

Evaluation methods for public engagement projects

Overview

This document provides a guide to encourage those running public engagement activities to think through and choose the most appropriate methods and techniques to evaluate the delivery and impact of their activities.

This guide draws upon a range of sources, including the experience of UCL staff and students, the UCL Public Engagement Unit and its programme partners, and literature on public engagement and research methods, to provide a brief introduction to a range of evaluation methodologies and examples of how they can be used throughout the life of your project.

Evaluation is a systematic way of reflecting on and assessing the value of what is being done (i.e. a project, a programme, an event). Evaluation is commonly interpreted as an end product or an activity taking place at the end of a project. However evaluation should be considered as a process, taking place across all phases of a project, used to determine what has happened and whether the initial aims of the project have been carried out and achieved. Evaluation is more than assessing and measuring; it helps set the stage for a culture of learning, change and improvement.

Details and examples are provided for a range of evaluation methods including:

- [Interviews](#)
- [Questionnaires](#)
- [Observations](#)
- [Walk and talks](#)
- [Focus groups](#)
- [Personal logs – diaries, log books, reports](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [Creative methods - drawing, writing, photography](#)

This guide should be seen as an emergent, ever evolving, collaborative document – the intention is to incorporate further evaluation methods and examples during the Beacons for Public Engagement programme. So, if you develop or discover a useful technique for evaluation do let us know.

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Before you start ...

Before setting out and undertaking any of the following methodologies it is important to consider the aims of the project (i.e. what you want to achieve). As you will be unable to tell whether your project was a success unless you have decided what it was supposed to accomplish.

It's important to know the difference between aims and objectives: **aims** are the changes you hope to bring about as a result of what you're doing; **objectives** are the things you do in order to make these changes happen.

A typical aim would be "to increase Londoners awareness of UCL's work in nanotechnology". This would lead to the objective "to host a series of public events that effectively increase this awareness". Aims should be as specific and detailed as possible, as they will form the basis for any evaluation undertaken.

A good project has an impact, on the participants, the audience or both. In the UCL Public Engagement Unit, we often think of these possible impacts on a grid such as this:

	Knowledge and awareness	Attitudes	Skills	Empowerment
Participants (i.e. staff, partners)				
Audience (i.e. publics)				

The main funders of academic-public engagement use similar tables to judge the impact of projects.

The next things to consider are: what evidence you need to collect to know you have met your aims (i.e. indicators), the focus of the evaluation (i.e. what and who with) and when the evaluation will take place (i.e. pre and post project, during the life of the project).

The answers to these questions will shape what method(s) you decide are appropriate for the evaluation of your project. The more you think about the answers to these questions the more you will be drawn towards particular methods of evaluation. Furthermore, the clearer you are in your aims and objectives, the more you will be able to use monitoring and evaluation to judge your success.

The table below summarises some of the most common evaluation techniques, so you can think through and choose the most appropriate techniques to evaluate your project. You shouldn't restrict yourself to this list – if your thinking about your aims has given you ideas for new and better ways to measure success, don't be afraid to use them!

Technique	Strengths	Weaknesses	Who to use it with and when to use it
Interviews	Great to understand different people's experiences of being involved. Allows you to explore in-depth reflections, and can uncover surprising findings.	Interviews can be staff intensive. There is a limit to how many interviews you can conduct, so you might end up with small numbers. You can end up with a skewed sample.	Any person that you require more in-depth and qualitative answers from. Useful to use at the end of the project, or anytime after the project.
Questionnaires	Potentially big data sets. Multiple choice questions are better for providing statistics, but you do need enough people to complete them for the statistics to mean anything.	Questionnaires do not tend to access the underlying reasons for responses. Only interested people will respond. Answers will be limited to pre-chosen questions (unlike interviews).	Can be used with everyone who is involved in your project. Usually self completing (handed out on paper, or later online).
Observations	Useful for studying and gathering information on an activity (what happens, what	Only useful for some participatory and interactive projects. Observations can be	The project planning and the activities can be observed (e.g. team, audience/participants). Most

	someone does or how they behave). Uncovers what people really do, rather than what they say they do.	very subjective: a template should be generated outlining the activities to be recorded.	useful for participatory and interactive projects.
Walk and talks	A 'go along method' which involves both walking and talking, can be particularly useful for evaluating location based projects or activities e.g. festivals or exhibitions.	These can take time to organise, conduct and analyse. There is a limit to how many walking interviews you can conduct, so you might end up with small numbers participating.	Any person that you require more in-depth and qualitative answers from. Good with location based or spatial projects.
Focus groups	Useful for organised discussion with a group of individuals to understand their views and experiences of a project. More qualitative information than a questionnaire will provide you and will take less time than administering several individual interviews.	Focus groups require good mediation. As it is an open-ended process, you may not get the precise answers that you would expect from a questionnaire or interview. The size and composition of the group are important considerations.	Can be used with a selection of the project team or audience. Most useful if used before and after the project.
Personal logs (diaries, log books, reports)	This can take many shapes or forms. Personal logs that are kept throughout a course of a project can provide evidence of personal development, behaviour, thoughts and feelings.	The value of the information collected depends on how truthful it is. They are unpredictable, some will provide lots of information; others will be brief and uninformative.	These work best with staff or participants directly involved in the project. Ideally, throughout the life of the project.
Workshops	It is an excellent, interactive way to understand different peoples' opinions and experiences of a project. It is also a useful tool to provide participants with the chance to challenge the agenda set by the project leader; raising new issues and/or asking questions back.	As with focus groups, workshops require good mediation. Openness and honesty: if undertaken as a group exercise look out for shy individuals who may feel intimidated by the situation and require encouragement.	These can be used with established groups (such as the project team) or with an assembled group (such as those involved in or affected by a project).
Creative methods	It is an excellent visual way to understand different peoples' opinions and experiences of a project. Creative methods can be very attractive, providing a focus for discussion.	The information you obtain will be unpredictable. You will not get precise answers, compared to what you expect from a questionnaire or semi-structured interview.	Could be used with all those attending a project event. Could be undertaken both at the start and end of a project.

If the object of the evaluation is to allow you to know whether you have succeeded (in your own terms), then the important thing is to collect evidence that relates to your initial aims. This is the evidence that will be most useful for future projects, and this is the sort of information that funders are keen to see.

Whatever evaluation methods you decide to use, it is good practice to tell people what information you are collecting, why you are collecting it, and what you will do with it (i.e. the purpose and uses). The approach to evaluation should be transparent and it is important to make it clear to all parties involved how much (or how little) the information you gather will inform future work.

Once you have finished ...

The data collection process is not an end in itself: the culminating activities of evaluation are analysis, interpretation, and the presentation of findings.

The analysis and the interpretation of your evaluation data should start during the process of data collection. The approach to data analysis depends on what methods were used (e.g. interviews, questionnaires) and the types of data collected (e.g. quantitative or qualitative). However, in general there are three steps to follow when analysing data:

- **Noticing and collecting.** The first stage of analysis may involve: filling in gaps in field and/or observation notes; following up any vague or cryptic comments received; downloading recordings; typing up transcripts; labeling the data collected; conducting debriefing meetings with team.
- **Sorting and thinking.** This stage of analysis may involve: listening to any recordings; reading field and/or observation notes; reading transcripts; inputting any quantitative data into spreadsheets and/or databases.
- **Critical analysis and interpretation.** The final stage of analysis may involve: comparing and contrasting results by individual questionnaires, interviews, observations and/or focus groups; exploring emerging themes from your data; producing tables, charts and/or graphs to illustrate your findings; describing the findings thematically; using quotes to illustrate the findings; examination of a topic from many different angles.

Data collection, analysis and interpretation is an iterative process, moving back and forth within these three stages.

The majority of the methods documented within this guide will generate qualitative data. The literature on social research methodologies and analysis, indicates that when analysing qualitative data (such as that collected from interviews, diaries, focus groups and observations) it is important to consider:

- Words i.e. the choice and meaning of words that people use.
- Context i.e. exploring the context in which responses were generated.
- Internal consistency i.e. examine any shifts or differences in opinion.
- Frequency and intensity of comments i.e. people may talk about a subject regularly, or with particular depth and feeling.
- Specificity i.e. responses based on personal experiences and reflections.
- The key trends and themes i.e. finding the key trends and themes within the data.

It is important to feed the findings of your evaluation back to the people who provided the information. This will show that you have used the information as you intended, as well as sharing your findings.

