

## Resource 6.1 Comparison of Different Evaluation methods

| Method   | Strengths   | Things to consider   | May be useful for...   |
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| Outputs / statistical data                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complements outcome evidence by showing that the museum is working with relevant groups and individuals.</li> <li>• Can be used to support more qualitative statements.</li> <li>• Straightforward to collect.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not evidence of an outcome in itself. For example, data showing that families are taking part in activities is not evidence that familial ties are being strengthened.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording visitors to a site, participants in an activity, members of a group.</li> </ul>   |
| Response cards<br>Comments cards<br>Comments books | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are flexible and accessible ways of engaging with users.</li> <li>• Can be used as part of a display that will stimulate other people to read and respond.</li> <li>• Need minimal administration as users can complete the card or write in a comments book themselves.</li> <li>• Can target people engaged in particular activities or in different parts of a site depending upon where the response cards or comment books are placed.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posing questions in a comments book or on a card will improve the quality of the comments relating to specific GSO outcomes.</li> <li>• Place comments cards so that all users can see them and are encouraged to share their views.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors to a temporary exhibition.</li> <li>• Participants in a drop in activity at the organisation.</li> </ul>   |
| Graffiti walls                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are interactive as comments can be made to look attractive as part of a display - people can read others' comments and may be encouraged to add their own.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments need to be fixed strongly to the wall or they might be lost.</li> <li>• Provide a posting box for respondents wanting to keep their comments anonymous.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors at a special event, festival or open day.</li> <li>• Public consultation at a venue outside your organisation e.g. stand or stall in town centre.</li> </ul> |

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|             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can include a single question based on the GSOs so that people's responses are focused.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be done using digital technologies / interactive screen in a gallery or exhibition space.</li> <li>• POST IT notes can be used as a colourful / cheap way of getting people to share their comments.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works well with young people.</li> </ul>  |
| Observation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation is one of the most powerful ways of understanding what is going on. Watching adults or children interacting with an object, exploring a building or taking part in a creative activity will give you an insight into their experiences.</li> <li>• Observation can work well if participants 'talk out loud' about their experiences while the observer walks around with them (walking tour).</li> <li>• An accompanied walking tour allows the observer to clarify points made or ask specific questions to participants.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up the observation so that participants don't feel like you are judging / assessing visitors.</li> <li>• Observation without explanation shows what people do but not why they do it so evidence of GSO outcomes may be limited.</li> <li>• May need to be combined with interviews or questionnaires.</li> <li>• If people know they are being observed their behaviour may be affected.</li> <li>• If the observer is hidden it may be complex to recognise learning from people's actions/speech.</li> <li>• There are ethical implications to hidden observations.</li> <li>• Think about: how you will record the observations, timing and focus of the observations, who will make the observations – a member of the team or an independent observer?</li> <li>• Consider using an observation checklist to record what you saw or</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be more useful for longer term work with groups.</li> <li>• Recording visitors to a site, participants in an activity, members of a group.</li> </ul> |

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|                  |   | <p>guide to code and identify certain behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You could use <b>Resource 6.5</b> blank observation template to structure the recording of your observations.</li> <li>You might also want to draw a map of the venue, to record where participants went and what they did.</li> </ul>   |  |
| Letters / emails | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letters and emails to museums, archives and libraries can show evidence of GSO outcomes.</li> <li>Will provide a rich source of data.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unpredictable and ad hoc source of collecting GSO outcomes.</li> <li>Useless unless properly analysed.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting evidence to use alongside a more formal data collection method.</li> <li>Good way of evidencing feedback from users or staff from partner organisations at the end of a project or piece of partnership work.</li> </ul> |
| Questionnaires   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are good for large-scale collection of evidence of outcomes where broad information is required rather than in-depth exploration.</li> <li>Can be used on-site, by email or post.</li> <li>Could be self completion, or completed by members of staff.</li> <li>Can include open and closed questions, or multiple choice, focusing on specific GSO outcomes you hope to capture.</li> <li>Can also collect demographic</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions need careful phrasing to reflect age, language and ability levels of the target group.</li> <li>The 'look' of the questionnaire is important and good design is crucial – think about layout, colour, length of questionnaire, possibly providing questionnaires on a postcard format, which looks more inviting to complete than an A4 sheet of white paper.</li> <li>Be aware of questionnaire 'overload' - is this method suitable for the users you are trying to reach?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End of longer term project work.</li> <li>One off workshops or activity sessions.</li> </ul>  |

