

Evaluation Data Collection Methods

Method	Purpose	Advantages	Challenges
questionnaires, surveys & checklists	to quickly and/or easily get lots of information from people in a non-threatening way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can be anonymous inexpensive to administer easy to compare and analyze can be given to many people can get lots of data many samples already exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> don't always produce careful feedback wording can bias responses can be impersonal may need sampling expert for surveys don't always get the full story
interviews	to fully understand someone's impressions or experiences, or learn more about answers to surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> get full range and depth of info. help to develop relationships flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> time consuming can be hard to analyze and compare can be costly interviewer can bias responses
documentation review (ie. review of applications, finances, memos, minutes, etc.)	to get an impression of how a program operates without interrupting it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gets comprehensive & historical info. doesn't interrupt program information already exists few biases about information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> time consuming information may be incomplete evaluators must be quite clear about what they are looking for not flexible- data restricted to what already exists
observation	to gather accurate information about how a program actually operates, particularly about processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluators can view program operations as they occur facilitates adaption to events as they occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interpreting and categorizing behaviors can be difficult expensive can influence behaviors of program participants
focus groups	to explore a topic in depth through group discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reliable way to get impressions efficient way to get a large range & depth of info. in short time conveys key information about programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> can be difficult to analyze responses a trained facilitator is needed for safety and closure can be difficult to schedule 6-8 people together