The most common way to share the findings of your evaluation is through a report, produced at the end of the project. The presentation of the report can vary in style, but usually details: an introduction (including aims and objectives of the project), a background to the project (e.g. what happened), the evaluation methodology undertaken, the key findings, and recommendations for future activities.

Some examples of completed UCL public engagement project evaluation reports can be found here: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/research/CaseStudies>

Interviews

Overview

Interviews are a great method to gain an understanding of the interaction between different project partners, stakeholders, and staff and/or participants experiences of being involved in a project or activity.

In general, people enjoy telling stories which makes the interview a really valuable evaluation tool. As people tell stories, they reflect on things in a way that they don't when just giving answers through a survey, which means that further subtleties and details can be drawn out. For example, a basic comment such as, "It was difficult", can be developed into a more useful answer by asking, "Give me an example of what you mean by that?"

Why use it?

Almost without exception people like being asked what they think and being listened to, as long as you can relax them into the conversation. On the whole, once the interview has been agreed to, most people enjoy the experience.

Specifically, for evaluating public engagement projects and/or activities, interviews can be used to understand:

- the project process (the management, the partnership, the delivery);
- stakeholders' role and level of involvement in the project;
- expectations and aims of being involved in the project;
- feedback on the project, particularly feelings about the project outcomes and outputs;
- what changes, if any, have taken place;
- potential impact of the project on individuals;
- what worked well and what didn't work;
- how the project could have been improved;
- understandings of certain concepts or issues (i.e. science, education, public engagement).

Instructions for use

Interviews can be structured or semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews give the interviewer the opportunity to be flexible and adaptable, therefore eliciting reflective discussions rather than 'yes' or 'no' answers.

There are some general, basic rules for conducting interviews:

- Ensure that the questions are worded in a simple clear language, free of unnecessary jargon.
- The interview should, if possible, be recorded and transcribed.
- Interviews should preferably be conducted face-to-face. However, if worded appropriately, they can be undertaken over the phone.

- Whenever possible, ask people to prepare in advance in some way, this can be through completing a very short survey to get them thinking, or by sending them some general information about the purpose or scope of the evaluation.
- It is useful to start the interview with a general introduction, explaining to the interviewee why you want to talk to them (e.g. in order for them to give their opinion on the project they have been involved in) and the purpose of the evaluation (e.g. to explore stakeholders' experiences and identify key lessons learnt from the project).
- Think about the sequence of questions; it might be useful to start the interview with some general, background or introductory questions which lead into more specific or probing questions.
- An interview is more than a conversation. The interviewer needs to have certain skills; questioning, probing, asking for clarification, listening, asking for explanations, posing alternatives. The interview engages in 'active' listening, which shows the interviewee that close attention is being paid to what they say, whilst also trying to ensure that the interviewee is focused on the subject under discussion.
- Think about the type of questions you are asking. In general, it is good to use a mixture of very straightforward and more reflective questions in order to provide two types of findings: 1. straightforward simple answers to some questions that can be compared or listed against each other; 2. interesting stories or narratives that are of value as individual assessments.

Who to use it with

Any project partners, staff or students involved, and/or participants from whom you require more in-depth and qualitative answers.

When to use it

It is probably best to use interviews at the end of a project or even after some time has passed to allow reflection following the completion of the project.

Limitations

- Interviews do take time to organise, conduct and analyse. There is a limit to how many interviews you can conduct, but if you organise them well you can pack a lot into a short time period.
- Phone interviews are acceptable, and can be useful, particularly for the follow up interviews after a project is completed. Telephone interviews need to be relatively short as people can feel imposed upon. Do remember to check that the interview takes places at a time that suits the interviewee.
- It is important to remember that people's perception of a project or activity will change over time. Interviews that are held some time after a project or activity is completed need to be qualified by the term 'with hindsight'. As an aside, it is always interesting and useful to see what people remember and how they remember it, and what is still important to those involved in a project weeks or months later.

- Interviews are unpredictable; some will be rewarding, providing you with more information than you anticipated and perhaps the opportunity for a new project, however, some might be brief and uninformative.
- Arranging interviews with people can take time. Stick with it and try to be accommodating with times and locations. It is also important to know when to call it a day!

Considerations

Assure interviewees that their responses will be confidential: good practice is to ask the interviewee to sign a consent form.

If you are collating any personal or sensitive information, you may need to assure respondents that their responses will be kept confidential. You may also need to declare the collection and storage of any personal data (i.e. information about a living person by which that person can be identified), under the Data Protection Act. More information on this matter can be obtained from your departments data protection officer and <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/efd/recordsoffice/data-protection/>

When projects and activities don't go to plan, interviews can provide valuable information about what went wrong, but individuals need to be assured that their answers are confidential if you want honesty.

Timing

The time needed to undertake interviews depends upon the questions you ask and who you are talking to. In general, you should allow at least half an hour to undertake each interview, bearing in mind that the timing of a semi-structured interview can always run over or under. Also, do not forget to build in time to write up notes and observations from the interview.

Link with other methodologies

A semi-structured interview can be a good way to build on findings from other methods, such as surveys.

Further reading

There are lots of articles and books on conducting interviews, below are some examples that come recommended by researchers within the field of social science:

May, T. (1993) *Social research: issues, methods and process*, Open University Press: Buckingham, Philadelphia

Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: an Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, Sage Publications: London

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA

Bryman, A. (2004) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press: Oxford

Example 01

The interview guide below was used in the evaluation of 'Cradle to Grave: A learning initiative for Women Prisoners', a project supported by the UCL-led Beacon for Public Engagement programme.

The evaluation of the project aimed to explore stakeholders' (UCL staff, artists, museum curators, prison officers) experiences and identify key lessons learnt from the project which could be shared more widely.

Introduction

- Thank you
- Who I am and why I am here evaluating
- The focus of the evaluation
- Consent form

Broad project questions, to give an understand of how different stakeholders view to project:

- Can you start by describing the project to me?
- When did the project commence?
- What were the initial aims of the project?
- Who would you say have been the key partners in the project? What were their roles?

Your involvement

- What has been your role in the project?
- How were you involved, for example what processes and activities did you take part in?
- Were there any reasons why you didn't get involved in certain processes or activities?
- Why did you get involved in this project?

Outcomes and Impacts

- Would like to think about some of the changes that have taken place as a result of this project. These could be changes to you, to partners or to the participants.
- Can you describe to me what changes have taken place as result of undertaking this project?
- WHY have you focussed on these aspects?
- Part of the aim of the project is to encourage learning and develop skills of people involved. Do you think the project contributes to these aims? What have you learnt? What skills have you developed? Note, these can be broad.

General questions

- Do you feel the project has met it initial aims?
- Did it turn out like you expected?
- What do you think was the biggest challenge within this project? How was it overcome?
- What do you think were the key successes? Why do you think they are successful?
- In general, thinking about the project as a whole what do you think has "worked" and what hasn't "worked"? Please elaborate: why do you think that is....

Moving on

- What do you want to achieve next?
- What do you need to do to achieve it?

Example 02

The example below is taken from the evaluation of Bright Club. Bright Club is a public engagement project organised by the UCL Public Engagement Unit. Reactionnaires, of which this is an example, are face to face short direct questions to structure informal interviews with some of Bright Club's audience members. Reactionnaires have been undertaken during the interval and at the end of the event. The focus of this part of the evaluation is on enjoyment and experience.

Reactionnaires: Overall, what did you think of tonight's event? Did you find the event interesting, stimulating, boring?

What did you like best about the event? What did you like least about the event?

Do you feel that you have learnt something from the event? If so, what did you learn from the event? What could be improved? Is there anything the team should do differently next time?

Questionnaires

Overview

Questionnaires can be conducted on a range of public engagement projects and activities. They can, for example, be used at events with participants. Many projects use questionnaires as a means of evaluation.

Why use it?

Questionnaires are useful to build background and baseline information, but, generally, not as the main source of evidence for evaluation. In our experience, they are useful as a first way to draw out information to be used as basis for either group workshops or for developing interview questions. Questionnaires can also be used to confirm issues that have come up through more exploratory techniques, but ideally should be supported by more in-depth methods of evaluation.

For example, questionnaires can be used to understand:

- who is involved in/attending the activity;
- why people are involved;
- how (if at all) people were involved in the project (e.g. consulted, informed, helped make decisions);
- how and when people undertook certain activities (e.g. attended meetings);
- perceptions of the quality of certain features (e.g. venue, handouts, speakers);
- potential outcomes of the project on an individual.

