



CREATIVE EVALUATION TOOLKIT

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INTRODUCTION

CREATIVE EVALUATION

Good practitioners look back on, review and reflect upon their work as well as observing participants, talking to them and consulting them as a matter of habit. It's the way we constantly evaluate and inform our practice and measure the impact of our work.

Standard questionnaires, tick box forms and interview techniques don't naturally enable a deep level of imaginative thought or complex recollection of events, and can be easily led by the people seeking the information, as opposed to those giving it.

This toolkit details a selection of creative techniques that practitioners can use to enable participants to engage in understanding and share their feelings and opinions in a reflective manner. It gives guidance on how the material gained through creative techniques can be used to prove the value of our work.

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This Toolkit Aims To:

- Act as an introduction to or a reminder of the process of evaluation and the important role of creativity in that process.
- Stimulate ideas for creative techniques that can be used in evaluation for both new and experienced practitioners.
- Give step by step guidance to those new to the use of creative techniques to enable them to have a go.
- Look at the place creative techniques have in proving the value of the work we do to funders, partners and commissioners.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The words below are commonly used in association with the process of evaluation. Reminding ourselves of their distinct meanings can help us to better understand the process of evaluation.

Evaluate: To judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount or value of something. (*Cambridge Dictionary*)

Review: To view or see again; to look back on. (*Webster's Dictionary*)

Reflect: To throw or turn back the thoughts upon anything; to contemplate. (*Webster's Dictionary*)

Discuss: To talk or write about a subject in detail, especially considering different ideas and opinions related to it. (*Cambridge Dictionary*)

Observe: To watch carefully the way something happens or the way someone does something, especially in order to learn more about it. (*Cambridge Dictionary*)

Consult: To have discussions with someone, to seek information or advice before taking a course of action. (*Oxford Dictionary*)

Reviewing, reflection, discussion, observation and consultation are all important processes that we use to analyse information in order to evaluate a piece of work.

PROCESS OF EVALUATION

THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

Evaluation is more than simply asking someone to fill in a form or take part in an exercise, it is a process that starts while you are planning your work and continues until well after you have delivered your sessions. A basic process of evaluation is as follows:

Question: Identify what you want to evaluate and clearly define the questions you want to ask. The questions you select may include a mixture of those designed to evaluate the effectiveness of your work, those related to participant progression and those required by funders.

Method: Determine how you will ask your questions ensuring that your target group will thoroughly understand them and engage with them.

Facilitation: Plan how you will facilitate participants to explore their responses to the questions asked. This could involve planning how you will go about facilitating filling in a form, playing a game or using a creative technique.

Analysis: Collate the responses you have gained being careful to locate them in the context in which they were collected, noting any points to follow up or external influences that may have had a bearing on the results.

Presentation: Present and use your findings to show the value of the work you have done and any aspects that could be improved.

Reflection: Use any strong or weak points highlighted by your evaluation results to inform your practice and further evaluation techniques and follow up any points identified in the analysis of your evaluation data.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING AN EVALUATION METHOD

When selecting, designing and delivering creative evaluation activities it is important to consider the following questions:

- Is the activity plausible? Are participants clear about what they are taking part in and why?
- Does the activity address a small number of clear questions?
- Is the activity flexible enough for participants to share thoughts you didn't expect?
- Is the activity unthreatening? Does everyone feel able to join in no matter what skills or previous experience they have?
- Are you confident you have the skills needed to deliver the activity?
- Does the activity produce information that is tangible and that can be collated, providing useable evidence?
- Is the activity fun and engaging?
- Is the activity accessible and suitable for the individuals or group you are working with?

The method you choose does not necessarily need to address all the questions outlined above but it is important to consider all aspects of an evaluation technique in order to understand its strengths and limitations and to be clear about your reasons for choosing it.

USING THE TOOLKIT

KEY TO THE ACTIVITIES

Some activities are great at engaging people and getting them thinking and talking but it takes a lot of input from the facilitator to quantify the information generated. Others are easier to quantify but less engaging. Some gain really rich participant centred feedback but require a high level of skill from the facilitator or need specialist resources. Below is a key to the activities in this toolkit which will help you to choose those that will meet your needs and those of your clients. They are not value ratings (i.e. lower or higher scores are not better or worse) but rather an indication of the nature of a particular activity or technique.

