Time Capsule

This approach has been developed by Happy Museum commission Reading Museum and then adapted so it can work more generally. It can also be used as a more embedded way of asking questions from the LIFE survey.

In Reading, the approach was used to test if the Happy Museum project made any difference to how participants thought of their local neighbourhood, using these words:

Strong community. Beautiful. Vice. Avoid. Dangerous. Peaceful. Historic. Modern. Ancient. New. Friendly. Ugly. Safe. Industrial. Crowded. Diverse. Bad. Good. Rich. Poor. Open space. Violent. Good atmosphere. Unfriendly. Lonely. Cosmopolitan. Decay. Urban. Countryside. Fumes. Children. Elderly. Working class. Youth. Families. Residential. Business. Criminals. Polluted. Dusty. Clean. Dirty. Noisy. Quiet. Bright. Dark at night. Restaurants. Boring. Pubs. Entertainment. Flooded. Alcoholics. Drug users. Gangs. Schools. Medical Centre. Shopping centre. Local market. Police station. Church. Police cars. Community Centre. Shops. Trees. High rise. Flowers. Brickwork. Concrete. Green. Good Facilities. Good transport. Remote. Arty. Suburban.

Using Time Capsule for a self-selected baseline and review

A wall map of the area created a focal point, and sort cards were offered with a variety of words that could describe the area.

Participants were asked to pick up the cards that represented their view, and put them in a Time Capsule which was sealed until the end of the project, when the exercise was repeated. This allowed a cross-sectional analysis of any changes in opinion.

By sorting the words alphabetically in Excel it was easy to see which had changed. The later session saw the introduction of some new key words, such as beautiful and historic. The first time, over half the words had negative connotations and only 14% positive. By the second session a third each were positive and negative (with the remainder dependant on preference).

Using Time Capsule for a defined baseline and review, for example the LIFE survey

The approach can be adapted to ask the questions in the LIFE survey longitudinally (which means asking the questions of the same people over time – as distinct from a cross-sectional analysis).

- Collect the *About You* (demographic) information about people separately as part of their participation agreement, and to limit the feeling of being surveyed

- Explore the *About Your Life* questions together as a group so that people understand the factors we're asking about (Learning, Interaction, Feelings and Environment).

- Create individual responses that can be collected into a 'time capsule' and sealed till the end of the period, for example:

  - use a questionnaire with numbers or bars to fill in

  - give the participants coded tokens (to identify the participant) and asked them to put the tokens in the relevant capsule for the five questions.

- OR collect scores in other ways:

  - text vote, using a purchased service (example here)

  - stand on a marked line made with masking tape on the floor and take a photo (see Where do you stand? tool)

- Repeat at the end of the project – allowing the participants to see their own results and collecting the data for analysis afterwards

- Discuss *About Your Experience* questions, to learn what it was that made the change, again using discussion or other tools.