Using a standardised questionnaire on a range of public engagement projects allows the comparison between different activities.

Instructions for use

Questionnaires can be conducted face-to-face (i.e. where an interviewer asks the questions and writes down the responses) or be self-completing (e.g. postal, online). If the latter is used there must be clear instructions on how to respond.

The presentation, the wording, the layout and the length of a questionnaire are important considerations. There are some general rules for using questionnaires for evaluation:

- Try not to make the questionnaire too long; if possible keep the questionnaire to a couple of pages in length i.e. a maximum of 10 minutes to complete.
- Ensure that the questions are worded in a simple clear language, free of unnecessary jargon.
- It may be necessary to have mixture of open and closed questions, as different styles of questions elicit different types of responses. Also, questionnaires requiring a choice of optional answers (closed questions) work better for self-completion questionnaires than it does for face-to-face ones, as people have time to consider the options and pick one.

- It is very important to ensure that the questions are not biased or leading in any way, as this will influence the results you obtain.
- Undertake a pilot study – it is worth building in time to draft a questionnaire and try it out on someone, such as a colleague who is not involved in the project.

Who to use it with

Anyone involved in your activity, such as project partners, stakeholders, staff and/or audience members.

When to use it

Asking the same questions at the start of the activity and again at the end will provide a method for understanding the potential changes that have been brought about by your activity.

Limitations

- Questionnaires sent by post or online frequently produce a lower response rate than those administered face to face.
- Self-completion questionnaires are really only worth doing if the person writing/compiling them has experience of using them - specifically, in asking a question that clearly communicates its meaning.
- Questionnaires do not tend to reveal the underlying reasons for responses, why and how a person gave that response.
- The information that you get from questionnaires is often of limited value unless you have enough of them completed, which can be challenging and can use up time that could be spent on more in-depth qualitative or creative methods.
- Questionnaires requiring a choice of optional answers are better for providing statistical outcomes, but you do need enough people to complete them for the statistics to mean anything.
- Questionnaires with open-ended questions, requiring an opinion or qualitative response (not chosen from a selection), are often problematic on self-completion surveys. People tend to respond in quite cryptic ways, and you usually have little opportunity to find out what they meant.
- Consider offering an incentive (e.g. a prize) to encourage people to complete and return the questionnaires.

Considerations

If you are collating any personal or sensitive information, you may need to assure respondents that their responses will be kept confidential. You may also need to declare the collection and storage of any personal data (i.e. information about a living person by which that person can be identified), under the Data Protection Act. More information on this matter can be obtained from your department's data protection officer and <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/efd/recordsoffice/data-protection/>

Timing

It will take at least a couple of hours to design and pilot a questionnaire. The overall timing depends on how it is administered (i.e. self-completed, phone, online, face to face).

Link with other methodologies

Questionnaires can be undertaken in a range of ways; they can be particularly useful to collect background factual information before using interviews or focus groups.

Further reading

There are lots of articles and books on designing questionnaires, if you are interested in finding out more, below are some examples that come strongly recommended:

Boynton P. and Greenhalgh T. (2004) Selecting, designing and developing your questionnaire, British Medical Journal, 328:1312-1315, also available at: <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/328/7451/1312?ecoll>

Bryman, A. (2004) Social Research Methods, Oxford University Press: Oxford

Example 01

This questionnaire was developed and used by Deafness Cognition and Language (DCAL) Research Centre as part of the evaluation of 'The Deaf Brain and Sign Language Open Day', a Beacon Bursary project, funded by the UCL Public Engagement Unit. The questionnaire was used as technique to capture participants' initial thoughts of the open day. The question was self-completed.

Deaf Open Day: Evaluation form

Please let us know what you thought of the day by answering the questions below. Your opinions will be invaluable for future DCAL events. You can also leave feedback in BSL at the Deaf Open Day if you prefer.

What did you find the most useful about the day?

.....
.....
.....

What did you find the least useful about the day?

.....
.....
.....

Is there anything we could have done better?

.....
.....
.....

Was the use of academic language (in presentations and on posters) easy to understand (select one)?

It was easy to understand / it was just right / I found it difficult to follow

How did you hear about the Open Day?

.....

.....

.....

How would you like to hear about our research in future (newsletter, another open day etc)?

.....

.....

.....

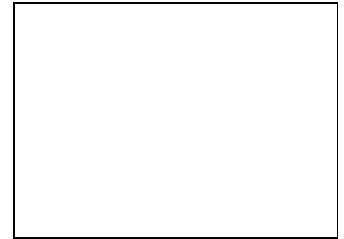
Example 02

This simple self-completed questionnaire was recommended by a partner of the Beacon for Public Engagement programme, at Camden Council (LBC), as a means to capture feedback from participants following training or learning activity.

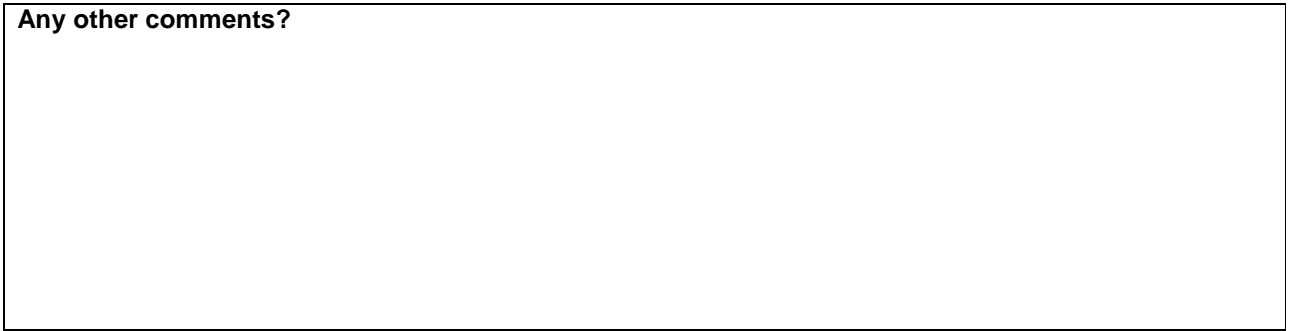
Evaluation & Feedback					event	title
				
	a lot	some	a little	none	specific and/or improvements?	highlights suggested
Enjoyment: Did I enjoy the event?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
New knowledge and ideas: Did I learn what I needed to, and did I get some new ideas?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
Applying the learning: Will I use the information and ideas?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		

Effect on results: Do I think that the ideas and information will improve my effectiveness and my results?

o o o o

An empty rectangular box with a black border, positioned to the right of the 'Effect on results' question.

Any other comments?

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for providing additional comments.

Example 03

These are a selection of questions taken from an online, self-completed questionnaire designed and administered by the 'Interior Traces' team, an Innovation Seed project, run by the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at UCL. Part of the project was funded by UCL's Public Engagement Unit. This questionnaire had three broad aims: 1. capture the background of those who attended project events; 2. understand the experiences of attendees; 3. explore potential learning of the audience who attended the dramas.

Thank you for clicking on the survey. The data you are providing will help us improve Interior Traces in the future. On the last page, you can enter your email address for the chance to win a £25 Amazon voucher.

First of all, we'd like to find out about which events you came to and why.

1. If you are happy to do so, please indicate your age and gender so we can better understand who has experienced Interior Traces:

Age - Under 18 / 18-25 / 25-40 / 40-65 / Over 65 / Prefer not to say

Gender – Male / Female / Prefer not to say

2. Which versions of Interior Traces have you heard or seen? (Please tick all that apply)

Live event on 5 May 09 (Science Museum's Dana Centre)

Live event on 6 May 09 (Birkbeck Cinema)

Live event on 7 May 09 (Wellcome Collection)

Broadcasts on Resonance 104.4fm

Mp3 downloads or streamed from the website

Cheltenham Science Festival event on 4 June 09

Secret Garden Party screenings

Other event (please specify)

3. Which episodes of Interior Traces have you heard or seen? (Please tick all that apply)

Episode 1 (set in 1906) / Episode 2 (set in 1906) / Episode 3 (set in 2009) / Episode 4 (set in 2009) / Episode 5 (set in 2030) / Episode 6 (set in 2030)

4. How did you find out about Interior Traces?

Wellcome Collection website

Science Museum's Dana Centre website

LCACE website

Resonance fm website

Guerilla Science listing

Time Out listing

Email list

Word of mouth

Flyer

Facebook group

Other (please specify)

5. What was your primary reason for coming to or listening to Interior Traces?

About the dramas. We'd like to find out what you thought about the dramas.