ENGAGEMENT IN REFLECTIVE THINKING



1 = Highly successful, engaging and thought provoking
5 = A potentially passive process

EASE OF QUANTIFYING



1 = Highly quantifiable
5 = Very difficult to quantify

INTERPRETATION



1 = Requires little interpretation or presentation by the facilitator
5 = Highly reliant on additional work by facilitator

RESOURCES



1 = Uses minimal easily sourced resources and requires little skill
5 = Involves specialised skills or equipment

Different evaluation techniques are suitable for different groups of people. While a physical game with lots of running around may be great for young children it would not be suitable for older people with mobility issues and some methods require specific skills such as literacy. The symbols below are there as a guide for choosing the right techniques for the people you are working with.



Better for children under 10 years old and families



Better for people over 10 years old



Requires literacy



Requires mobility



Well suited to people with special needs



Well suited to young people

WORDS

10/11

Gathering words around key questions through the creation or adaptation of a song, rap or poem can be an informal way of discovering what is important to participants while also being a creative and integral part of the session.

Work can be created by individuals or by the group as a whole and can be focused on key questions like enjoyment or what they have learnt.

Identifying key words and then expanding these to make sentences helps participants to think more deeply about what they want to say.

As a facilitator it is important to accurately record material created by participants and to be careful not to interfere with their meaning when you are transcribing for them. You can always add explanatory notes to the original material to help with clarity if needed, but the work itself should be that of the participants.

WORDS

SOME BASIC IDEAS

Nursery Rhymes

Use the format of a well known nursery rhyme or song, replacing words with those volunteered by younger children.

Example: “She’ll be coming round the mountain when she comes,”

Adapted to: “We’ll be when we come”



Singing

As a part of a song writing or rap project ask participants to write lyrics to express their experiences during the project. These can then be performed to give them authority.



Key Words

As a group exercise, key words can be volunteered by the group members in response to questions asked by the practitioner about their experience or development during the project. These words can then be expanded to create group or individual reflective poems.



WORDS

12/13

NONSENSE POEMS

1. Pre-prepare five things that you would like to know about that can be expressed simply in words. For example for a community arts and health project you might choose the words confidence, friends, health, learning and feelings.
2. Completely cover a table with flip chart paper and scatter a mixture of felt pens over it. Make sure you have small strips of paper for later.
3. Ask the group to walk around the table and explain that when you shout out a word they have ten seconds to draw the first thing that comes into their heads somewhere on the table.
4. Shout out the five words in turn, asking the group to resume walking around the table in between each word.
5. Ask the group to walk in the opposite direction and tell them that when you shout stop they must write down everything they can see.
6. Ask the group to walk around one last time, when you shout stop ask them to look really hard at the words in front of them.
7. Now ask participants to get into groups of three and write down the first seven words they can remember from the drawing (without going back to look at it).
8. Give each small group a strip of paper and ask them to create a sentence using all of the seven words they remembered, only adding joining words such as 'and', 'but' and 'it'. Explain it will be nonsense.

9. Bring together all the seven word sentences and ask the whole group to order them to make a poem. Tape the finished nonsense poem together.

10. Ask a member of the group to read out your nonsense poem which may sound unusual but will encapsulate the themes of the project as experienced by the participants.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS NEEDED

- LINING OR FLIP CHART PAPER
- SMALLER SHEETS OR STRIPS OF PAPER
- FELT TIP PENS
- STICKY TAPE
- A LOUD VOICE



ENGAGE



QUANTIFY



INTERPRET



RESOURCE



OVER 10



LITERACY



MOBILITY

SCRAPBOOKING

14/15

Scrapbooking is the process of collecting, editing and presenting a variety of media over a period of time.

This process enables practitioners and participants to reflect on what they have done and to see the project as a journey.

The act of scrapbooking involves selection, recollection and reflection and enables participants to tell the story of their learning journey in a visual way through a kinaesthetic process.

