



Methodological challenges for foyer evaluation research



Ambitious tenets for framing foyer evaluation design (1)

- The foyer is **an ensemble** of objects, signs and people
- **Visitors make sense** of this ensemble, not of separate foyer elements
- The visitor experience comes from **the relationality** within the ensemble of objects, signs and people



Ambitious tenets for framing foyer evaluation design (2))

- While **specific foyer phenomena** may dominate the experience, and should therefore be identifiable in the evaluation, the scope of the evaluation should encompass **the full range** of functionalities
- The need to evaluate **experiments** within the ensemble calls for a **before/after** evaluation design



A reminder from communication research

“Communication cannot be conceptualized as *transmission*. Rather, it must be conceptualized in terms of both parties involved in creating meanings, by means of *dialogue*. The sense people make of the media messages is never limited to what sources intend and is always enriched by the realities people bring to bear.”
(Dervin 1989, p. 72)



From the conventional toolbox of evaluation research:

- Survey questionnaire
- Qualitative interviews
 - Individual, depth
 - Focus groups, natural groups
- Participant observation

All useful in well-known ways!

(cf. *New Walk Museum and Art Gallery*
visitor survey)

- "video glasses" (Bruno Ingemann)
 - Eye-tracking
 - Follow-up sense-making interview



Lessons from *New Walk* visitor survey

- Basic demographics, visit purpose: necessary!
- *What people missed* in the foyer: provides useful indicators about
 - need for spatial orientation
 - project museum identity more clearly
 - blurring foyer and in-gallery spaces
- *What people remembered*: Avoid ‘test’ impression!
 - Does not generate new ideas for foyer design.
- *What people ‘looked at’*: is this perceived as a meaningful question? What do we learn from the answers?





Q methodology: a mixed method approach

Christian Kobbernagel, Roskilde University/DREAM



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN DENMARK

Investigation of student experience in art workshops

- School class visit art galleries
- Guided dialogue about art works and exhibition theme
- Students produce audio podcast
- Target group 13-19 year olds
- Workshop aim to facilitate students' reflections about art theme or cultural political issues



Research design

1. Research question: What **patterns** of coherent views on art, media work process and reflective thinking can be found among students?
2. Questions based on students' discourses about art experiences
3. Interview tool: questions are translated into statements
4. Data collection online:
 1. sorting statements on grid
 2. commenting on select responses
5. Quantitative factor analysis of sorted statements produces type views (survey analysis can be added)
6. Interpretation of type views and conclusion



Preparing data collection

Students' discourses

Educator talk is often long and boring. It is fun to work with media in groups. The art works were exciting. I kind of leave with a disturbed mind.....

Statements

Art works are exciting, because one does not get a fixed opinion imposed about them

It is complex to understand art, but I like art, because it is mysterious

It is only if I know something about the artworks beforehand, that I really have an experience

Some artworks are nice, but a lot of it doesn't really mean anything to me



Online data collection – sorting exercise

UENIG				ENIG		
-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
(17) Jeg føler, jeg bliver mere kritisk,...		(16) Jeg er interesseret i at få noget at vide...	(4) Noget kunst er meget pænt, men...	(18) Jeg kan godt lide at diskutere meningen...		
	(11) Når jeg ser kunst på Arken, kan jeg komme til at...					
(14) Det er tit, jeg underer mig over, hvad der er...	(9) Det er spændende at bruge effekter i...					
		(10) Det giver mig mere at arbejde med medier...	(15) Jeg kommer til at tænke over mening...	(15) Jeg kommer til at tænke over meningens med kunstværket, når vi skal lave en videofilm eller andet		(13) Det kan være lidt svært for mig at...

