



**Evidencing the *impact* of the GLOs
2008 – 13**

Learning Unlimited

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About the consultant

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- Museum of London: evaluation of programmes for children under 2
- English Heritage: Activity Plans for Kenwood House and Swiss Cottage
- English Heritage: strategic Evaluation Plan for the Education and Interpretation teams
- National Maritime Museum: Learning Strategy
- National Trust: evaluation of the *Bringing Properties to Life* initiative
- National Portrait Gallery: Family Strategy
- *Renaissance* South East: evaluation of the *SLIME* network
- *Renaissance* South West: research into Parents as First Educators
- MLA SW Museum Skills Training programme

Evidencing the impact of the GLOs

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this in-depth study was to uncover quantitative and qualitative evidence of the awareness, use and impact of the Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) on the museum sector in the UK. This study was commissioned by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG in the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester.

1.1 context

The Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs) were created through the *Learning Impact Research Project (LIRP) 2001-2004*, which the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the then strategic body for the sector in England, commissioned from RCMG. Devised in response to the need to define, capture and measure learning in museums, libraries and archives, the GLOs provided a system, or conceptual framework, to capture the learning outcomes that result for users.¹ Underpinned by socio-cultural and constructivist theories of learning, which describe learning as a process of active meaning-making, the GLOs were not designed for the capture of predetermined learning outcomes but to be inclusive of all learning experiences in the museum (formal and informal) and all types of user from 'traditional' museum visitors to those unfamiliar with museums. Piloted successfully in a range of museums, libraries and archives, the GLOs were incorporated into MLA's wider programme, *Inspiring Learning for All (ILFA)*, a strategic initiative for putting learning at the heart of museums, libraries and archives.

They were subsequently used to make the case for a huge government investment in regional museums in England: known as *Renaissance in the Regions*. *Renaissance* led to the establishment of nine regional museum hubs in England, each with a lead museum service and regional partners to act as centres of excellence and support for the regions.

Evidence of the impact of the GLOs immediately following the launch of ILFA in 2003/4 is plentiful. Between 2003 and 2007, RCMG was commissioned to carry out four national studies with the GLOs at their heart and MLA ran regional workshops and training on ILFA and how to use the GLOs to evaluate learning. This study therefore focuses on the period 2008-12 and, where relevant, projects into 2013. Within the period under study, significant changes have taken place in the funding and policy landscape for museums in England. In 2011, MLA was disbanded and its remit passed over to Arts Council England (ACE). *Renaissance* funding has been reduced, re-structured and re-directed. It is also now the responsibility of ACE.

¹ Identified by a change in their Knowledge and understanding; Skills; Attitudes and values; Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity; or Action, behaviour, progression.

Whilst ILFA was not developed by ACE, ILFA and the GLOs are one of the frameworks referenced by ACE in its *Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF)*,² launched in 2010, which fulfils many of the strategic and organisational change functions of ILFA.

ACE's new strategic framework for museums³ mirrors their framework for the Arts, rather than drawing directly from ILFA. ACE is currently reflecting on the way in which learning and evaluation is developed and supported in the museum sector (and across all the cultural organisations that fall under its remit) and is exploring how to take these agendas forward.

1.2 focus

The focus of this study is the following:

- what has been the **reach** of the GLOs?

The study has looked for evidence of the extent and diversity of organisations both in relation to awareness and use of the GLOs

- what has been the **significance** of the GLOs?

The study has looked for evidence of ways in which the GLOs have influenced, informed or changed policies, practice or understanding within the range of organisations

1.3 sources of evidence

This study combines a survey of *Renaissance*-funded museums with desk research and interviews with practitioners representing a range of museums in both size and governance. The aim was to generate a qualitative data set that could give indicative evidence of how museums are using the GLOs as part of their practice. Using the 2012 *Renaissance*-funded museums for quantitative responses has provided a data set that can be said to be reasonably representative of small to medium sized museums in England.

² <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/selfevaluation/framework/> [retrieved 22 10 2012]

³ Culture, Knowledge and Understanding: Great Museums and Libraries for Everyone (ACE: 2011)

2 Executive Summary

The GLOs were the first attempt by the museum sector to develop a framework for capturing the impact of museum learning on individuals. Although MLA originally intended the GLOs to be used as part of the overall continuing improvement and strategic framework of *Inspiring Learning for All* (ILFA), this study indicates that the language they provide to describe learning experiences in the sector, and their practical application, has meant continued high levels of both awareness and use across the sector. This seems set to continue into the future with the latest government funded museum learning initiative, the £3.6 million *Museums and Schools Programme*, reporting that the GLOs will form part of its evaluation framework.

Renaissance-funded museums, in particular, continue to report high levels of use of the GLOs. The Museum of London offers the best example. As Case Study 2 in this paper details, the Museum uses the GLOs in both planning and evaluating gallery and exhibition development. They are also used in induction training for all staff as an accessible means of developing thinking about learning in museums.

The GLOs have gone on to be used in the sector in ways that were not anticipated as part of their original development, such as in the formulation of organisational strategy, planning and policy, which suggests they have value because of their adaptability for the museum sector.

The Chiltern Open Air Museum Case Study (Case Study 5) demonstrates how museums have been able to use the GLOs to underwrite interpretation strategy, thereby helping to shape the museum learning experience.

The fact that this small-scale study could find evidence of awareness and use of the GLOs across a range of museums in terms of location, size, governance and collection suggests a high penetration of the GLOs into the collective psyche that still continues.

Whilst awareness has spread beyond learning teams, to Management, Curatorial and Exhibitions teams in particular, the GLOs seem to be most used by those with a responsibility for learning, whether that is to measure impact, bring coherency to evaluation or to develop a shared understanding of learning within the learning team and across the organisation. The extent of the use of the GLOs, and therefore their significance, varies by organisation. Some museums have embedded their use into planning and evaluation of all learning provision. For others they have just become part of the accepted thinking about what museum learning is and what it should achieve.