Scrapbooks can contain a whole variety of things including, photographs, written observations, pieces of work, sound recordings, working drawings, video clips, notes, leaflets and participant planning.

They can be produced through group work, by individuals by themselves, or created by the group in the facilitators absence.

They could be in the form of a book, display boards, as loose leaves in a box, or digitally captured material.

The key ingredient to scrapbooking is the process of working with and talking about the material.



SOME BASIC IDEAS

Timelines

Lay out photographs and other collected material from the project and ask the group to select items to put on a timeline, encouraging them to add notes about how they felt at different points and where they gained new skills, knowledge, friends etc.



Blogs

Create a blog for your project, uploading videos, photos and sound clips after each session, commenting on what you have done and learnt.



Observed Scrapbooks

Give a book and camera to a supporting member of staff, encouraging them to take on the role of observer, transcribing interactions between participants and annotate photographs of specific individual achievements and development.



SCRAPBOOKING

16/17

GROUP SCRAPBOOK

- 1.** Take photographs and collect leaflets, working drawings and other material during your sessions (you might want a special box to keep everything in).
- 2.** Introduce the group to the scrapbook early in the project, explaining that it is something that can be used to show other people what they are doing and so they can look back and reflect on what they've done.
- 3.** Regularly, perhaps towards the end of each session, get out the book, choose and stick in the new materials and encourage participants to add comments about what they have done or how they felt (you could cut out speech bubbles or use post-it notes for this).
- 4.** At the end of the project look through the scrapbook like a memory book, asking participants to comment on the distance they have travelled. Ask questions to help participants to focus on certain aspects of the project such as: What can they do now that they couldn't do then? Do they feel more confident than they did at the start? Where in the book did things start to change?

TIPS. Unless you have a Polaroid camera or the means to print out photos during a session you won't have printed photos of your current session ready for selection and scrapbooking at the end. Another way to use photos is at the beginning of each session, asking participants to select photos from the last session to recap on what was done. This can help maintain continuity during a project and is a quick way of addressing points from a previous session that you want to pick up on.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS NEEDED

- PLAIN PAGED BOOK
- PENS
- CAMERA
- PRINTED PHOTOS
- GLUE STICK

OPTIONAL

- SPEECH BUBBLES
- POST-IT NOTES
- SPECIAL BOX TO KEEP EVERYTHING IN



ENGAGE



QUANTIFY



INTERPRET



RESOURCE



UNDER 10



OVER 10



SPECIAL

PHYSICAL FORMS

18/19

Games and challenges can be used as an alternative to asking people to mark the value of something on a form, or as an activity to get people thinking before undertaking an evaluation form.

Games where people place themselves or an object in terms of opinion or agreement are a more playful physical way of expressing a response to a question. This can work well with children and young people as well as those for whom a written form may be a barrier, such as people with limited English or the learning disabled. A playful physical expression of an opinion can also encourage discussion.

Asking participants to place objects (rather than themselves) can offer a level of anonymity when this is appropriate and can help overcome any issues of mobility.



SOME BASIC IDEAS

Playing Games

Adapt an existing game such as the port, starboard, bow and stern pirate ship game, attaching meanings to different areas of the ship such as loved it, hated it, too difficult, learnt loads. On the shouting of a question participants then position themselves in the part of the ship that best fits their experience.



Evaluation Circles

Ask your group to make a circle, give each of them a small object and ask them to place their object in terms of agreement with the statements you give, the centre of the circle being complete agreement and the edge being complete disagreement. Photograph the results.



Stand Up Sit Down

Begin with the whole group standing up. The facilitator makes a statement such as “I learnt nothing today” and asks participants to sit down if they agree with it. Those standing and sitting can then be counted and individuals can be asked to elaborate on their choice.



