

Evaluation and evidencing

Why evaluate your arts project?

- To improve practice during the project
- To show what's happened as a result of the project
- To gather evaluation evidence to report back to funders, or to get quotes for publicity about the project.
- Evaluation is most useful if everyone (artists, teachers and project participants) is actively involved in and committed to taking part in evaluation and learning from what's happened, and if gaining feedback is an integral but not too time consuming part of the project.

Planning to evaluate

Plan what you'll do to evaluate your project *at the start of the project*, when you set your aims and objectives, with the involvement of all project partners, including the teachers and artists who will be involved. Plan how you will:

- Collect evidence
- Interpret and draw conclusions from the evidence (eg in a review meeting)

Making evaluation creative and relevant:

Collect evidence from participants, teachers and artists before, during and after the project. Choose methods that will give you the evidence you need (keep the project aims and objectives in mind here). Think about methods that would be appropriate to the participants, relate to the project, and not off-putting or intimidating to them giving their true opinions. For instance - if a group does not engage well with writing, use a visual or oral method of collecting evidence. Make sure that the artist/ teachers will build in time for evaluation during the project. It doesn't have to be time consuming.

Some methods of evaluation:

- Small “round the group” discussions straight after a session
- Video diaries (set up a camera and invite young people to talk about the project at regular intervals throughout it)
- Diaries
- Questionnaires
- Individual interviews
- Photography
- Tape recordings
- Drawings and diagrams
- Observation by an external evaluator
- Graffiti walls
- Peer evaluation - eg. interviews carried out by other people in the same age group as the participants.

For further advice and some inspirational examples, read **Partnerships for Learning: a guide to evaluating arts projects** by Felicity Woolf, available online at www.artscouncil.org.uk/artsmark/documents/Partnerships.pdf