The study suggests that for some organisations, the GLOs have provided a pathway from talking about learning and evaluating, to outcomes based planning. Perhaps the most significant example of this is the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). HLF is the

largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage with around £375 million per annum to invest in new projects. Its current framework incorporates three aims around learning, participation and conservation. Meeting the learning aim is mandatory for all projects in their open programmes. This in turn has driven how HLF evaluate their programmes for learning. Since they needed to measure learning, they adopted the GLOs as a key part of their approach. Over time, this has inevitably led to the learning impact of the programmes being expressed in terms of outcomes. The recently published 2013-18 Strategic Framework now includes a single aim and set of outcomes for people that have been informed by the GLOs. This move from explicitly using the GLOs to adapting them, so that they can be owned by the organisation, is mirrored in the experience of a number of the museums that provided case studies for this report.

Whilst some museums may never have used, or no longer use, the GLOs, in 2009 *Get it: the power of cultural learning*⁴ asserted that the GLOs were “now used widely in the sector to plan and evaluate learning”. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that in the following three years, the awareness of the GLOs has remained high, *Renaissance*-funded museums' diverse use of the GLOs has continued and that for those museums who actively use the GLOs, they have a significant impact on developing thinking about learning, planning learning experiences and measuring the learning impact.

⁴ *Get it: the power of cultural learning* (Culture and Learning Consortium, 2009).

3 Key Findings

3.1 what has been the reach of the GLOs?

Awareness of the GLOs appears to be **high** amongst the museum learning profession. Over a third of Heads of Learning in *Renaissance*-funded have used the GLOs in **sharing their work with the sector**.

All the *Renaissance*-funded museums were aware of the GLOs and the vast majority reported that awareness went **well beyond the learning team**. Senior Management, Community Engagement and Curatorial colleagues were the most likely to be aware of the GLOs.

All Heads of Learning at *Renaissance* museums reported **still using the GLOs** to some extent. Some are using them extensively, others less so. Almost all learning teams at *Renaissance* museums are also using the GLOs and most *Renaissance* museums have used the GLOs with partner museums.

The study was able to find examples of **use across a wide range and size of heritage organisation** beyond those funded by *Renaissance*. Use of the GLOs for evaluating impact continues to be encouraged by HLF in their evaluation guidance and the GLOs will also form part of the evaluation framework for the new *Museums and Schools Programme*, a £3.6 million targeted investment by the Department for Education in response to the Henley Review.

It is reasonable to imply that awareness of, and interest in, the GLOs is **widespread within museum learning**. There is also a desire to consider how the GLOs could be further developed alongside other learning models to keep theoretical discussions alive within the profession.

“The biggest change is that everyone now talks about learning and asks us questions, so we don’t need to always be trying to make the case. I’ll be sitting round the table with the in-house designer talking about GLOs and I don’t need to remind people what they are.” **Head of Learning, Museum of London**

3.2 what has been the significance of the GLOs?

Significance is much harder to gauge since it is a matter of degree. Nonetheless there is evidence of **continued impact** of the GLOs between 2008-12.

There have been some **high profile projects** that have used the GLOs in their planning and/or evaluation, e.g. the £47 million development of the National Museum of Scotland.

Most of the museums that responded to this study use the GLOs to help **shape their thinking about learning**. Three quarters of Heads of Learning from *Renaissance*-funded museums consider that the GLOs have helped the sector to take on board a wider definition of learning, with almost as many feeling that the GLOs have given the sector **a shared language** to talk about museum learning. The research suggests that the GLOs helped to form thinking in some contexts and, in others, provided a model that resonated with current practice. There is strong evidence that the GLOs have informed understanding about learning and provided a ready-made framework that enabled **cross-departmental learning conversations** to take place.

“They were great for getting the conversation about learning started and keeping it going.” Head of Learning and Programmes, National Museums Scotland

The majority also use the GLOs to **measure impact, and evaluate** projects and programmes. One organisation incorporated GLOs into their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which meant that they impacted on staff pay through the in-house bonus scheme.

Over half of *Renaissance*-funded museums have used the GLOs in **formulating learning policies** or strategies.

Not only have the GLOs clearly informed organisational policy, but they have also impacted on **the visitor experience**. Some museums have used GLOs strategically in **devising exhibition content** or interpretation approaches. Museum educators feel the GLOs help justify the provision of a wider range of learning experiences.

“The GLOs are especially useful for learning outside of classroom settings because they value, and give equal weighting, to the non-academic: behavioural, emotional and skills.” Head of Education, HRP

The GLOs have been instrumental in some museums moving towards **outcomes-based planning**, putting audiences at the heart of their provision. HLF used the GLOs to capture programme outcomes; an approach which has subsequently

informed their new strategic framework. A key element of the 2013-18 framework, which will be applicable to all funded projects, is a set of outcomes for people that have been informed by the GLOs.

Around half of *Renaissance* museums have used GLOs in **funding bids** or to **report to existing funders**. Whilst some participants noted that the use of GLOs in reporting was decreasing for them as any requirement to do so was removed, others felt that the GLOs still gave a coherent and consistent way to report impact.

GLOs are likely to have impacted on both practice and understanding in *Renaissance* museums since respondents reported using them to discuss learning with colleagues, **in training** and in working with volunteers.

“They tend to provide the bedrock of policy and training development for us in Learning and were fundamental to our capital bids for our City Museum permanent galleries.” **Head of Learning and Audience Development, Leeds**

The **spectrum of use** ranges from museums that are simply aware of the GLOs and see them as part of their thinking about learning to museums that use the GLOs to underwrite all their policy and practice. Most *Renaissance* museums are towards the top of this range. Small museums appear to be more likely to use GLOs for evaluation.

“I would regard GLOs as a 'soft tool' which has had a positive influence on museum learning practice - particularly on planning, evaluation and impact surveys - but has not been universally adopted.” **Lead Education Officer, Museum of History of Science**

Since the GLOs were initially developed to capture and measure learning, their extended use in reporting, advocacy and seeking funding could perhaps have been predicted. What seems significant however is the way that their generic nature - research-based, adaptable and transferable across organisations - has provided a timely means for museums to talk about learning and in this way the GLOs have proved themselves useful for strategy, exhibition planning and enabling cross-team working.