UENIG	NEUTRAL	ENIG
(1) Kunstmalerier er spændende, fordi man ikke skal mene noget bestemt om dem	(5) Jeg synes, det er sjovest at tale om ideer til, hvordan vi skal lave en videofilm eller andet	(2) Det er svært at forstå kunst, men jeg kan godt lide det mystiske ved det
(12) Når jeg ser kunstmalerier kommer jeg til at se problemer i samfundet på en anden måde	(8) Det er sjovere at producere noget på computer end at lytte til historier om kunstmalerierne	

see <http://www.qmethodology.dk/flashq/flashQ10.swf>



Data collection – writing comments

Enig (+3)

(1) Kunstværker er spændende, fordi man ikke skal mene noget bestemt om dem

Det er fordi det netyder meget for mig at der er den frihed. Jeg er ikke god til fag med faste resultater og kun en løsning

(2) Det er svært at forstå kunst, men jeg kan godt lide det mystiske ved det

Uenig (-3)

(14) Det er tit, jeg underer mig over, hvad der er meningen med kunstværker bagefter

(17) Jeg føler, jeg bliver mere kritisk, når jeg ser andre billeder efter et forløb på Arken

see <http://www.qmethodology.dk/flashq/flashQ10.swf>



Type 1: The *active producer* view

Factor array (top five and bottom five statements)

+3	8. It is more fun to produce material by the computer, than listening to stories about the artworks
+3	9. It is exciting to use special features in the computer programme, when editing a video podcast or other
+2	7. The best part of the visit is when working with digital camera and the computer programme
+2	4. Some artworks are nice, but a lot of it doesn't really mean anything to me
+1	10. Its more productive for me to work with media, than to write an assignment
...	...
-1	12. When I experience artworks, I eventually see problems in society in new ways
-2	18. I like to discuss the meaning of artworks with my class mates
-2	17. I feel, I get more critical, when I see other pictures, after a visit at Arken
-3	16. I am interested in getting more knowledge about how to analyze artworks
-3	11. When I experience artworks at Arken, I eventually associate to things in my own life



Analysis results: visitor typology (85 students)

Type 1: ***Active producers*** – less interest in art, more active, creative, non-reflective, more boys

Type 2: ***Engaged art learners*** – art knowledge seekers, high engagement, less reflective, trained students, younger, all girls

Type 3: ***Process enthusiasts*** – media production focus, highly reflective self-aware of learning, design interested, mixed gender

Type 4: ***Inspired art explorers*** – art appreciators, enjoy art, highly reflective, mixed, dissents of elitarian art views, older, mixed gender

Extrapolating Q methodology to foyers: deriving statements from *New Walk* visitor survey

Describing ambience – there is need for more:

inspiration

warm welcome and approachableness (it should be the opposite to a church)

colorfulness, attractiveness

cousyness (one should feel at home)

needs more to ‘get you in the mood’

Describing information – there is need for more:

organized information (too easy to miss core info)

awareness on communicating what is expected

more instant, accessable and clear (like a library of the museum)

hub-like-things, a junction of networks

explanation of signs (arrows pointing are not understandable)

more tables

automatic doors

map on the wall (not a leaflet and not digital!)



Translating visitor discourses into statements

- I thought that the greeter who directed me into the collections was a nuisance
- The Twitterfall screen was fun and informative
- When I came in, I didn't get much information to help orientation
- The foyer served well as an appetizer to the gallery space
- The screen with breaking news about key items in the collections was irrelevant
- The signs on the wall really helped me find out where to go first in the exhibition
- I missed a focal piece (work of art, striking geological find), which could draw me into the exhibition proper
- There should be more places to sit and relax
- The shop should be more separate from the rest of the foyer



The rewards of Q-based evaluation

- The resulting **typology** satisfies the tenets:
 - The typology reflects the visitors' experience of the foyer as a design ensemble
 - The typology incorporates the relationality of foyer elements
 - The role played by single design elements can be isolated
 - Some qualitative 'thick description' complements the typology
- Assistance with online data collection and factor analysis: Christian Kobbernagel





Thank you!

Open methodological discussion