PHYSICAL FORMS

20/21

THE MARMITE LINE

1. Pre-prepare a length of string, tape or cord clearly marked into 50cm sections.
2. Pre-prepare some questions you want your group to consider and write them on A4 paper in bold pen. Also make two pieces of paper, one saying 'Yes' and the other 'No', and one piece of paper with a warm up question on it such as 'Do you like Marmite?'.
3. Lay the length of string or tape along the floor, with 'Yes' at one end and 'No' at the other.
4. Ask your group to all stand with one foot on the line.
5. Place your warm up question on the floor near to the line.
6. Explain to the group that you will ask them a question and that they have to talk to each other to discover their position in relation to each other in answer to the question and that they must order themselves on the line according to their answers but they must keep one foot on the line at all times.
7. Using a warm up question like 'Do you like Marmite?' helps participants understand the process before asking your own questions.
8. Be clear that they can't just run to the 'Yes' or 'No' end, but must discuss with each person they pass their opinion on Marmite, even if the two people at the 'Yes' end both love Marmite, who loves it the most, and why? Be strict about the participants having to keep one foot on the line at all times rule.

9. If it is taking the group a long time to get into order, give them a thirty second warning, counting down the last ten seconds
10. Ask a couple of people from the line to explain why they are in that position and discuss with the group.
11. Photograph the line, making sure to include the question and the 'Yes' and 'No' papers in the image.
12. Repeat the exercise with your own questions.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS NEEDED

- STRING, TAPE OR CORD MARKED AT 50cm INTERVALS
- SHEETS OF PAPER
- BOLD FELT TIP PENS
- CAMERA
- GOOD EXPLAINING SKILLS
- AN OPEN SPACE



ENGAGE



QUANTIFY



INTERPRET



RESOURCE



OVER 10



MOBILITY

ACTING IT OUT

22/23

Using drama and dance techniques can enable people to express things in a more conceptual way than they may be comfortable to articulate verbally.

Exploring your emotional response to a question through a physical (as opposed to word based) process, allows people to think in new ways, and overcome social and cultural barriers to talking about feelings.

Introducing new vocabulary through discussion of movements or shapes will also enhance the richness of participant's contributions to discussions around themes of feelings, experience and emotion.

Reflective drama and dance techniques can also be skilfully worked into projects, so that the evaluation becomes an integrated part of the creative experience.



SOME BASIC IDEAS

Tableaux

Ask small groups to use themselves to create a still silent image of an aspect of the project that they have enjoyed or to represent a response to a specific question.



Movement

Make a movement to express how the session has made you feel, this could be a stand alone activity or could be developed into a repeated movement or expressive dance.



Acting Skills

Ask small groups of participants to act out a skill or situation they are now competent in. Repeat this short improvisation until they know it well. Now ask them to remember what they were like at the start of the project and repeat the improvisation as if they didn't have the skills and knowledge they have gained.



ACTING IT OUT

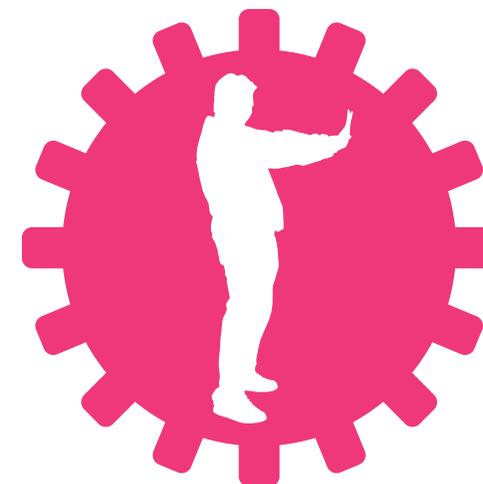
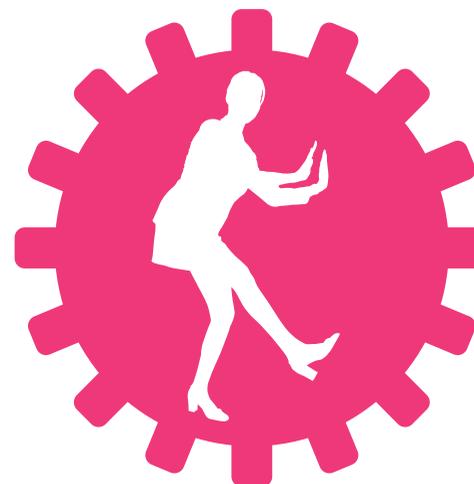
24/25