4 Sources and method

4.1 who provided the evidence?

Twenty four out of a possible thirty *Renaissance*-funded museums responded to the survey. Every region was represented by at least one response. Of those not responding all were small, single person teams, many part time. Three were either new to the post or were awaiting new appointments.

Since twenty four is statistically quite a small sample the findings are not presented in numerical terms. However it should be noted that due to the size of many of the *Renaissance* museums or services the twenty four respondents were answering on behalf of 190 other learning staff in their teams, making a total sample of over 200.

In addition to twenty four *Renaissance* museums and web research, the following provided evidence:

- seven colleagues from museums or heritage organisations gave in-depth interviews. These were:
 - British Museum: Head of Learning, Volunteers and Audiences
 - Chiltern Open Air Museum (COAM): Director
 - Heritage Lottery Fund: Head of Research
 - Historic Royal Palaces: Head of Education
 - Museum of London: Head of Learning
 - National Museums Scotland: Head of Learning and Programmes
 - National Museum Wales: Learning Department Manager
- five museums or heritage organisations responded to calls for information:
 - Doncaster Museum Service
 - Dr Johnson's House, London
 - Group for Education in Museums (GEM)
 - Hertford Museum
 - Poole Museum Service

4.2 method

All *Renaissance*-funded Museums were invited to take part in an online survey. The survey consisted almost entirely of quantitative, closed questions with multi-choice answers.

In-depth interviews were carried out over the phone. They used a basic script but questions were added in relation to the use of the GLOs as it emerged through conversation.

A call for information from small museums was put out on the GEM list. Respondents were asked to reply to three questions:

- size of museum
- how had they used the GLOs
- what, if anything, had been the benefit

Desk research was used throughout the study.

5 Detailed findings

5.1 reach

The GLOs have penetrated deep into the consciousness of museum learning professionals. In providing a ready-made framework, based on robust scholarly research that was theoretically informed by evidence from the education and cultural sectors on the value of cultural learning, they have been used by many museum learning teams to deepen understanding of learning across their museums. Some Heads of Learning continue to use the GLOs explicitly, others have adapted or supplemented them, whilst for some they form part of a general awareness of approaches to learning in the sector.

The continued awareness and range of use of GLOs within *Renaissance*-funded museums is high. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to assess levels of use beyond *Renaissance*, examples of use of the GLOs have been found in a wide range of museums and heritage organisations from large to small, national to local, commercially driven to free, suggesting that the GLOs can be useful to all kinds of museum. Awareness of the GLOs is likely to remain whilst key funders such as HLF and ACE continue to use or reference them.

5.1.1 awareness

- the HLF evaluation guidance, used across all HLF projects, references the GLOs
- the *Inspiring Learning For All* website (with a section on GLOs) is still available and has not been replaced as best practice guidance
- ACE good practice materials, such as the SEF, reference the GLOs
- the new £3.6 million ACE regional programme: “Museums and Schools” is set to use the GLOs to capture evidence of impact
- all of the Heads of Learning in *Renaissance*-funded museums were aware of the GLOs, prior to the survey
- the majority (15/24) considered that *all* their team would be aware of the GLOs, whilst all respondents felt that at least some of their team would be aware of them
- the overwhelming majority (21/24) indicated that colleagues beyond the learning team were aware of the GLOs
- the colleagues most commonly cited as being aware of the GLOs were: Senior Management, Community Engagement, Curatorial, Interpretation and Volunteer Management
- the *Renaissance*-funded museums have partnered approximately 345 other museums through learning projects in the period under study. Half of the *Renaissance* museums felt that most of their partners had heard of the GLOs.
- GLOs continue to be discussed through professional development and networking channels, e.g. a blog following the *Engaging Digital Audiences*

conference (Manchester, July 2012)⁵, a discussion in a breakout session at the *Transforming Children's Lives* conference (NMW: July 2012), discussions on the GEM list and NMW reporting on their use of *ILFA* to CyMAL (Sept 2012)

5.1.2 use

- all but one of the *Renaissance*-funded museums said they had used the GLOs in the last 4 years
- there was a wide range of uses, the most common being: thinking about learning, followed by measuring impact, evaluating projects and programmes, writing learning strategies and reporting to funders
- it was not just Heads of Learning using the GLOs. Whilst use by Heads of Learning was universal, the overwhelming majority (21/24) also reported that their teams were using the GLOs
- the range of use by learning teams was similar to that of Heads of Learning, with the emphasis on thinking about learning, measuring impact and evaluating programmes and projects

5.1.3 use beyond *Renaissance*-funded museums

- more than three quarters of the *Renaissance*-funded museums said they used the GLOs in at least some of their learning partnership projects with around a third saying they used them in all or most of their partnership work
- the most popular way to use the GLOs in partnership projects was to measure impact or evaluate the project, although around half of the museums also mentioned using GLOs to discuss learning and to plan the project
- the study found evidence of national museums, multi-site services, commercially driven museums and smaller museums using GLOs

5.2 significance

The impact of the GLOs is strongest amongst *Renaissance*-funded museums. Most are using the GLOs to inform policy, planning and practice (through evaluation). Some say they are tending to use the GLOs less as there is no requirement to do so, but only one respondent said they categorically did not use or refer to the GLOs.

Amongst the non-*Renaissance*-funded museums interviewed, there was a range of uses of the GLOs from explicit use in planning and/or evaluation to a less tangible use as part of thinking about learning. The impact in each organisation therefore varies. Nonetheless even those who were not using the GLOs explicitly considered that they had informed decision-making or practice.

⁵ <http://rhiannonlooseley.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/generic-learning-outcomes-friend-or-foe.html>

The GLOs have enabled the museums that used them to compare coherent data across time or sites, provide evidence of impact beyond numbers, talk confidently about learning and the impact of their work, influence colleagues' thinking about learning, bid, and account, to funders, move towards outcomes based planning of visitor experiences and marry up planning and evaluation.