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|                               | information to provide evidence of outputs (see above).  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make them manageable so that users are not put off by (perceived) length or difficulty of questions.</li> </ul>  |  |
| Journals / Reflective diaries | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your own experiences, ideas and observations of the project are also a valid form of evaluation data. Your reflective diary can record comments from participants, anecdotes, inform your future plans, and support other evidence you have collected.</li> <li>• Can provide in depth, qualitative data about the experiences of participants in longer term projects.</li> <li>• May include diagrams, drawings, images or video (if done using digital technologies) that can also be analysed.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will keep the journals, when will they complete it, and how will you support them to fill it in? For example, specific questions or prompts to answer at specific points in the project or time made available to complete at the end of meetings?</li> <li>• You could keep a record of each time you work with a group or are involved in a project, using the following headings as a guide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What went well</li> <li>- Issues or problems</li> <li>- How do you feel?</li> <li>- Own evaluation of how the project is going</li> <li>- Action / what will you do next</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Some may find keeping a journal quite challenging, either because of their literacy skills, or because they are unused to reflective writing.</li> <li>• Think about how you will analyse any diagrams, drawings and images you may find in journals. This can be a very time consuming process.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term project with adults or young people, working towards a joint project or shared goal.</li> <li>• Can be used by staff delivering sessions as a self reflective process and to capture comments often missed with other methods.</li> </ul> |
| One to one or group           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is helpful to think of interviews as</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find ways of setting participants at</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer term work with</li> </ul>  |

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| interviews   | <p>conversations with a purpose. Interviews give you useful data, but are constructed through interaction – both the interviewer and interviewee affect the interview outcome. For example, children interviewing each other will gather very different sorts of data than you would interviewing children, even if you use the same questions. Therefore it is important to triangulate – see Resource 6.2 for more information about triangulation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews can provide in depth, qualitative information on outcomes – good for people more comfortable with talking than with writing.</li> <li>• Can take place face to face or on the telephone.</li> <li>• Used one to one, interviews can provide good information feelings, experiences, changes in perception or attitudes etc.</li> </ul> | <p>ease - they need to feel comfortable about sharing their experiences with the interviewer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If language is an issue use a translator or peer interviews where one person could translate for the other.</li> <li>• How will you structure the interview and what questions will you ask?</li> <li>• Will you make notes on paper during the interview, or record the interview to analyse later?</li> <li>• Plan how you will analyse the data in advance – an interview may produce a large amount of evidence that may be time-consuming to analyse unless the interview is structured (then answers may be more predictable).</li> <li>• You could consider asking participants to come up with the questions (tell them what you want to find out, then ask for suggestions for the questions) and to conduct the interviews.</li> </ul> | <p>community groups, families or young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would work well for recording the outcomes and benefits of being involved in longer-term groups, such as friends groups, volunteering or readers groups.</li> </ul> |
| Focus groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can elicit in-depth information from participants about their views and experiences of museums, libraries and archives.</li> <li>• May encourage people to share their attitudes, beliefs and experiences</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The facilitator should be skilled in leading the discussion and keeping the group focused. They should ensure that everybody feels comfortable about sharing their opinions equally.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Longer term work with community groups, families or young people.</li> <li>• Would work well for recording the outcomes and benefits of being involved in longer-term</li> </ul>                                       |

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|          | <p>more openly through group interaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be structured around the GSOs to focus discussion.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make practical arrangements clear for all involved including location, maps, furniture and refreshments.</li> <li>• You may need to pay for participants to attend or provide an incentive.</li> <li>• Will you make notes on paper during the interview, or record the interview to analyse later?</li> <li>• Plan how you will analyse the data in advance – a focus group may produce a large amount of evidence that may be time-consuming to analyse unless the interview is structured.</li> </ul>  | <p>groups, such as friends groups, volunteering or readers groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can work well with young people.</li> </ul>   |
| Drawings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are useful when writing skills are limited and may be more "fun" or engaging.</li> <li>• Can be used in combination with written comments to aid analysis.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These are challenging to interpret without questioning and mediation</li> <li>• The important aspect of this approach is that you then discuss with the participants about the images they have created, why they chose to make them in this way, and what they wanted to portray.</li> </ul> <p>Sample questions for this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can you describe for me what you have drawn?</li> <li>- Why?</li> <li>- What gave you the idea?</li> <li>- Try to avoid asking too many questions, but let the participants choose what to tell you.</li> </ul> <p>You can make positive comments to</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works well as a way for children to feedback on what they most enjoyed about the experience etc – ask the children to draw their answer to a specific question, then to explain the drawing to you.</li> </ul> |

