

Resource 6.2 Triangulation / the Mosaic approach

Triangulation involves either:

- Asking different people about the same thing
- Using different methods to collect information.

Triangulation is a way combining different research methods and approaches in order to get a deeper or clearer research picture.

1. Often, triangulation mixes quantitative and qualitative methods (e.g. surveys, focus groups, observation, questionnaires, tracked attendance figures etc). For example, a researcher facilitates a focus group interview (loosely structured open questions) with participants in a project and identifies key themes / impacts emerging from their participation. They then ground their interpretation with supporting evidence from participant questionnaires, repeat session attendance, in-depth formal interviews etc.
2. Triangulation may bring together different theoretical approaches to interpret the outcomes of research (e.g. sociological and economic).
3. The term triangulation can also describe the work of several researchers combining their observations of the same evidence during the same time (e.g. a gallery observation by a team).
4. Lastly, triangulation can be as simple as comparing differentiated sets in the same set of evidence from two different periods (e.g. seasonal library lending figures for children, young adults, males and females etc.).

Triangulation is useful because:

- It combines quantitative and qualitative data.
- It can mix different primary evidence (direct from participant) and secondary evidence (partner evaluation, facilitator feedback, attendances etc).
- It allows researchers to double check that on type of data has not got a built in bias (e.g. people always say good things in a focus group, or only fill in a customer survey when they wish to complain).

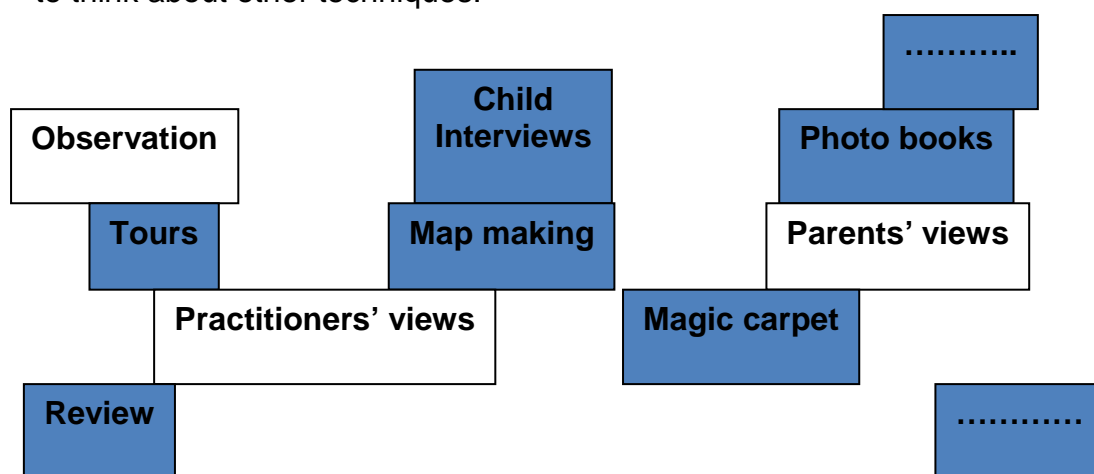
Why triangulate?

1. Taking into account lots of different people's view of the project gives you a more whole and reliable picture of how the project went.
2. Lots of different groups of people are involved in a project (e.g. teachers, children, parents, community groups, partners), so capturing all their perspectives will give you much richer information about what happened and the benefits of your work. It is useful to think about 'crystallization' - that is looking at the same project through a prism of lots of different perspectives (more than three).

A good way to plan your evaluation methodologies is the Mosaic Approach (Spaces to Play: more listening to young children using the Mosaic approach by Alison Clark and Peter Moss (2005) London: National Children's Bureau).

The Mosaic Approach involves

- Using different methods to build up a picture of the project
- Including visual methodologies, which are more accessible to many participants, especially children.
- Capturing different people's voices and putting them at the heart of research
- Avoiding reliance on the written or spoken word - writing can be a huge barrier, particularly for children, so if you want to be inclusive you need to think about other techniques.



In order to use the mosaic approach to plan your evaluation, think about the range of perspectives on a project, and the different groups of people you might want to gather information from (e.g. parents, children, practitioners, museum, library and archive staff, teaching assistants). You will need to consider different methods you could use to do this, including visual methods.

Resource 6.1 and 6.4

(http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplatessocial/section6_impact.html) give you some more ideas on different methods of evaluation you might want to consider, and **Resource 6.3**

(http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/toolstemplatessocial/section6_impact.html) will help you to think about different perspectives and methods you could use to build up a mosaic approach.