1. If you didn't go to the live events in London, Cheltenham, or the Secret Garden Party, please go on to Question 2.

If you did go to the live events, what did you think of the short introduction to the performances?

I would have preferred to have jumped straight in to the dramas with no introduction.

I would have preferred a shorter introduction to the dramas.

I would have preferred a longer introduction to the dramas.

The amount of introduction to the dramas was about right.

Please add any further comments or suggestions about the introduction:

2. How would you rate the following aspects of the dramas overall?

Quality of scripts (scenarios, dialogue, characters etc.) - Very good / Quite good / OK / Poor / Don't know / doesn't apply

Quality of acting - Very good / Quite good / OK / Poor / Don't know / doesn't apply

Quality of video works - Very good / Quite good / OK / Poor / Don't know / doesn't apply

Quality of music - Very good / Quite good / OK / Poor / Don't know / doesn't apply

Please add any specific comments below:

3. Do you think the music and videos added to the drama?

Do you think the music and videos added to the drama?

Definitely / To some degree / No / It didn't affect me / N/A

If you have any comments on the interaction between the drama, music, and videos please tell us here:

4. Was there any aspect of the episodes you saw or heard that stood out as being particularly good or bad? Please fill in as many of the boxes below as you wish.

Episode 1 (Catherine - 1906)

Episode 2 (Mick - 1906)

Episode 3 (Cathie - 2009)

Episode 4 (Michael - 2009)

Episode 5 (Catie - 2030)

Episode 6 (Mike - 2030)

About the content

We'd like to know if you learnt anything new from Interior Traces and if it provoked any new ideas.

1. Did you learn something new about brain science? Yes / No

If yes, please tell us what you learned:

2. Did your ideas about the relevance of brain science to our society change? Yes / No

If yes, please tell us how:

Observations

Overview

Observations are a means of studying and gathering information on an activity: what happens, what someone does or how they behave. This technique can be best used to observe who is involved in an activity, and how, and should be undertaken during an activity.

Why use it?

Observations can be more direct than approaches that rely on what people say or think (i.e. in questionnaires or interviews) as it is also a record of what they do. For example the 'observer' can watch and note how an exhibition space is being used at different times of the day and on different days. For instance, observations can be useful to get an understanding of:

- who is taking part (e.g. number of children, adults, teenagers)
- how people are involved (e.g. sitting, talking)
- how / when a particular space is being used / not used
- an assessment of certain quality criteria (e.g. atmosphere, levels of interaction)

Completing several observations during the course of the project (e.g. during meetings, events) can provide a means of capturing and monitoring the activities taking place.

Instructions for use

Observations can be casual or structured, overt or covert, but whatever approach is adopted there are some general rules for using observations for evaluation:

- Structured observation entails the direct observation of activities, behaviour or places and the recording of that in terms of categories that have been devised prior to the start of data collection. A key risk with applying a structured observation approach is the potential of imposing an inappropriate or irrelevant framework to record observations. The categories devised for the recording the activity observed need to be carefully thought through to ensure that the appropriate information is captured and recorded.
- A template can be generated outlining the activities to be recorded. This observation framework can be adapted to fit with the aims of your activity.
- There is a need to decide on the timeslots during which you would like the observations to take place.
- Encourage the observer to keep clear observational field notes.

Who to use it with

Observations can be used on a range of activities, and undertaken by anyone involved in your activity, such as project partners, stakeholders or staff.

When to use it

During the project activity – this method is particularly useful for activities which have a spatial element, including festivals or exhibitions, as you can observe how people use or behave in certain spaces.

Limitations

The fundamental concern with undertaking observations is the subjectivity of and the reliance on the 'observer'. However, it is essential to note that 'generalisability', i.e. whether the results of the observation be applied more generally and more widely than the study itself, is not the purpose of this method - instead observations are useful to generate an in-depth, intensive examination of a setting or situation. If you want to make an effective comparison, you should undertake a few observations throughout the life of the project, or have a number of 'observers'.

Considerations

If the observations are open rather than covert, the project leader should inform all those involved in the activity that it is being observed.

Timing

It is best to undertake observations during the project. However, the timing ultimately depends upon the type of activities being undertaken.

Link with other methodologies

This is a useful tool to complement questionnaires, focus groups and/or interviews.

Further Reading

There are lots of articles and books on undertaking observations. If you are interested in finding out more, below are some examples covering both a background and application of the method:

- Bryman, A. (2004) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press: Oxford
Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA
Whyte, W. (1980) *The social life of small urban spaces*, The Conservation Foundation: Washington, D.C.

Example 01

The template below is the observation schedule developed for observing a monthly public engagement entertainment event called Bright Club. Bright Club is a public engagement project organised by the UCL Public Engagement Unit, the project tests a different, new method for HEI public engagement, focused around entertainment. The schedule provided a guide for notes taken by an evaluator at each event.

Criteria	Notes
Date / Bright Club Theme	
Number of people attending	
Structure	
Established appropriate mood/climate	
Variety in presentations	
Timing (running time, length of sets)	
Content (raising awareness of science issues, explained usefulness of knowledge)	
Method of delivery (visual, examples, illustrations)	
Style of delivery	

Example 02

The template below is the observation schedule developed for capturing the experience of a whole host of public engagement activities undertaken at the Food Junctions Festival. Food Junctions was a collaborative, creative festival held in April-May 2010 in Kings Cross, organised by UCL students and staff, funded by the UCL Public Engagement Unit. The schedule provided a structure to capture observations of a range of activities, including talks, film screenings, wildlife workshops and wine tasting, taken by a 'participant observer' at each event.

To fit with the food theme of the festival, a sensory observation form was devised to capture the variety of experiences, from sight to taste.

Food Junctions: Sensory Observation Form

We wish to capture and understand all the events happening within the Food Junctions programme. As our eyes and ears, we are asking all participants-observers to keep a log of each of the events/activities you attend so that we have a record of how each one is experienced. Either during or immediately after the event/activity please complete this sheet; you can use the questions below to help guide your observations if you wish...

Sight

How would you describe the look? Are there any significant visual experiences?

Describe the audience - is it mostly families, young people, a mixture?

Are people sitting through the whole event or coming and going?

Sound

How would you describe the sound of the event? Are there any significant sounds?

Is the lecturer engaging with the audience? Can they be heard?

Did the speaker have a clear message about their subject?

Was this successfully communicated to the audience?

Is there audience interaction? How much?

Touch

How would you describe the feel? Are there any significant associations with your sense of touch or how you feel?

Was the event hands-on? How many of the audience are actively participating?

What are people doing?

Taste

How would you describe the taste of the event? Are there any significant associations with your sense of taste? Or taste can refer to culture, good/bad taste

Are people sampling the food/drink? How many people?

Smell

How would you describe the smell of the event? Is there any significant smells?