Most people who took part in this study felt that the GLOs offered a valuable part of the museum learning picture and provided a set of outcomes that many experienced museum learning professionals would have needed to define for themselves, in house, had not a research-based externally provided model been developed. Some museums have combined the GLOs with other models to provide a more comprehensive planning framework.

In a small number of services the adoption of the GLOs at the heart of planning and evaluation has had a profound impact. Most *Renaissance*-funded respondents also felt that the GLOs had had an impact at sector level as well, helping cement the ILFA definition of learning, providing a shared language for the sector to talk about learning and helping the sector improve its evaluation practice.

5.2.1 large-scale developments

- the GLOs have been used to inform planning or evaluation of learning experiences in a number of flagship or award winning development projects, including:
 - **planning the National Museum of Scotland**
 - major Scottish cultural flagship (see Case Study 1)
 - £47 million redevelopment,
 - 16 new galleries, opened July 2011
 - visitor figures increased to over 2.2 million in its first year
 - **planning and evaluating the Galleries of Modern London**, - - Museum of London
 - major development of new permanent galleries
 - £20 million redevelopment
 - opened 2010
 - over half a million visitors per annum
 - **Making Museums project**, the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford
 - Clore prize winner 2011
- the GLOs are also used by a number of other museums to develop content or interpretation for exhibitions. Examples include:
 - Thinktank, Birmingham have used the GLOs to varying extents in nine projects since 2005. Projects include upgrades and extensions of existing popular galleries such as *Kid's City*, large-scale temporary exhibitions such as *Walking with Dinosaurs* and *Thinktank Goes Wild* and completely new installations such as the *Science Garden* (opened in 2012) and the forthcoming *We Made It* permanent gallery opening

in 2013. Thinktank set overall outcomes for the whole exhibition, more detailed outcomes for the themed areas of larger exhibitions, and then exhibit-specific learning outcomes also using the GLO framework headings

- Royal Pavilion and Museums, Brighton have used the GLOs as part of the exhibition planning process since 2009 for all exhibitions at Royal Pavilion and Museums venues including *The Land Girls: Cinderellas of the Soil* (2009), *From Sickert to Gertler: Modern Art from Boxted House* (2010), *Capturing Colour* (2010-11) *Radical Bloomsbury* (2011), *Biba and Beyond: Barbara Hulanicki* (2012)
- the Museum of London use the GLOs as a standard part of the exhibition development process for permanent and temporary exhibitions (see Case Study 2)

5.2.2 shaping thinking about learning

- the majority of *Renaissance*-funded museums felt that the GLOs have helped the sector to take on board a wider definition of learning
- almost all *Renaissance*-funded museums reported using the GLOs to think about learning with over half also using them to discuss learning with colleagues and inform their learning policies
- the GLOs were not only used to inform management views of learning but in most cases across the learning teams
- all of the museums interviewed found that the GLOs worked well for helping non-learning specialists to deepen their understanding of learning, e.g. Historic Royal Palaces found that reflecting on GLO evaluation data from adult learning sessions with session leaders helped to deepen understanding of learning processes and teaching practice (see Case Study 3: Using GLOs to evaluate learning)
- Leeds, Tyne and Wear Museums (TWAM) and the Museum of London have put the GLOs at the core of their learning provision. The Museum of London has used this to go further in developing a learning organisation (see Case Study 2) and TWAM have embraced *ILFA* and the GLOs across all departments.

“TWAM has really taken on the GLOs across the board within all teams and procedures. This includes corporate information, HR and training, outreach, project planning, fund raising as well as learning and outreach.” Learning Officer, TWAM

- Leeds, TWAM and the Museum of London have used the GLOs in training around museum learning but they are not alone. The GLOs were part of Chiltern Open Air Museum’s (COAM) volunteer training on understanding visitors and are regularly used by experienced evaluation consultants, such as Nicky Boyd and Kate Pontin, to help museums to focus on their desired outcomes and recognise the breadth of learning experience they are providing. Nicky also incorporates the GLOs into teaching on the evaluation

unit of the MA Culture, Policy and Management at the Centre for Cultural Policy and Management in the Department of Creative Practice and Enterprise at City University.

- museums commented that the research base for the model gives it a credibility that enables them to speak with authority within their organisations

5.2.3 measuring impact and evaluating learning

- around three quarters of *Renaissance*-funded museums consider that the GLOs have helped the sector improve its evaluation practice, whilst just over half consider that the GLOs are useful for showing the impact of their work
- around three quarters of *Renaissance* museums have used the GLOs to measure impact in the last four years.
- the same number have used the GLOs to evaluate programmes and projects, with almost all using the GLOs to evaluate partnership projects
- just over a quarter have used the GLOs to evaluate resources or exhibitions, which may indicate that although the GLOs have potential in this area, many learning teams are still largely focused on schools
- most museums use the GLOs to both plan *and* evaluate. There is clearly a relationship between evaluating against outcomes and planning for them in the first place. Whilst some museums may have begun with outcomes-based planning, many seem to have moved towards planning with outcomes through using the GLOs as an evaluation tool
- the four small museums who provided evidence all used the GLOs for planning and evaluation, mostly with school groups

“We use a speech bubble with ‘what amazed me the most was’ on and the responses are coded against the GLOs. We use them to monitor our intended outcomes and also to report to local schools in terms of our SLA arrangement..” **Learning and Access Manager, Poole Museum**

- some museums have moved away from the GLOs over the period of study because there is no longer a requirement to use them and ACE use different indicators.
- some museums have found that whilst the GLO language is recognised within the museum sector it is not a shared language with teachers or community partners, whilst some have adapted the GLO language and find that the focus on **learning** does provide a shared agenda with teachers
- museums who use the GLOs value the coherency of the data produced and consider it is the only available framework for reporting more than numbers
- some organisations, like Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) and COAM (see Case Studies) have found that data generated by use of the GLOs provides a means of demonstrating that learning is taking place in programmes for audiences beyond schools

