Fast and Flexible Evaluation Methods for Exhibits and Programs

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Participatory methods for data collection get the target audience involved in generating the data. Using participatory methods helps to integrate evaluation into the overall visitor experience. From the visitors' point-of-view, data collection feels more like an activity. Examples of participatory methods include:

- Card sorting
- Feedback walls
- Dot/sticker voting
- Carousel sheets
- Two stars and a wish
- Fist-to-Five

Resources to inspire and to get you started using participatory methods:

- "Active Learning and Teaching Methods" from Northern Ireland Curriculum. A great overview of many different participatory strategies, some which are better suited to workshop/classrooms and some (like dot voting, feedback sheets, two stars and a wish) which can be easily adapted for exhibit evaluation: http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stage_3/ALTM-KS3.pdf
- See the NISE Network website for a detailed explanation of using carousel sheets, including analysis steps: http://www.nisenet.org/blog/post/network-wide-meeting-materials-team-based-evaluation www.nisenet.org (see the bottom of web page for a link to the "carousel sheet" Word doc)

Remember: Data collection is only one step in an evaluation! Key to any evaluation is producing *usable* and *useful* results, not just creating a pile of data! Before you decide on a method, think through what you'd like to find out. When choosing a method, make sure you are able to analyze the data that will be produced. Finally, share the findings via an email, conversation, presentation, memo, or report.

For help thinking through the steps of an evaluation, see the "Planning a Program Evaluation" worksheet developed by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension: http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/G3658-01W.pdf

Cycle of Evaluation

Share & Use Findings → Identify & Engage Stakeholders → Focus & Plan Study → Collect Data → Analyze & Interpret Data → Share & Use Findings

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