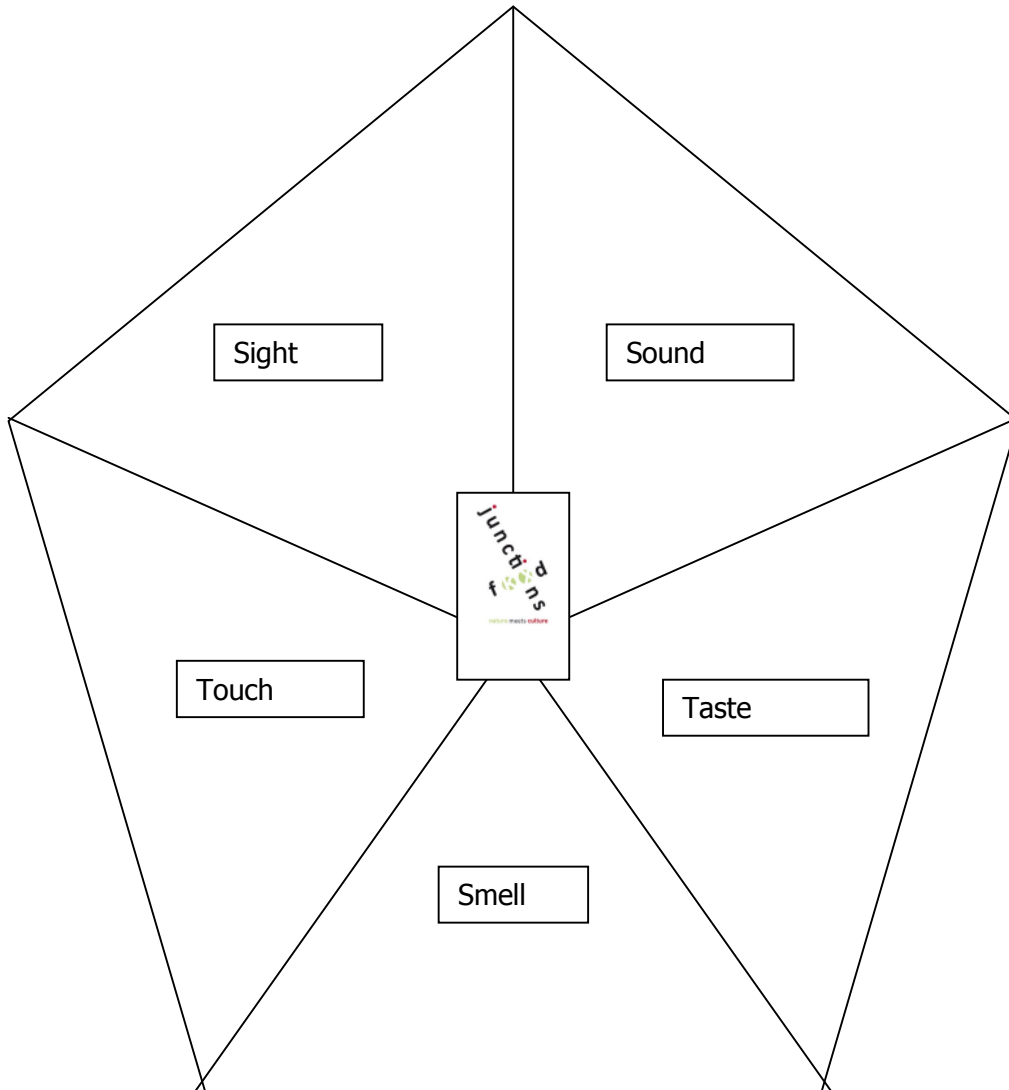
General Impressions...

What is your overall opinion of what's happening here? Is it worth doing?

Is it adding value to the overall Food Junctions programme?

Food Junctions: Sensory Observation Form

We are particularly interested in your experience of each event and we would like you to think about how all your senses experience these activities within the festival



Date:

Event Name:

No. of Plates given out:

No. of Participants:

No. of Plates returned:

Your Comments:

Participant-Observer Name:

Please return this sheet to the Living Kitchen when your event has finished, thanks!

Example 03

The template below is the observation schedule developed for capturing the experience of an evening event – Science Soirees. Science Soirees was funded under the UCL Public Engagement Unit Beacon Bursary small grant scheme. The project was six ‘cabaret-style’ evening events on five different cutting-edge chemistry topics at six different London schools. Topics included: ‘CO₂ The world’s deadliest molecule’, ‘Pattern formation in nature’, and ‘Fueling the vehicles of the future’. The audience of the events were parents and guardians of primary and secondary school students. Each event involved 10-25 parents/guardians.

**Chemistry Department Science Soiree
Wednesday 16th December
Holland Park School**

Observed by:

Topic: A date with Chemistry

- 1. How many different activities were there in the evening and what were they? (i.e. speaker talking, speaker demo, PRS survey, audience experiment, Q&A = 5)**
- 2. How effective was the change between activities? Did most/all participants realise the activity had changed? Was attention maintained well?**
- 3. How long did it take to change between activities? Please list each activity change with time taken to switch, if possible**
- 4. If there was a discussion section how many people were involved in asking questions/discussion?**
- 5. Was the discussion activity a group discussion or a more formal Q&A?**

Walk and Talks

Overview

Walk and talk sessions can be described as mobile interviews or 'go along' methods, as the technique embodies both walking and talking. Walk and talk sessions are particularly useful for evaluating location based projects/activities e.g. festivals or exhibitions.

The sessions can be conducted with any interested group or individual. The aim is for the group or individual to give a guided tour of how they use and perceive the project (be it an exhibition or festival). This can involve taking photographs and notes of how they see or feel about the space, activity and/or project.

Why use it?

Walking methods can be valuable because they elicit very different information than asking people to sit in a room and answer questions about specific topics or environments. When people are not in a particular space and are asked to describe it, they tend to think of the obvious, rather than having their memories provoked by catching sight of a feature that reminds them of something else (such as a previous event, or forthcoming activity).

Walking methods can be used to gauge:

- any physical changes that have taken place to a site, location or space
- an historical narration of the project
- use of a space or site
- an understanding of the context of the project

By asking an individual or group who knows a project well to guide you around a space, you can capture many aspects that you as an outsider would not know from a site visit. However, by asking a variety of stakeholders to undertake a walk and talk session of the same project, you can build up a multi-dimensional understanding of the project. For example, by asking a member of staff, an audience member and funder to walk and talk sessions of the same exhibition, you will acquire a detailed understanding of the exhibition from a range of perspectives.

Walking methods can be used to empower evaluation participants, as it hands over the focus of the evaluation to them. Unlike questionnaires or interviews, the participants can set the route of the walk and the agenda for the talk.

Instructions for use

Walking methods can be adapted to focus on particular aspects of the project, such as soundwalks (to focus on listening) or night-walks (which have a temporal focus), or can be used with a range of people (groups, individuals, different ages). Whatever approach is adopted there are some general rules for using walk and talks for evaluation:

- Brief the individual or group undertaking the walk, explain that they should be guiding you around the project (e.g. exhibition or festival) and that you are only there to take notes to complement the photographs they take.
- If necessary, because the individual or group really can't engage with the activity, try using prompts including themes such as historical narrative and usage.
- If you feel it would be useful, comments can be annotated on a map of the space for comparison at a later date.
- Ensure that you have considered any health and safety implications of the walk and talk session, and if appropriate undertake a self assessment of risk.

Who to use it with

Walking methods can be used with a range of individuals (e.g. partners, staff, audience members, funders) or groups.

When to use it

As noted earlier, walking methods are suitable for location based projects such as exhibitions or festivals. They can be used before, during and/or after the activity.

Limitations

- Ensure that all parties know what the walk and talk involves, how long it lasts and that they may be asked to take photographs.
- Walk and talk sessions do take time to organise, conduct and analyse. There is a limit to how many walking interviews you can conduct, but if you organise them well you can pack a lot into a short time period.
- It is important to remember that people's perception of a project or activity will change over time. Walking interviews that are held some time after an activity is completed need to be qualified by the term 'with hindsight'. As an aside, it is always interesting and useful to see what people remember and how they remember it, and what is still important to those involved in an activity weeks or months later.
- Walking interviews are unpredictable. Some will be rewarding, providing you with more information than you anticipated and perhaps the opportunity for a new project; however, some might be brief and uninformative.

Considerations

Assure participants that their responses will be confidential: good practice is to ask the participant to sign a consent form.

If you are collating any personal or sensitive information, you may need to assure respondents that their responses will be kept confidential. You may also need to declare the collection and storage of any personal data (i.e. information about a living person by which that person can be identified), under the Data Protection Act. More information on this matter can be obtained from your department's data protection officer and <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/efd/recordsoffice/data-protection/>

Timing

The time needed to undertake a walk and talk sessions depends upon the questions you ask and who you are talking to. In general, you should allow at least half an hour to undertake each walk and talk session, bearing in mind that the timing of the session can always run over or under. Also, do not forget to build in time to write up notes and observations from the tour.

Link with other methodologies

Interviews can be a useful precursor to a walk and talk on a project. The information collected by a walk and talk session (e.g. photographs, comments on a map) can be used to provoke discussion in a focus group or workshop.

Further Reading

If you are interested in finding out more about walking as a method, below are some references to further information:

Clark, A. and Emmell, N. (2008) 'Participatory walking interviews: More than walking and talking?' Presented at *Peripatetic Practices: a workshop on walking* (London)
Westerkamp, H. (2001) *Soundwalking*, Available from: <http://cec.concordia.ca/econtact/Soundwalk/Soundwalking.htm#top>, accessed on 2007, 30 October, INTERNET
Kusenbach, M. (2003) 'Street Phenomenology: The Go-Along as Ethnographic Research Tool', *Ethnography*, 4, 455-485

Example 01

The walk and talk session log sheet below was used to evaluate a series of engagement activities to regenerate a number of public open spaces. The walks were undertaken in the open spaces with project decision makers and with users of those spaces.