- some independent evaluators use the GLOs, finding that the GLOs “provide data that the museums can understand, compare and use in future development.” **Kate Pontin**

5.2.4 formulating learning policies

- over half of *Renaissance*-funded museums have used the GLOs in creating learning policies or strategies
- four *Renaissance*-funded museums have also used the GLOs in supporting partner museums to develop learning policies or strategies

5.2.5 improving the visitor experience

- the in-depth interviews in this study and additional comments from the survey suggest that many colleagues have used the GLOs as part of their effort to put visitors at the heart of their museum’s offer
- many of the museums that use the GLOs to think about learning, talk about that thinking impacting on their provision. This may be through the challenge to themselves to create provision which offers a wider range of learning experiences or through learning teams having increased confidence to justify this broad offer, if it is ever questioned
- a number of museums use the GLOs to plan exhibitions (see 5.2.1). Most of these museums have embedded the GLOs within core planning documents or processes so that they have become a standard part of exhibition planning and been used for a significant number of exhibitions
- the Case Study from the British Museum demonstrates how the GLOs can become integrated into thinking about interpretation, often used alongside other visitor engagement models and sometimes simply becoming part of the shared understanding
- all the in-depth interviews included reference to the GLOs being a useful way to talk about learning and engagement with colleagues, outside of learning, who are developing visitor experiences
- over three quarters of *Renaissance*-funded museums felt that the GLOs have given the sector a shared language to talk about museum learning

5.2.6 outcomes based planning

- museums that use the GLOs both for planning and evaluation often mentioned that the GLOs enabled them to report, and then plan for, outcomes other than simply numbers of people participating
- HLF have used the GLOs to evaluate some of its biggest core programmes including:
 - the large scale impact of funding study 2005-9
 - the study of social impact of volunteering in 2010 which used the GLOs to code answers to the question of what was the single best thing volunteers felt they took from their volunteering
 - the 2012 evaluation of the *Young Roots* programme

Using the GLOs enabled HLF to capture the impact of its investments in terms of learning outcomes. This in turn has had a significant effect on how it describes the impact of its funding streams. This has most recently become evident in the new HLF Framework for 2013-18 in which the outcomes for people are expressed in terms that reflect the five GLO categories.

5.2.7 funding bids

- just under half of *Renaissance*-funded museums said they had used the GLOs in funding bids in the last four years. Leeds Museums, for example, used the GLOs in their bid for funding for the permanent galleries at the City Museum
- around a quarter of the museums said that their wider learning team also used the GLOs in seeking funding
- well over half said they used the GLOs to report to existing funders, with five of these museums also using the GLOs to report to funders of partnership projects. The Museum of London, for example, finds the GLOs useful in reporting outcomes from the *askit*, *filmit*, *shareit in Museums* to its external funder The Helen Hamlyn Trust
- one of the smaller museums that replied to the GEM list enquiry articulated clearly something that was implied in other responses:

“I have been able to ask teachers for answers that can then form quotes for things like my publicity and advocacy to supporters/funding bodies.” **Learning Officer, Hertford Museum**

5.2.8 training

- just under half of *Renaissance*-funded museums said they had used the GLOs in training in the last four years. This was mostly Heads of Learning rather than the wider teams
- organisations such as TWAM, Museum of London and Leeds that have embedded the GLOs across their work, also use them in training
- at the Museum of London the GLOs form part of the induction training for all staff

5.3 perceived limitations

A small number of respondents offered explanations for the limited use of the GLOs in their own practice which are summarised below:

- the GLOs neatly group outcomes, but, to be more useful, they need to be combined with models that relate to other aspects of learning such as learning processes, context and motivations;

- the language of the GLOs is not a shared language beyond the museum sector;
- for some, the language of the GLOs can be a barrier in itself and needs “demystifying”;
- the GLOs don’t capture social outcomes;
- the GLOs can become superficial if those using them don’t “drill down” to specific learning outcomes at an individual level;
- there is a danger that some people feel they have to meet all 5 GLOs in everything they do (even though this is not a feature of their intended use);
- some articulated a concern that ‘enjoyment’ becomes seen as a learning outcome in its own right;
- there is a question, for some respondents, about the robustness of evidence when it is based on people’s perceptions of their own learning
- some people have found that, in using GLO based questions, they are beginning to get fairly “static” results and have needed to move away from these questions to get more useful information from teachers.

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Case Study 1: Using GLOs to plan new galleries

Museum: National Museums Scotland (NMS)

National Museums Scotland care for collections of national and international importance, collected across more than two centuries. They operate five museum sites across Scotland and the National Museums Collections Centre in Edinburgh.

The new National Museum of Scotland underwent an extensive redevelopment project that completely transformed the former Royal Museum of Scotland. With 16 new galleries the new Museum is a major Scottish cultural flagship. Since reopening in July 2011 its visitor figures increased from 800,000 to over 2.2 million in its first year.

How the GLOs were used:

National Museums Scotland (NMS) used the GLOs in their £47 million redevelopment project for the National Museum of Scotland, which opened in July 2011. The GLOs were used to help shape the overall interpretation planning process as well as the development of each individual gallery.

- **shaping the project**

GLOs were used to help establish the aims and objectives of this large capital project. Through discussions between the Head of Learning and Programmes, project director and lead curators, the GLOs helped shape the overarching learning principles for the visitor experience. NMS's commitment that the GLOs would be an integral part of planning and development was very much encouraged by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), which part funded the redevelopment (along with the Scottish Government and individual donors). GLOs had been established by MLA in England but had not had the same promotion or profile in Scotland. Both NMS and HLF saw this flagship project as a means of raising awareness of the GLO model.

- **developing the galleries**

GLOs were used to identify learning outcomes for each individual gallery and were incorporated into gallery briefs: the key documents for design. They provided a prompt for thinking beyond knowledge and understanding to a wider definition of learning within the galleries. This was significant at the formative early stages of planning, where they had most value.

