, and that this test will help reveal problems with the system

Your contributions are valuable. Cheers, and have fun!