Walk and Talk Log Sheet

Project Name:

Name:

Date:

Time:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in a 'walk and talk' session. We aim, through the use of innovative and exciting visual and aural techniques to obtain an understanding of your experience of this project. We hope you will enjoy this task as it will involve you walking around the area taking photos of everyday sights, something that people don't often do.

We do not want to be too prescriptive in telling you what to photograph, but we would like you to give us a guided tour of the project (which could include aspects of the site and wider local area), following your own route and choosing areas or topics to focus on which you feel are important. For example the following could be looked at:

Historical narration of the project
Positive and negative design features or aspects of the project
Any safety, crime, anti-social behaviour or litter issues
Maintenance and management
Usage of the open space i.e. appropriate or inappropriate

Please bear in mind the project as a whole when taking the photos, i.e. the resources that went into it, the initial aims, the processes undertaken, the outputs delivered and the impacts of this project. These may not only be physical, visual aspects, but could be social, behavioural, economic or decision-making elements. We are interested in capturing and understanding all of these aspects.

Comments	Photograph

Focus Groups

Overview

A focus group is an organised discussion with a group of individuals to understand their views and experiences of a project, activity or a topic. Focus groups can be used as a substitute for interviews, to understand experiences, learning, expectations and impacts of being involved in a project.

Focus groups should be held at a convenient time and location for all those invited, and should, ideally, be recorded and transcribed.

Why use it?

Focus groups can be a means of capturing more qualitative information than a questionnaire will provide (i.e. how and why things happened or people felt or acted the way they did) and will take less time than administering several individual interviews. However, because focus groups are not as structured as interviews, you may not get the same level of detail from a focus group response as you would from undertaking several interviews.

Specifically, for evaluating public engagement projects and/or activities, focus groups can be used to understand:

- the project process (the management, the partnership, the delivery);
- stakeholders' role and level of involvement in the project;
- expectations and aims of being involved in the project;
- feedback on the project, particularly feelings about the project outcomes and outputs;
- what changes, if any, have taken place;
- potential impact of the project on individuals;
- what worked well and what didn't work;
- how the project could have been improved;
- understandings of certain concepts or issues (i.e. science, education, public engagement).

Focus groups are useful to obtain several perspectives about a project, activity or a topic. Unlike one-to-one interviews people can build upon one another's responses and come up with ideas they may not have thought of on their own. They are particularly beneficial for bringing together a range of people or stakeholders (i.e. staff, students, local authority, community, local businesses).

Depending on how the session is structured a focus group can provide a good opportunity to reach a consensus on certain topics or issues (i.e. for instance a group could be asked to rank or agree on priorities for the direction of or next steps for a project).

Instructions for use

There are some general rules for using focus groups as a technique for evaluation:

- The size of the group matters - focus groups work best with 6-8 people.
- Ensure there is a set of ground rules for the focus group, covering what behaviour is acceptable within the session, make sure these are read out at the start to all participants (or stuck on the wall so you can refer to it if needed). The ground rules should be agreed by all participants at the start. You could even ask the participants to suggest some rules.
- Ensure that the seating is in a circle so that people can see each other and everyone feels involved. If some individuals are physically marginalised they may not contribute.
- The role of the focus group facilitator/moderator is very important. Leadership and interpersonal skills are required to moderate the group and the conversation. They should encourage discussion around particular topics or subjects. It is likely that they will have to step in at certain points to ensure that the session stays on track. Ideally use someone who is experienced in this area.
- The focus group should, if possible, be recorded and transcribed.

Who to use it with

Focus groups can be used with established groups (such as the project team) or with a group assembled specially to be a focus group (such as those involved in or affected by a project).

When to use it

It is probably best to use focus groups before and after the public engagement activity.

Limitations

- Focus groups require good mediation. The size and composition of the group are important considerations. Beware of dominating personalities who may restrict others from talking. Furthermore, look out for shy individuals who may feel intimidated by the situation and require encouragement.
- As it is an open-ended process, you may not get the precise answers that you would expect from a questionnaire or interview.
- Problems may arise when attempting to identify the individual view from the group view.
- Focus groups can be difficult to assemble; try to approach a pre-existing group. As well as saving time, group members will be comfortable with each other and perhaps more open and honest, than a group of strangers would be with each other.
- In some circumstances, focus groups are perceived by groups as an opportunity to complain about issues relevant to them, which soon becomes unconstructive. Beyond good mediation, one method to curtail this is to give the group the first 5-10 minutes to put their complaints across. Having been given the group this opportunity, they may be more willing to move forward into the discussion.

Considerations

Assure the focus group participants that their responses will be confidential, good practice is to ask participants to sign a consent form.

If you are collating any personal or sensitive information, you may need to assure respondents that their responses will be kept confidential. You may also need to declare the collection and storage of any personal data (i.e. information about a living person by which that person can be identified), under the Data Protection Act. More information on this matter can be obtained from your department's data protection officer and <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/efd/recordsoffice/data-protection/>

Timing

The time needed to undertake focus groups depends upon the questions you ask and who you are talking to. In general, you should allow at least an hour to undertake the focus group, bearing in mind that the timing of a focus group can always run over or under. Also, do not forget to build in time to write up notes and observations from the focus group.

Link with other methodologies

Focus groups can be useful to provide further qualitative information for a project after a questionnaire has been administered. Also, the information gathered on a 'walk and talk' (i.e. photographs) can be used to stimulate discussion in a focus group.

Further Reading

If you are interested in finding out more, below are some examples covering both background and application of the method:

Social Research Update 'Focus Groups': <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU19.html>
Morgan, D.L. (1997) Focus groups as qualitative research. London: Sage.
Bryman, A. (2004) Social Research Methods, Oxford University Press: Oxford
Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) Handbook of Qualitative Research, Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA

Example 01

The template below is a discussion guide developed for a focus group to evaluate Food Junctions Festival. Food Junctions was a collaborative, creative festival held in April-May 2010 in Kings Cross, organised by UCL students and staff, funded by the UCL Public Engagement Unit. The discussion guide was designed to be used pre-festival with the Food Junctions project team. The purpose of the focus group is to conduct evaluative research to: generate a comprehensive list of topics surrounding the issues faced by project team concerning Food Junctions pre-festival.

Introduction - Welcome and introduce myself.

Explain the general purpose of the discussion

Explain the presence and purpose of recording equipment

Address the issue of confidentiality. All information collected will be confidential and participants names will not be disclosed neither will any attributions for quotes be made in my final report. I hope this encourages you to speak openly.

Let's begin. I'd like to find out some more about you by going around the room one at a time. Please tell me your first name and the role you have within the project team.

Why did you choose to get involved with this project?

What comes to mind when you think about *Food Junctions*?

Professional Development

What kind of professional skills do you hope to develop from *Food Junctions*?

What kind of knowledge do you think you will take away at the end of *Food Junctions*?

What do you know about public engagement at UCL and what does the term mean to you?

How do you think you will go about creating a successful dialogue with the public audience?

What challenges have come up so far for you?

Shared learning

How do you feel UCL – your peers, lecturers, and advisory committee - have responded to *Food Junctions*?

What is the most interesting or intriguing use of knowledge exchange and shared learning within higher education that you have ever heard about? It doesn't matter whether this is already happening within UCL or not, I just want to know what you find interesting

What changes would you like to see made at UCL with regard to how knowledge exchange and shared learning is managed?

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Example 02

The example below is taken from the evaluation of a public engagement entertainment event which runs every month called Bright Club. Bright Club is a public engagement project organised by the UCL Public Engagement Unit, the project tests a different, new method for HEI public engagement, focused around entertainment. The schedule provided a guide for a focus group undertaken with a sample of the audience (7 audience members) who attended Bright Club.

Bright Club Discussion Group Guide

Introduction

-Aims of focus group: the evaluation of the Bright Club aims to explore stakeholders' experiences and identify key lessons learnt from the project which could be shared more widely. I would like to talk to you about your experience of attending bright club. I'm interested in both positive and negative comments, so would really like you to honestly reflect on your experience.

-Consent form

-Ground rules. These rules can help set the boundaries for decorum (e.g. mobile phones on silent) and for interaction and exchange (e.g. listening to others, no interrupting, speaking up).

Getting involved

Why did you come to bright club?

How did you hear about it?

Have you been involved in other similar activities, project or groups? If so, what?

Description

How would you describe bright club?