MAKE A MACHINE

1. At the end of the session, ask the group to stand in a circle and think about a part of the session or project that they have particularly enjoyed and ask them to keep it a secret.
2. Ask a volunteer from the group to come into the circle and do a short movement to represent the thing they are thinking of. Ask them to repeat this movement over and over continuously.
3. Invite a second person to create a movement for their thought, and again repeat it over and over continuously.
4. Place the second person in relation to the first so that they start to become a machine.
5. Continue adding more group members until everyone is included.
6. You may want to invite each person or group to add a noise that goes with their movement.
7. If you wish you can pat people on the head to turn that part of the machine off and pat them again to turn them back on.
8. Take some video footage or a photographs of the machine.
9. Ask the machine to freeze, then go around each person asking them what part of the project they were representing.
10. All give each other a clap!

RESOURCES & MATERIALS NEEDED

- CONFIDENCE TO DELIVER A DRAMA BASED EXERCISE
- AN OPEN SPACE



DRAWING

26/27

Drawing responses to key words, or representations of feelings, can enable some participants to explore and understand their responses less self-consciously and with more detail than if they were to try and articulate them directly.

Drawing can also be a useful way to identify different characters and times or places within a narrative and to Clarify who or what people are referring to in discussion.

The facilitator can also use drawing as a tool to get conversation going or to direct it to the areas they are interested in finding out about.



SOME BASIC IDEAS

Group Drawings

Do some group, time limited drawings in response to questions or themes introduced by the facilitator. Put out a piece of flip chart paper for each question and only allow the participants ten seconds to sketch out their responses.



Self Portraits

Ask participants to draw themselves, or their faces, at different points during the project, showing what they have been doing or how they have been feeling. If these are done on card you could make them stand up, and use them as stimuli for reflective conversation.



Experience Maps

Participants share their experiences while the practitioner maps them out onto a large piece of paper, linking or grouping contributions either by subject or chronological order.



DRAWING

28/29

FOLD OVER PEOPLE

1. Make sure you have a piece of flip chart paper or lining paper for each group of three people as well as felt tip pens and definitions of the sections of the body ready. Pre-fold the paper into thirds.
2. Split your group into smaller groups of about three, you need at least three groups each at their own table.
3. Explain to the group that they are going to make a creature that represents the project they have just done.
4. Give out the paper and ask each group to draw the head of the creature in the top third of the paper. Explain that the head needs to represent what the project has made them think about. Prompt the group with suggestions like: Has it given them new ideas, made them think about themselves or put any new knowledge in their brains? Have they gained new philosophies, changed their opinions, perceptions or ways of thinking? They can add words if they want.
5. As the group is working record or note down the conversations that are taking place.
6. Ask the groups to fold over the top third of the paper so that only the bottom of the neck can be seen then pass it on to the next group. They must not look at what has already been drawn.
7. The next third is the body, this includes the arms which represent action (what have they done) and the heart (how the project has made them feel).

8. Again ask the group to fold over the drawing so that only the waist is showing and pass their paper on to the next table.
9. The last third is the legs, representing mobility (where will they go now, has the project given them ideas for the future or changed the way they will do things).
10. Now its time to unfold the drawings, have a good laugh, and share some of the things included in them.
11. Take good photographs of the drawings. Attach them to your notes or recordings of the conversations that went into making them.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS NEEDED

- FLIP CHART OR LINING PAPER
- FELT TIP PENS
- DEFINITIONS OF THE BODY PARTS
- NOTE BOOK OR AUDIO RECORDER
- CAMERA



ENGAGE



QUANTIFY



INTERPRET



RESOURCE



OVER 10



SPECIAL



YOUNG

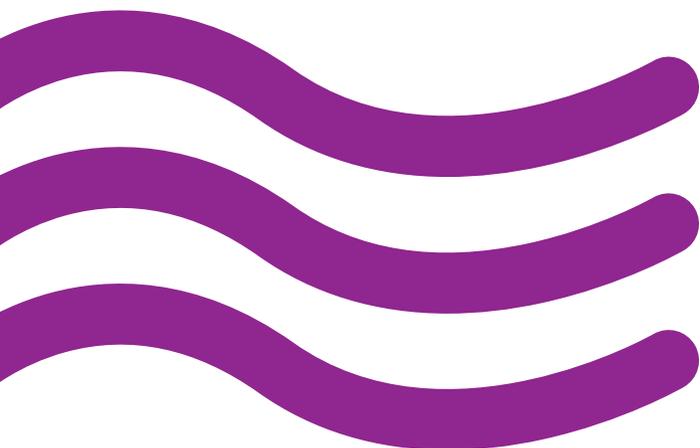
SYMBOLS

30/31

Symbols can be an unthreatening stimulus that encourages people to talk about choices they have made and where the creativity is in personal interpretation.