- **talking about learning**

GLOs were used in the early stages of the project to help build a shared working approach between curatorial and learning colleagues.

“The process of doing GLO planning was part of the team building process and meant that all our thinking about learning was signed up to and bought into.” **Head of Learning and Programmes**

Why the GLOs were used?

The Head of Learning and Programmes had used the GLOs in previous posts to plan and evaluate both programmes and gallery development. He had found them a useful method of raising the issue of, and focusing the discussion around, learning at the heart of the visitor experience.

NMS therefore saw their commitment to using the GLOs as providing one way of ensuring that a learning approach would be central to this major project. The resonance with HLF’s primary aim around heritage learning confirmed this decision.

What’s been the impact on the project:

The GLOs have been instrumental in establishing a good understanding of what the Museum was trying to achieve across the gallery teams, which included curatorial and learning staff. That shared understanding has meant that the visitor experience has been at the forefront of planning and has also resulted in a more integrated way of working within a large team.

“They were great for getting the conversation about learning started and keeping it going.” **Head of Learning and Programmes**

Using the GLOs has helped drive the focus on target audiences and resulted in the galleries having a more textured feel. The broad definition of learning supported by the GLOs has ensured a good variety of interpretation across the galleries and has been particularly impactful in developing different kinds of learning experiences through the interactive exhibits.

Where now for the GLOs?

NMS will use the GLOs in the early stages of project development as part of the next stage of their “Master Plan” for the National Museum of Scotland. The Head of Learning and Programmes describes the GLOs as a toolbox that museums can dip into and use what they need. For them to be effective they need to be adapted to the organisational context and used to their strength, which is how NMS have used them.

Case Study 2: Using GLOs to develop a learning organisation

Museum: Museum of London, London

The Museum of London consists of the Museum of London, the Museum of London Docklands and the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre. The Museum is one of the largest urban history museums in the world and tells the story of London and its people from pre-historic times to the present day. Its mission is to “inspire a passion for London and for learning” and every year it welcomes over half a million visitors per year. The Museum has a learning team of 20 staff working across the three sites.

How the GLOs are used:

The Museum uses the GLOs in planning and evaluating new galleries, exhibitions and in evaluating all aspects of its learning provision from schools sessions and family events to adult courses and web resources. The GLOs form the basis of an induction programme session on museum learning that all staff attend. In this way, learning and the GLOs are as basic a part of the Museum consciousness as customer service or caring for the collections.

- **gallery, exhibition and programme planning**

There are three strategic documents that sit at the heart of the exhibition development process at the Museum:

- the concept and content document
- the learning strategy
- the design brief

GLOs form the backbone of the learning strategy, which makes learning a central component of all exhibitions and drives exhibition content. The GLOs play a key role in turning content messages into visitor outcomes, moving exhibitions from being collections driven, to being visitor focused.

GLOs also prove useful at a more detailed level of planning for programme sessions, activities or exhibits. Here the learning outcomes become more specific so that they can be tested either through prototyping and piloting or through summative evaluation. These specific outcomes are developed against the backdrop of the GLOs, which provide a useful reminder to think beyond knowledge and understanding and retain a broad view of the potential learning outcomes.

Recent examples of galleries and exhibitions planned using the GLOs:

Pirates: the Captain Kidd Story: the summer 2011 major temporary exhibition at the Museum of London Docklands, budget around £130,000

Galleries of Modern London: major development of new permanent galleries at the Museum of London, opened 2010, budget around £20 million

- **evaluation**

GLOs are used to assess and measure the learning across the breadth of Museum provision. They are used to:

- inform development: e.g. as part of exhibit prototyping
- inform practice: e.g. teacher feedback
- measure impact: e.g. GLOs were used to present the impact of an innovative national project: *askit, filmit, shareit in Museums* to its external funder The Helen Hamlyn Trust.
- deepen understanding of learning: the evaluation of the *Pirates* exhibition combined the GLOs with other models of learning such as visitor motivation models and learning styles to seek a deeper understanding of the process of learning from a visitor perspective
- advocate for learning: GLOs are used to present evidence of learning and the importance of outcomes based planning to all colleagues involved in developing provision

- **talking about learning**

The GLOs are an integral part of how the Museum talks about learning. In induction training, the Museum introduces the idea of learning to all staff through the broad definition developed by MLA, as part of ILFA, and the GLOs.

The GLOs frame learning discussions in exhibition development and amongst learning staff, as the Head of Learning explained it: "It's just something that is embedded in what we do."

Why the GLOs are used?

As part of the *Renaissance* London partnership, the GLOs were central to the way the Hub developed evaluation methods. The Hub developed a set of standard evaluation tools that could work across the partner sites, based on the GLOs. These enabled comparisons as well as providing a means of measuring combined impact.

The GLO framework also provided a language of outcomes for planning. Prior to their introduction, the learning team had sought to encourage and support visitor-centred planning, but the Head of Learning feels that the GLO framework was seminal in providing the team with: “a definition, the language and the confidence” to make the case for learning. The GLOs as part of ILFA provided an established and agreed definition of learning that enabled the learning team to speak objectively about best practice.

What’s been the impact on the organisation:

For the Museum of London, using the GLOs has helped establish learning as core to the Museum’s function. The GLOs have provided a shared language that helped them to work with their *Renaissance* partners. The same shared language has had a profound effect on the way the Museum thinks about, plans for and evaluates learning across its departments.

“The biggest change is that everyone now talks about learning and asks us questions, so we don’t need to always be trying to make the case. I’ll be sitting round the table with the in-house designer talking about GLOs and I don’t need to remind people what they are.” **Head of Learning**

Where now for the GLOs?

The Museum will continue using the GLOs but is interested in how to build them into a wider model of learning, particularly one that can accommodate virtual learning experiences. When they began to do this in the *Pirates* evaluation they found that curatorial colleagues became very interested in the inter-relationship between their content decisions and the visitor experience.