Did you enjoy the events? Why? What parts?

Can you name one thing you liked about the bright club and one thing you didn't like?

Did you find them useful?

Was it as expected?

Outcomes: changes that have taken place as result of attending bright club

What did you hope to get out of coming to bright club and what did you actually get out of it?

One of the aims is to raise awareness of science, research and the role of higher education. In your opinion, how and how much does the project do this?

Did you learn anything new? If yes what, if no why not?

Have they continued to think about the issues raised?

Did you use the information and ideas?

Have they attended any other related events, on the same subject?

Conclusion

Where could you see the project going next? How could it be developed further?

What themes/issues do you feel are important?

Any other comments?

Personal logs – diaries, log books, reports

Overview

Using documents as sources of data is a common social research method. Personal logs specifically require a respondent (e.g. a project stakeholder) to record activities they are engaged with. Personal logs in any format that are kept throughout the course of the project provide evidence of personal development, behaviour, thoughts and feelings.

The structure can vary from unstructured or open-ended, where the respondent can write in their own words, to highly-structured tick-box questionnaires. This can be textual (book, report, online), audio or image (photographic or video) based. For instance, providing respondents with a portable voice recorder or camera means that they can be asked to capture the day-to-day experiences of a project.

Why use it?

Personal logs are particularly useful for evaluating the impacts of projects/activities that focus on individual, personal development, for example, projects that aim to increase knowledge and skills.

The method is useful to obtain real life accounts about certain activities or behaviours that might normally be inaccessible. They can be useful to capture information that may be forgotten in an interview or focus group.

Diaries, reports and logs can provide powerful stories and narratives of certain activities. They can also be very useful tool for the respondent; providing an opportunity for them to reflect upon an activity.

Instructions for use

- Personal logs can take many shapes and forms. Personal logs may be open format, allowing respondents to record activities and events in their own words, or they can be highly structured where all activities are pre-categorised. Whatever format is decided, be clear on what you want the respondent to log in their diary or book, use the introductory session as an opportunity to set out an example of what you want to see on each page.
- Personal logs will not be appropriate for all activities – they are particularly useful as a means to evaluate long-term projects focused on personal development.
- Agree on how regularly you want the respondent to fill in a personal log (e.g. daily, weekly, at the end of a project) and a final date for submission.
- It is important to encourage honesty and ensure confidentiality.

Who to use it with

Personal logs, such as diaries, reports or books, work best with staff and participants directly involved in the project.

When to use it

The diary or log should be kept throughout the life of the project. Reports can be completed at the end of the project.

Limitations

- Personal logs are unpredictable; some respondents will provide more information than you anticipated. However, some might be brief and uninformative.
- These types of methods can require significant time and effort from the respondent. What is required and expected of the respondents should be made clear from the outset.
- The value of the information gathered in the personal log depends on how truthful it is. Those who agree to keep diaries or logs, or supply reports, must be encouraged to be truthful at all times.
- Ensure confidentiality. If people want to share their progress with others they can, but some might feel intimidated if their progress is common knowledge.
- Do not forget time to build in time to sufficiently analyse the information collated. Diaries, logs or reports have to be thoughtfully examined and carefully analysed.

Considerations

It may be necessary to be discrete with the content of the personal logs where possible, especially if you are collecting and analysing sensitive and personal information.

If you are collating any personal or sensitive information, you may need to assure respondents that their responses will be kept confidential. You may also need to declare the collection and storage of any personal data (i.e. information about a living person by which that person can be identified), under the Data Protection Act. More information on this matter can be obtained from your department's data protection officer and <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/efd/recordsoffice/data-protection/>

There are ethical considerations with this method. Although unlikely, if something gets revealed in a diary or a log where the respondent is thought to be at risk, it is important to report it, to your line manager.

Timing

The time needed to undertake this method is difficult to assess; you will need to build in time at the beginning of the project to brief those taking part on how to keep their log, and time will be needed at the end to analyse each diary, report or log book.

Link with other methodologies

While the personal log will give you hard facts about how the project impacted on individuals, a few semi-structured interviews can be useful to validate and corroborate some of the information with individuals who have produced them.

Further Reading

If you are interested in finding out more, below are some examples covering both a background and application of the method:

Latham, A. R. (2003) 'Research, performance, and doing human geography: some reflections on the diary-photo diary-interview method', *Environment and Planning A*, **35(11)**, 1993-2017

Using Diaries in Social Research: <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU2.html>

Bryman, A. (2004) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press: Oxford

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA

Example 01

The example below is the UCL Public Engagement Beacon Bursary: Project Evaluation & Learning Form. The form aims to provide a simple way to document what the project has done and achieved. Projects leaders are asked to self evaluate by reflecting on their experience, explaining any problems they had, summarising what they have learned, and by identifying lessons they would pass on to other projects or can be applied elsewhere. Although a template is provided, the nature and scope of the form depends on the project undertaken.

Projects leaders are asked to submit a complete project evaluation and learning form no later than one month after the project end date. The form is reviewed by the UCL Public Engagement Unit and summarised to the Steering Group.

Background:

Name	
Job Title/Course	
Organisation/Department	
Project name	
Total project value (£)	
Beacon funding (£)	
Funding breakdown <i>Please note the project actual spend, broken down into specific costs</i>	
Location	
Start and end dates	
Project partners <i>(Please list the partners involved in the project, include names, organisations and contact details where appropriate).</i>	

Summary of project / activity: What happened?

Who was the audience for this project? *Please give details.*

What was the project supposed to accomplish? *Please outline the aims and objectives agreed at the start of project, note if they changed during the project and the process and reasons for making those changes.*

Did the project succeed in its aims? How do you know? *Specifically, please outline any evaluation and assessment undertaken.*

What things do you think worked well and why? *When filling in this section, please try to think about all aspects of the project (e.g. initial inception, project activities and project outcomes), from a range of perspectives.*

What problems emerged during the project and how were they tackled? *Specifically, what barriers did you face and how did you overcome them? Again, please try to think about all aspects of the project, from a range of perspectives.*

Looking back, what things do you wish you had known when the project started? *Please list anything you feel would have been helpful to know at the start which could have made the project easier.*

Has the project led to any new activity or relationships? *For example has the project led to any changes within the department or any changes in teaching or research? Please give details.*

Which of the Beacon aim(s) did it address? *The aims for the Beacon for Public Engagement Programme are as follows:*

Create a culture within HEIs and research institutes and centres where public engagement is formalised and embedded as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels and for students	
Build capacity for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff at all levels, postgraduate students, and undergraduates where appropriate, to become involved	
Ensure HEIs address public engagement within their strategic plans and that this is cascaded to departmental level	
Create networks within and across institutions, and with external partners, to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported and able to draw on shared expertise	
Enable HEIs to test different methods of supporting public engagement and to share learning	

Specifically, how does the project addresses these aims?

More information: *Please attach photographs of what happened, if you have one. Please also list any titles or links to more information on the project (for example reports, articles, websites).*

Workshops

Overview

A workshop is an interactive, participatory group exercise. It can be used in a range of circumstances, including the evaluation of a project, event or activity. For instance within a project it could be used to either explore what needs doing or, for the purposes of evaluation, understand what happened when and who decided what. Similar to a focus group, the technique can also be used to gauge and compare opinions on a range of different aspects, criteria or qualities of a project or activity.

Why use it?

Workshops can be a means of capturing more qualitative information than a questionnaire will provide (i.e. probing the meanings participants give to their behaviour, ascertaining reasons, motives and intentions).

It is an excellent, interactive way to understand different peoples' opinions and experiences of a project. It is also a useful tool to provide participants with the chance to challenge the agenda set by the project leader; raising new issues and/or asking questions back. Whatever the focus - it can be useful to create some sort of visual and participatory activity to structure the discussion.

Depending on how the session is structured, a workshop can provide a good opportunity to reach a consensus or decision on certain topics or issues (i.e. for instance a group could be asked to rank or agree on priorities for the direction of or next steps for a project).

Instructions for use

There are some general rules for using workshops as a technique for evaluation:

- Workshops can be undertaken with small (6-15 people) and/or large groups (15-35 people, as people can be subdivided into smaller groups).
- Ensure there is a set of ground rules for the workshop this should include what behaviour is acceptable within the session. This should be read out at the start to all participants (or stuck on the wall so you can refer to it if needed). The ground rules should be agreed by all participants at the start, you could even ask the participants to suggest some rules.
- The workshop should be highly structured to include a range of interactive, participatory techniques to stimulate discussion. This could be undertaken in a number of ways, with a range of material, whatever approach is adopted the results of the workshop should be the basis of decision-making or further discussion.
- The role of the facilitator/moderator is very important. Leadership and interpersonal skills are required to moderate the group and structure the workshop. They should encourage discussion around particular topics or subjects. Try to use someone with experience or consider taking facilitation training yourself.
- The workshop should, if possible, be recorded and transcribed.