Open symbols can transcend issues of culture, age, experience and ability as there is no correct interpretation of an image.

Symbols themselves are both suggestive, and subjective, giving participants a starting point, but also allowing personal explanations for choices given by participants to be the most informative.



SOME BASIC IDEAS

Jelly People

Ask participants to choose from a selection of 'Jelly People' or 'Blobby People' depicted in different positions to represent how they're feeling. You can extend this exercise by then asking people to place their person onto a photocopy of a tree, or other situation, and encouraging comments on the choices made.



Open Symbols

Open symbols like speech bubbles or medals can be a good focus through which the practitioner can ask a question, or participants can illustrate or write a response.



Custom Symbols

You can ask participants to create their own symbols in response to a question, such as a coat of arms for the project depicting the four most important things to come from it.



SYMBOLS

32/33

WEATHER SYMBOLS

1. Pre-prepare a selection of laminated weather symbols (like the ones shown opposite which represent a range of moods from negative to positive) with blue tack on the back, and a drawing of a weather map on flip chart paper. You will need enough copies of each symbol so everyone can choose the same one if they want to.
2. When participants arrive, ask them to select a weather symbol that best represents their mood, and stick it on the weather map.
3. Photograph the map, once everyone has contributed to it.
4. Towards the end of the session remove all the symbols.
5. Ask the participants to again choose a weather symbol that represents their mood, and stick it on the weather map.
6. Photograph the map again.
7. It may feel appropriate to ask participants to comment on their choice of symbols. You should right down any illuminating comments at the earliest opportunity.
8. You can use the change in symbol choice and any explanatory comments to analyse the effect of taking part in the session on peoples mood or sense of well being.

RESOURCES & MATERIALS NEEDED

- WEATHER MAP
- WEATHER SYMBOLS
- FLIP CHART PAPER
- LAMINATOR
- SCISSORS
- BLUE TAC
- CAMERA
- NOTE BOOK



ENGAGE



QUANTIFY



INTERPRET



RESOURCE



OVER 10



SPECIAL



YOUNG



USING INFORMATION

34/35

MAKING INFORMATION YOU HAVE GATHERED USEFUL

Well designed creative processes enable a deep level of imaginative thought or complex recollection of events and are led by the individuals taking part. They use imaginative ways to enable people to understand and explore their thoughts, opinions and experiences. However, these imaginative creative processes do not always collect that wealth of information in a very ordered or predictable way. Trying to make the information gained through the process itself more quantifiable can alter the nature of the exercise and therefore the quality of information that is gained through it.

The solutions we find to this problem will depend on the specific needs of a project. Here are some suggestions of approaches you could take.

Selection

Some activities such as the Marmite Line gain more readily quantifiable information than others. Look at the key to the activities and use those that are easier to 'quantify' if the collation of the information gained during the activity is important to you.

Stimulus For Thought

Taking part in a creative activity will help your participants to think deeply about the questions you want to ask. It can act as a stimulus for thought prior to the filling out of a more formal evaluation form, which asks the same questions. This approach enables participants to explore the questions and give a more complex response to them than if they were simply given the form at the end of a session.