“The good thing about the GLOs is that they can be simple or sophisticated, depending on how you use them.” **Head of Learning**

Case study 3: Using GLOs to evaluate learning

Museum: Historic Royal Palaces, London

Historic Royal Palaces is an independent charity that looks after the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, the Banqueting House, Kensington Palace and Kew Palace. The Palaces and collection belong to the Queen on behalf of the nation.

The Sandford Award winning learning team works across the service, with the greatest focus on the three higher volume sites: the Tower, Hampton Court and Kensington Palace. Between them, they welcome around 230,000 formal education visitors per year. In addition, the adult learning provision caters for around 3,000 people per year and family learning activities for 25,000.

How the GLOs are used:

Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) use the GLOs in evaluating its formal learning provision. On a monthly basis HRP send out a postal feedback form to **every** visiting school that includes questions relating to the GLOs. Results are collated and allow comparison year-on-year and across sites. Headline results from the evaluation have been part of the organisational Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and in the past have been reported to DCMS, although this is no longer a requirement.

In addition HRP uses on-the-spot questionnaires with school groups as part of continuous improvement. These focus largely on learning outcomes and use the GLOs as the basis for the questions. They are used to inform practice and monitor quality, allowing comparisons between sessions or types of session, identifying areas in need of refreshing or gauging effectiveness where new sessions or activities have been introduced.

GLOs are also used to evaluate adult learning provision. Questionnaires are completed at the end of each session asking questions across the range of GLOs. The feedback is shared with the course presenters and is used to inform practice.

Why the GLOs are used?

HRP have found the GLOs really useful as a tool for developing questionnaires. The wording enabled the team to devise meaningful questions that made sense to schools and could help prompt adult learners into thinking about their own outcomes. It provided a shared vocabulary that could be used consistently across sites and across different sessions. HRP began using the GLOs because they provided a common framework that already existed. In continuing to use the GLOs they have found them especially helpful in talking to colleagues who are not learning specialists, such as curators and conservators.

The GLOs have also been useful in helping senior management and Trustees to see the learning value of the team's work. For adult learning for example, where there is

no accreditation, the GLOs help make participants' learning visible and provide evidence of the benefit of sessions. The broad definition of learning provided by the GLOs has enabled the Head of Education to demonstrate the importance of the "non-academic" parts of learning, legitimising the provision of creative and immersive learning experiences.

"It makes your data and evidence comparable and understandable to other professionals. The GLO framework is recognised, easily understandable and it gives an authority to the kinds of learning outcomes we might want to achieve." **Head of Education**

What's been the impact on the organisation:

For Historic Royal Palaces, the GLOs have provided a language around learning that can be shared across the learning team, freelance providers and the wider organisation. As part of the KPIs, GLO data has not only provided the team with evidence of their impact internally but in some years has materially contributed to staff pay, through an organisational bonus scheme.

Evidence gathered through evaluation has been used to shape the learning programmes, to report internally and to report back to funders. Discussions with adult learning course presenters, who are expert in their field but not educationalists, have been impactful. Reflecting on the GLO evidence from sessions has enabled the HRP team to talk with presenters about planning for learning and has developed a vocabulary that has become part of their coaching. It has also helped presenters feel more confident about their teaching skills, developing growing awareness of what works and what doesn't.

Where now for the GLOs?

HRP intend to continue to use the GLOs to evaluate their provision.

"The GLOs are especially useful for learning outside of classroom settings because they value, and give equal weighting, to the non-academic: behavioural, emotional, skills. It gives value and legitimacy to those areas that are not about the three "rs" or knowing the dates of history." **Head of Education**

Case Study 4: Using GLOs as part of understanding the visitor experience

Museum: The British Museum, (London)

Founded in 1753, the British Museum was the first national public museum in the world. The Museum has permanent collections of around 13 million objects from across all continents and the largest online database of objects in the world.

The Museum has around 80 galleries open to the public and a regular temporary exhibitions programme. The Museum is still growing, adding four new permanent galleries in the last 15 years and currently building a £135 million World Conservation and Exhibition Centre. The Museum attracts almost 6 million visitors per year.

How the GLOs are used:

The Interpretation team at the British Museum have used the GLOs alongside the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre motivational hierarchy in formulating ideas around visitor outcomes in new galleries and exhibitions. Initially the GLOs were a way of engaging people across the Museum with the idea that anything that the Museum did, and especially its exhibitions, were about a much wider range of outcomes than just learning facts. They provided a form of “internal checklist” for Interpretation Team members when discussing content and visitor outcomes with colleagues on exhibition teams and have been useful as an “argument you can roll out” at certain points.

Whilst the GLOs have never been used verbatim, they form part of the foundation for the visitor outcomes that sit within the Exhibition Scoping Paper, a key planning document for new exhibitions.

Why the GLOs are used?

The Head of Learning, Volunteers and Audiences is interested in theories and models of visitor engagement and is always on the look out for new ways of thinking. The GLOs provided him with a ready-made set of outcomes that resonated well with his commitment to putting learners at the centre of learning.

“The GLOs were the thing that allowed us to not have to make up a list for ourselves.” **Head of Learning, Volunteers and Audiences**

What's been the impact on the Museum:

The explicit formulation of visitor outcomes as an integral part of exhibition scoping has enabled the Museum to focus clearly on the desired visitor experience, how to achieve it and how to prioritise where necessary. Although only part of a much larger jigsaw, the GLOs have thus become an integral part of the Museum's visitor centred exhibition planning and helped to reinforce the idea across the Museum that learning is more than simply cognitive.

Where now for the GLOs?

The Museum's understanding of visitors and learning is constantly evolving, drawing inspiration from strategic thinkers across the sector. For the Museum, it's not the wholesale adoption of particular models that is important, but rather finding models and frameworks that can work together to provide new insight. What's important is improving the quality of the experience for visitors. The GLOs still help to do that.

Case Study 5: Using GLOs to move towards outcomes-based planning

Museum: Chiltern Open Air Museum (COAM)

Chiltern Open Air Museum (COAM) is an independent open-air museum that tells the story of the unique history of the Chilterns through buildings, landscapes and culture for the enjoyment, inspiration and learning of present and future communities. With 33 historic buildings on a 45 acre site, COAM welcomes around 35,000 visitors a year and has a team of approximately 200 volunteers.

