

New Possibilities: Using Art to analyze data, draft recommendations, and promote reflexivity

Jennica Nichols & Maya Lefkowich | April 23, 2021

FAQ Creation

Because a large Zoom webinar is not an ideal platform for a discussion, we answered your questions as an FAQ to accompany the webinar recording on the CESBC website. Thank you for suggesting questions for us to answer.

Questions Asked:

- 1. What other arts based methods can be used? Could you share some examples and/or tools?**

There are MANY methods that can be used to collect & analyze data and support reflexivity. Jennica and Maya use the following methods in their practice:

- Research-based Theatre
- Photo elicitation & Photovoice
- Narrative interviewing & storytelling
- Digital storytelling & collaborative film
- Drawing & doodling
- Collage
- Painting
- Multimedia, sculpture & ceramics

Other methods you could explore are:

- Dance & movement
- Comics
- Bodymapping
- Music

When selecting a method, consider the following:

- How the method aligns with the goal, purpose, or overarching question of the project (not all arts techniques can answer all questions)
- The fit between population involved and technique
- Your familiarity with the method
 - Do NOT use a method if you do NOT have experience with the art form or the arts tool/technique
 - We recommend partnering with artists, arts-based facilitators, and arts-based researchers to try out methods that fit your population and project scope
- Always consider reciprocity - or the benefits offered to those participating in the method

- Arts techniques are NOT arts therapy. You cannot promise that any arts are inherently healing without the intentional collaboration with an art therapist, wellness advisor, traditional healer, or counsellor
 - Options for consent throughout the creative process. At minimum, this should happen before the activity and after the art has been created. If you cannot guarantee participants can meaningfully opt-in and opt-out, we do NOT recommend using arts techniques.
2. **I'm already obsessed with this presentation. How can we get the slides? - CESBC will add them to the website and you'll get an email with the after materials - Thank you!**

We have now posted a digital version of our slides on our website:
www.andimplementation.ca/training.

Please cite our work:

Lefkowich, M. & Nichols, J. (2021, April 23). New Possibilities: Using Art to analyze data, draft recommendations, and promote reflexivity [Online Presentation]. CES BC Chapter Webinar Series, Vancouver. <https://www.andimplementation.ca/training>.

Contact us for permission if you want to use our worksheets in your programs and facilitation: admin@andimplementation.ca

3. **Which stages of evaluation have you found poetry based tools to be most useful?**

We find that the context, rather than the specific phase, is often a better gage for fit with poetry. For example, poetic exercises that get to the essence of an idea can help get team members onto the same page by exploring diversity in perceptions and checking assumptions. This can be helpful at the beginning of a project when outlining priorities, in the middle making sense of what happened/is happening, or at the end when drafting actionable recommendations.

4. **How do you encourage people who might be resistant to arts-based methods? Have you encountered a lot of resistance in using these practices?**

Sadly yes, we have encountered resistance to arts-based methods. Many of these techniques challenge status-quo thinking related to “objectivity,” “gold standard science,” and “generalizability.” So, it can be difficult to make a case for the importance of tools that embrace complexity, diversity, and trustworthiness instead.

That being said, here are 4 things we do to make a case for arts:

- We use mixed methods approaches (i.e., we pair or blend an arts technique with something more familiar to a funder/partner/client) and map them to specific evaluation questions
- We demonstrate the rigor and trustworthiness of arts techniques relative to the question we are trying to answer and the population we are working with
- We stand against and actively challenge status-quo methods, assumptions, and techniques that gatekeep oppressive knowledge systems and inequities and reinforce knowledge supremacy.
- We don't use arts when they aren't the right tool. Arts cannot answer all questions, so the best thing we can do to support future arts-based projects is to not misuse them.

5. What evaluation arts-based method can be used to entice survey participation when response rates are low?

Without knowing the context (ie., who the population is, what you're trying to find out, and how much is being asked of respondents) it is impossible to meaningfully answer this question. That being said, we do NOT recommend dropping an arts technique into a project for the novelty or potential increase in interest. Using arts techniques responsibly and respectfully requires an intentional focus on how that art form answers a specific question and creates risks/benefits for participants. We would encourage thinking about how an art technique could be used to compliment other data collection methods during the design phase.

6. If we wanted to learn about/explore arts-based methods more, where might we look for inspiration or ideas?

Amazing! Yes, please continue to explore. We cannot possibly create a conclusive list here (although we are in the process of compiling a library of resources). Here are some go-to resources & inspirational starting places to support your arts journey. For those interested in using techniques described in this list by Indigenous and First Nations scholars, we do NOT recommend using these materials without meaningful collaboration with Indigenous community leaders, experts, consultants, and artists and we do NOT recommend using these materials with or to the benefit of white settlers.

- Audre Lord - [Sister Outsider](#) & [Collected Poems](#)
- Augusto Boal - Games for Actors and Non-Actors
- Claudia Mitchell, Naydene De Lande, Relebohile Moletsane - [Participatory Visual Methodologies: Social Change, Community, and Policy](#)
- Elissa Washuta & Theresa Warburton - [Shapes of Native Nonfiction: Collected Essays by Contemporary Writers](#)
- Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill & Sophie McCall - [The Land We Are](#)
- Jo-anne Archibald - [Indigenous Storywork](#)
- Johnny Saldaña - [Ethnotheatre: Research from Page to Stage](#)

- Patricia Leavy - [Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice](#) & [The Oxford Handbook of Methods for Public Scholarship](#)
- Sam Bradd, Brandy Agerbeck, Kely Bird & Jennifer Shepherd - [Drawn Together Through Visual Practice](#)
- Sheila Preson & Michael Balfour - [Applied Theatre: Facilitation - Pedagogies, Practices, Resilience](#)
- Warr, D., Guillemin, M., Cox, S., Waycott, J. (Eds.) - [Ethics and Visual Research Methods: Theory, Methodology, and Practice](#)