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|                      |  | encourage participants to carry on talking, rather than asking them another question e.g. 'that's good', 'I love that', 'uh-huh', 'wow'.   |   |
| Video                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A video box could be made available for people to answer a specific question, or to act as a video diary for group work.</li> <li>• Is an appealing alternative to traditional comments cards - may be more fun and engaging for some users than writing comments.</li> <li>• Is potentially a powerful tool for gathering evidence for advocacy purposes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of video may be time consuming with too much material.</li> <li>• Consider how you will code and analyse that footage and the time needed to do that.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work and projects.</li> <li>• General consultation with the public about your service.</li> <li>• Good for young people.</li> </ul>  |
| Photographs / images | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful supporting evidence, when used with other forms of data collection, to illustrate how a project worked and what happened.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be difficult to analyse if the context for the photographs is unknown</li> <li>• Unlikely to provide convincing evidence for GSO outcomes by itself.</li> <li>• The important aspect of this approach is that you then discuss with the participants about the images they have created, why they chose to make them in this way, and what they wanted to portray.<br/>Sample questions for this:<br/>- Can you describe for me what you have drawn?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group visits, trips, projects, events.</li> <li>• Can be used by participants to convey their experiences creatively e.g. recording their visit to a museum on disposable cameras, then turning it into artwork with captions etc.</li> <li>• Works well with family audiences – get the children to record the adults using a camera, or vice versa.</li> </ul> |

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|  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why?</li> <li>- What gave you the idea?</li> <li>- Try to avoid asking too many questions, but let the participants choose what to tell you.</li> <li>• You can make positive comments to encourage participants to carry on talking, rather than asking them another question e.g. 'that's good', 'I love that', 'uh-huh', 'wow'</li> <li>• Think about whether it would be worth investing in a professional photographer, and also about how you will gather permission from people to be photographed, and copyright to use the photos again.</li> </ul> |  |
| <p>Art works / sculptures / things produced as a result of the visit / portfolio of work</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used in conjunction with other methods e.g. interviews and focus groups with participants to obtain the context and help articulate the experience.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As for images, it may be difficult to interpret and analyse if the context is not known.</li> <li>• The important aspect of this approach is that you then discuss with the participants about the images they have created, why they chose to make them in this way, and what they wanted to portray.</li> </ul> <p>Sample questions for this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can you describe for me what you have drawn/made?</li> <li>- Why?</li> <li>- What gave you the idea?</li> <li>- Try to avoid asking too many</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group work, projects, art and craft sessions, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Could be used as a prompt or starting point for capturing the voice of participants e.g. through one to one interviews, focus groups, annotating and captioning the work.</li> </ul> |

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|  |  | <p>questions, but let the participants choose what to tell you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can make positive comments to encourage participants to carry on talking, rather than asking them another question e.g. 'that's good', 'I love that', 'uh-huh', 'wow'.</li> </ul>  |  |
| Walking Tours  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increasingly popular way of understanding space and communities.</li> <li>Directed by the participants – they decide where to go and what to include on the tour, and you follow.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, you could walk around a museum or library or local area with a child or adult. Ask the participants to guide you and decide where to go, talking about favourite spaces, places they like and don't like, and talking about the objects that interest and mean something to them.</li> <li>A walking tour could also include a camera.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking your museum, library or archive more closely with the local community.</li> <li>Understanding how the services you offer operate in a wider context.</li> </ul> |
| Secondary data. For example school test results (SATS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Again useful in backing up more qualitative evidence</li> <li>Often provides a powerful message for funding bodies.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability and interpretation of data – there will be confidentiality issues here.</li> <li>Establishing causality - a very wide range of factors will affect these longer term indicators.</li> <li>Avoid making claims that are unsubstantiated.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal educational groups with whom you have long term contact.</li> </ul>  |