How the GLOs were used:

COAM have been on a journey to think more widely about learning and the visitor experience. As an independent museum they have a commercial imperative to attract visitors and ensure a high quality and value-for-money visit. Key areas of development have been improving workshops for schools and creating an Interpretation Strategy.

Whilst the GLOs have played an informal and often tacit role within this development, they have been instrumental in helping the Museum move towards a more outcomes-based way of thinking about the visitor experience. The Museum has used the broad definition of learning embodied by the GLOs in both planning new school workshops and evaluating their learning provision.

The GLOs themselves form part of the core principles in the Interpretation Strategy and have been used to underwrite new interpretation, particularly moving away from a didactic approach to providing information towards offering a more emotional engagement for visitors. The Interpretation Strategy was written in 2012 and is a key planning document for the Museum.

Visitor awareness training for the volunteer team included the GLOs as one way to think about what people get from visiting the Museum, which resonated well with the outcomes based thinking in the new Interpretation Strategy.

Why the GLOs were used:

COAM's Director used the GLOs effectively in her previous museum to evaluate the education programme and found the framework especially useful for adult learning. It enabled her to move away from numbers as the only success criteria to considering the whole museum experience and the changes that can take place in people through museum learning.

"It gave us a really good insight into what each of the courses was achieving, the experiences that people were having and the connections they were making as a result." **Director**

As a result the GLOs were part of her thinking around learning and naturally influenced her strategic work at COAM.

What's been the impact on the Museum?

The main area of impact has been in the new interpretation on site. The Director feels that the learning principles behind the GLOs are visible in the more emotional and enquiry based visitor experience on offer. The *Back bedroom in the pre-fab* for example is a bedroom developed by young people for children and marks a different way of thinking for the Museum. Whilst still seeking to deepen understanding, it also offers chances to develop skills and engage emotionally and imaginatively. For the Museum, this wider definition of learning outcomes has inexorably led to a widening of learning approaches, with the displays becoming much more interactive and immersive and visitors having a much greater choice of ways to engage.

For some of the volunteers who work with visitors, the GLO-based idea of visitors developing questioning skills has also helped them take a new approach to interacting.

"It's been good for all of us to sit down and try to think in a new way about interpretation and the principles behind the GLOs have certainly driven elements of what we do and helped us by giving us a foundation." **Director**

Where now for the GLOs?

The Museum is moving into "Effective Collections" work and will take the same approach with them into this new area.

Case Study 6: Using GLOs to plan and evaluate learning programmes

Museum: National Museum Wales (NMW)

Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales was established by Royal Charter in 1907. The Museum receives its core funding through grant-in-aid from the Welsh Government as a Welsh Government Sponsored Body. Amgueddfa Cymru's Vision, published following significant internal and external discussion and consultation, is to become 'a world class museum of learning'.

During 2011/12, there were 1,690,340 visits to the seven national museum sites in Wales. The Learning Department across the seven museums has around 40 staff, including 17 Learning Officers, who develop and deliver opportunities for lifelong learners. Last year there were 248,425 formal learning visitors, 209,200 informal visitors engaged with added value learning opportunities, and 32,981 individuals took part in learning activities organised by the museum beyond its 7 museums.

How the GLOs are used:

The Learning Department use the GLOs to evaluate much of their provision and to provide evidence of impact. It is standard practice at the Museum is to produce case studies to reflect upon and disseminate learning from projects and service delivery. The Museum has a case study template which all departments use. The Learning Department proactively uses the GLOs within the case study template, seeing it as a means of reinforcing a wider definition of learning throughout the Museum.

Case studies are sent to the Performance Review Committee each quarter and are read by the Director and Trustees, as well as being available to colleagues from across the Museum via the Museum's intranet.

In 2009, the Learning Department Manager was given the responsibility of working with other departments to encourage and nurture their writing of case studies. Talking about Learning Department case studies provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the GLOs, of the importance of outcomes, the value of learning beyond knowledge and understanding and the legitimacy of informal learning experiences. Whilst other colleagues have not necessarily subsequently used the GLOs, the Learning Department Manager feels that this has laid a basis for a wider acceptance across the Museum of learning being as much about attitudes and values etc as gaining new knowledge.

Within the Learning Team, the GLOs are also used beyond evaluation and advocacy. They use learning outcomes to plan provision, although use of the GLOs themselves is optional and not all team members explicitly use them. The GLOs have proved a useful quality assurance tool within the team that deliver to schools. The team is often changing, welcoming new members and exchanging responsibilities. A planning template based around the GLOs for school sessions has provided a good

way to ensure that, as workshops are handed over to new staff, the underlying rationale of the activities and the intended learning is clear to all involved.

Why the GLOs are used:

The Learning Department has found the GLOs useful in articulating the value of learning and also of their work. The GLOs have enabled the team to demonstrate the importance of events and activities they offer and given them the confidence to be able to offer provision that is more skills-based or aimed at challenging attitudes and values.

The Department has found the common language of the GLOs to be useful both in establishing shared understanding and vocabulary within team discussions but also in discussing learning with other museums across Wales.

What's been the impact on the Museum?

The greatest area of impact has been within the Learning Team and their thinking about learning. Outcomes based planning can now be largely assumed across the team, whether the GLOs are used or not.

“The GLOs have reinforced that our role is to use our collections and expertise to help achieve the learning outcomes of the widest possible variety of learners, and not simply to transmit our content.” **Learning Department Manager**

Learning Team members are often involved in wider Museum projects, especially re-developments or new galleries. They would then take the use of the GLOs with them into strategic planning or exhibition development.

Where now for the GLOs?

The Museum is about to embark on a large-scale re-development at St Fagans, a leading open-air museum and Wales's most popular heritage attraction. With the Learning Manager seconded onto the development team, the GLOs will be used as an integral part of the planning.