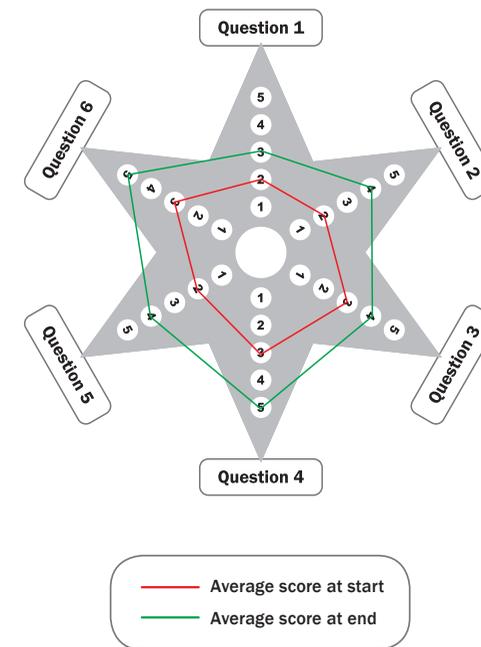
Evidencing Reflective Process

Taking a photograph, short video or audio clip of a reflective activity is useful evidence and a good reminder of what happened. Attaching to this any key points or quotes that came up will also add to the value of your evidence.

This approach enables the activity to continue as an unrestricted creative process, while gaining qualitative evidence to support and bring a project report to life.

Presentation

Quantifying qualitative evaluation allows you to measure it and present it in a variety of different ways. The diagram on the right shows average before and after scores for given questions arranged in a star format. Evaluation results from methods such as the Marmite Line can be presented like this by marking the line into five sections and recording how many people stood in each section when asked before and after questions such as 'How good did you feel at the start of the session?' and 'How good do you feel now?'.



ASSIGNING VALUE

36/37

ASSIGNING VALUE TO QUALITATIVE INFORMATION

Sometimes it is useful to assign value to learning and experience in order to monitor the effect of a project and show its worth in a quantified way. Numerical value can be assigned to many quantitative exercises enabling you to produce strong evidence around the benefits of your project or about peoples opinions on a given subject.

Example 1: Quantifying Weather Symbols

The table below shows an easy way of assigning value to the Weather Symbol evaluation method using a wellbeing rating of 1 to 5.

Symbol	Sun	Sun and Cloud	Cloud	Cloud and Rain	Cloud and Lighting	Total
Rating	5	4	3	2	1	
No. who choose symbol at start	0 people (0 points)	1 person (4 points)	4 people (12 points)	6 people (12 points)	2 people (2 points)	30 points
No. who choose symbol at end	2 people (10 points)	4 people (16 points)	4 people (12 points)	2 people (4 points)	1 person (1 point)	43 points

13 people attended the session so a 100% wellbeing score would be 65 (5x13). We can now say that participants arrived with a wellbeing score of 46% and left with a wellbeing score of 66%, or that the average sense of wellbeing improved by 20% during the session.

Similar methods of quantifying information can be applied to other techniques including all those in the physical forms section of this toolkit.

Example 2: Quantifying Language Use

Quantifying language use requires establishing clear questions for evaluation and firm milestones for each question. The table below is a framework that can be used if the impact of developing positive use of language between parents and children needs to be evaluated.

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Language Use	Is using very little positive language and struggles to reflect with the group or on a one to one basis.	Shows awareness that 1 is not useful to them and/or a move to try out elements of 5.	Has an appreciation of 5 and is sometimes managing this behaviour.	Is moving steadily towards 5 but their behaviour is not yet consistent.	Uses positive language and can confidently articulate what they and their child have done regularly.

Observations written on post it notes and photographs taken of scrapbook entries can be used to support the assigning of a value to parents' language use at the start and end of a project enabling us to evidence their development both numerically and qualitatively. Evidence from all the exercises in this booklet in the form of notes, photographs or video clips can also be used to support a numerical rating.

For this method of quantifying information it is important to have a clear definition of what constitutes a high and low score for each question worked out before you gather the evaluation material rather than trying to retrospectively apply meaning to evidence. You should also be careful to explain the process used to quantify material when presenting results

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WORD

DRAWING

PHYSICAL

CREATIVE
EVALUATION
TOOLKIT

ACTING

SCRAPBOOK

SYMBOL



CREATIVE EVALUATION TOOLKIT

ARTWORKS CREATIVE COMMUNITIES

Working in partnership with professional artists, we deliver creative projects that inspire, engage and enable communities and organisations. We use creativity as a force for positive and effective social change.

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