

Meaning Making During A Pandemic

A new course on
Digital Storytelling

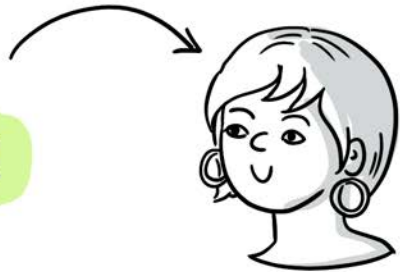
Episode 5:

The digested read by
Azam Masoumzadeh



This online program is hosted by:

Andrea Geipel



Abhay Adhikari



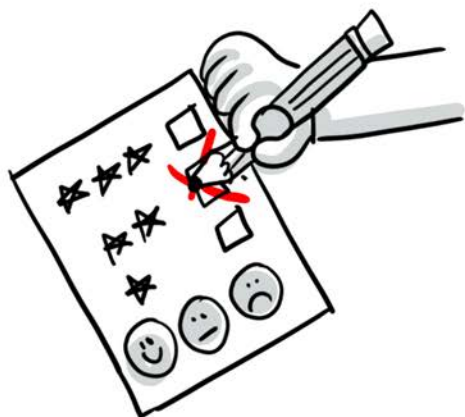
Guest speaker
Natalie Nelissen



Our digital producer is
Jenni Mueller



This was our last episode of Season 1 of Meaning Making During The Pandemic. It was about **success** and **evaluation**

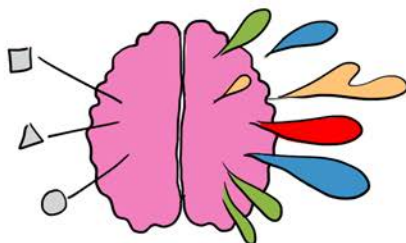


Our guest speaker Natalie said:

I was both pleased and surprised to see that our participants were already aware of the importance of evaluation



We started the discussion by looking at the emotional and the analytical aspects of evaluation



Azam: As someone who works both on arts and community projects, I feel we need to combine both these aspects and that's why I've focused on it in this comic



Natalie:
Just asking questions isn't enough



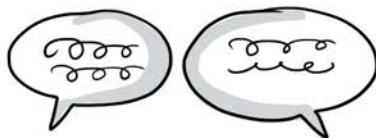
Natalie: It's really important to know why you are doing the evaluation as well as what you want to do with the result!

So, we asked our participants: **What evaluation techniques have you used in the past?**

● **Questionnaire**



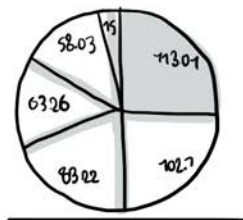
● **Interviews**



● **Observations**



● **Demographics**



Andrea: In our museum we use a variety of different techniques. As Natalie said, it's about why and what we want to evaluate, rather than just running a process



For example, we're always curious to see if we are getting visitors from diverse backgrounds to engage with us. And we want to capture data that gives us as accurate a snapshot as possible!



Also evaluations are a way to bring the user in, and as we try to be usercentric evaluations help us this reach this goal as well



Florian: I always start the evaluation by asking myself what do I want to learn?



Katherina: I want to learn certain things but I also let some informations come to me and surprise me



But evaluation is rarely a straightforward process:

Soeren:

I know evaluation is very important but I struggle to find the resources to do it well



I would be happy to help



Natalie: I see what you mean, but evaluation doesn't always need big budgets and access to experts. There are many things you can do as a team. Also, you should explore the possibility of collaborating with universities - in many cases they might be happy to work with you

Jenni: Sometimes I feel we gather data and let it die. We really need to use the data to create actionable insight



I don't see the point of evaluation



Azam: That's true. also working with colleagues who don't value evaluation can be frustrating

Natalie: Ah, yes. Your team members might find evaluation useless as almost all of us feel we know what people want. Sadly, that's not true most of the time. It's important to convince your colleagues to consider the outcomes of an evaluation

How about we discuss it over a cup of tee?



Andrea: Natalie, can you give us some examples of why people don't care about evaluation?

Feeling over facts



It's not worth it!



**Unrealistic expectations
from the evaluation**



Speaking about feelings, should we always be guided by the results of an evaluation or is there room for intuition?

Abhay



Well, that depends on the personality type. Some people are good with gut feelings and some not

Soeren: Thanks for bringing it up because I feel that's one area we need to focus on - results versus intuition - when we are talking about young adults, especially children

Yes please ask us instead of guessing...



Azam: I agree with what you are saying, but perhaps we need a bit of both - a balance between facts and feelings

So, when do we begin the evaluation process?

What I've learned from this conversation is that evaluation is never about the ending. We do these great projects and feel that we will be able to evaluate them with the perfect questionnaire. We need to think about evaluation from the very first steps we take. This allows us to avoid dead ends and mistakes at the end



We'd like to thank everyone who took part in Season 1 of Meaning Making. As a team, we were inspired to work with colleagues from different countries in every episode. We're also pleased to announce that we will be back with **Season 2**



Illustrated by: Azam Masoumzadeh