- You will need materials - paper, post-it notes, pens, flip chart paper, sticky dots.

Who to use it with

Workshops can be used with established groups (such as the project team) or with a group assembled specially (such as those involved in or affected by a project).

When to use it

It is probably best to organise workshops before and after the activity.

Limitations

- As with focus groups, workshops require good mediation. Beware of dominating personalities who may restrict others from talking. Furthermore, look out for shy individuals who may feel intimidated by the situation and require encouragement.
- Workshops should be viewed as an open-ended process; you will not get the precise answers that you would expect from a questionnaire or interview.
- Problems arise when attempting to identify the individual view from the group view - the analysis needs to focus on the group interaction data, rather than on individual responses.

Considerations

Assure the participants that their responses will be confidential, good practice is to ask each participant to sign a consent form.

Timing

The time needed to undertake a workshop depends upon the content and the number of people involved. In general, you should allow at least an hour to undertake the workshop, bearing in mind that the timing can always run over or under. Also, do not forget to build in time to write up notes and observations from the workshop, and to disseminate the findings to the group.

Link with other methodologies

The information gathered by other methods, including interviews, questionnaires and/or 'walk and talk' (i.e. photographs) can be used to stimulate discussion in a workshop.

Further Reading

If you are interested in finding out more about workshops, below are some examples covering both a background and application of the method:

Kindon, S., Pain, R. and Kesby, M. (2008) *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place*, Routledge: London

Example 01

The workshop guide below outlines an evaluation poster exercise. It was used with the core team involved in a community engagement project to look back over the project, encouraging reflection on the impacts and the lessons that have been learnt by the project team.

Introductions (why are we here; what will happen; how long will it take)

Ground rules

Stage 1:

Make a timeline on a piece of flipchart paper. Complete start date and today's date, mark the timeline with some years/ months so events can be recorded in the right place.

Stage 2:

Highs and Lows. Ask each person/group to discuss amongst themselves the highs and lows of the project; before agreeing on the project's 2 highest points and the 2 lowest points. These should be written on Post-its with a short reason why they were chosen (different colours should be used for each group.) The highs and lows are then presented by groups to everyone else in the room while the Post-its are attached to the poster; at the appropriate date along the timeline.

Stage 3:

Connections, Impacts and Learning. Connections: Look at the poster with the whole group; discuss the overall picture. Any connections between highs and lows? Use a marker pen to link with arrows. Impacts: Discuss...

- What difference have we made by doing this project? Have there been any spin-off effects?
- How has the project helped people to develop new skills and confidence? Evidence?
- What do people do differently as a result of the project? Evidence?

Learning: Discuss...

- Have there been any surprises?
- What would we have done differently in this project if we knew at the start what we know now?

Stage 4: Moving forward. With the full group discuss the following:

- What do we want to achieve next? Thinking about goals needed to be achieved. Maybe you want to change the direction of the project, or develop the next one.
- What do we need in order to achieve it? Think carefully about actions required to achieve goals identified. Who could take responsibility for actions?

The poster is now complete

Example 02

The 'history of the future' approach was used in a workshop with the UCL Public Engagement Unit during the life of the programme to encourage a discussion around the aims and objectives of the programme, in order to break them down into indicators for the evaluation.

The 'history of the future' approach

Imagine that the programme is complete and that it has succeeded in its goals. X has asked you to present at a committee meeting. X sent you a list of questions beforehand that he would like you to address, so you can note the key points.

What did the programme actually do?

Who's going to benefit from this?

Why is this important?

How did you make the programme a success?

Creative methods –drawing, writing and photography

Overview

Creative methods, incorporating drawing, writing and photography, can be used to evaluate activities and projects. These tools and techniques can be useful for capturing and visually displaying different people's opinions and experiences of a project.

In general, people enjoy being creative, which makes these methods a really valuable evaluation tool. Creative methods can be very attractive, providing a good focus for discussion. Lots of different things can be drawn or written about, for instance creative methods can be used to understand perceptions of certain issues, words, or topics (e.g. science, health or well being) or usage (i.e. where people do things, which places they visit). For instance, people could be asked to draw mental maps (these do not have to be geographically accurate) to show how people perceive spaces.

Why use it?

Creative methods can be a means of capturing more open, qualitative information than traditional qualitative methods will provide. Creative methods are visually effective, and can be used to stimulate debate or democratise information.

Instructions for use

A number of aspects or features of a project can be evaluated by using creative methods. Some examples of creative methods include:

- discussion boards or posters, giving people, e.g. participants, the opportunity to write responses to questions, words or images;
- drawing, as a response to certain words or subject matters;
- postcards, giving people, e.g. participants, the opportunity to provide feedback;
- voting systems, asking audience members to choose or vote on certain topics;
- quizzes;
- disposable cameras, given to stakeholders to capture experiences of being involved in a project.

The outputs of such methods could be the basis for further discussion.

Who to use it with

This depends on the approach adopted, but there is potential to use these techniques with everyone who comes to an activity or is involved in project.

When to use it

In general, creative methods are best used during the activity.

Limitations

- These methods are unpredictable; some will be rewarding, providing you with more information than you anticipated and perhaps, ideas for a new project. However, some might be brief and uninformative.
- You will not get the precise answers from these methods, compared to that you would expect from a questionnaire or interview.
- Creative methods yield lots of information and data, but depending upon the nature of the method this could prove difficult to analyse.

Considerations

Not applicable.

Timing

The time needed to undertake this method is difficult to assess; you will need to build in time at the beginning of the activity to brief those taking part on what to do, and time will be needed at the end to analyse the outputs of the creative methods e.g. images, texts.

Link with other methodologies

Creative methods can be used during a workshop, or provide information for a workshop or focus group.

Further Reading

If you are interested in finding out more, the reference below covers both a background and application of the method:

Kindon, S., Pain, R. and Kesby, M. (2008) *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place*, Routledge: London

Example 01

The example below is taken from the evaluation report of a public engagement project called Destination London. Destination London was a series of public events structured around the experiences and perceptions of east Europeans who have written about London. The project was run by the UCL School of Slavonic & East European Studies, funded by the UCL Public Engagement Beacon Bursary Scheme. The events were intended to explore new approaches to seeing and writing about the city, whilst marking the completion of the AHRC-funded East Looks West travel writing research project. Over 100 attended the events, to fit with the theme of the project participants were asked to give feedback on postcards.

One of the aims of the project was to provide new perspectives on intercultural interaction in London through travel writing.

It was clear from audience take-up that the popular appeal of travel writing provided a hook that attracted people; the way it was approached in the events was carefully orchestrated to use this,

but also to subvert preconceptions and stereotypes.

Feedback at the writers' panel was solicited by distributing London postcards (quite kitsch: London buses and Big Ben) and asking for written comments on the event. Specific remarks included: 'Tonight really helped me understand my feelings as an immigrant in London, and as a Londoner back at home in Poland.' 'Pessoa said 'my homeland is the Portuguese language'. I think Danilo Kiš said the same thing (not about Portuguese, though!).' The question and answer session after the readings also opened out into a discussion of travel and intercultural interaction, as well as other matters such as style in travel writing. (Postcard: 'Why do travel writers all write as if we were in the 19th century in terms of style?')

Example 02

Disposal? was an interactive exhibition designed to consult with UCL staff and students and the general public, about UCL Museums & Collections about what UCL should keep and what should be 'disposed'.

The main purpose of the exhibition was to have discussion about how museums should work and for us as people who work in museums to understand how our public view the collections and the work we do. To this end, evaluation was built in to the whole format of the exhibition. A number of methods were used, including:

- A voting system, where the project asked visitors to vote on which one of 5 objects they would dispose of if they were a museum curator. Visitors voted at the beginning of their visit and again at the end, once they had had a chance to look around the exhibition. By tracking individual votes we will be able to see what criteria people used to make their decision and also whether they changed their minds.
- Discussion boards, an area was created in the exhibition with posters and post-its notes for visitors to leave comments against a number of questions which were posed to them.