

Development, Test, and Evaluation of New Continuing Education for Museum Staff in Scandinavia.

Results from the Nordplus Adult Project "Increased Learning through Social Spaces"

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Development, Test, and Evaluation of New Continuing Education for Museum Staff in Scandinavia.

Results from the Nordplus Adult project “Increased Learning through Social Spaces”.

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In the Nordplus Adult development project *Increased Learning Through Social Spaces* (2018-2022) a collection of examples of social interactions at cultural heritage organisations in Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden), that contributed to interactivity and learning, was carried out by a joint Scandinavian research group. In addition, the project analysed how cultural heritage organisations actively create social spaces with the intention of promoting learning opportunities and how the organisations evaluate these learning opportunities. Based on the examples collected, a hypothesis was developed on how various elements can create social interactivity and learning. By departing from research literature such as museum studies (Falk & Dierking 2013) and lifelong learning (Jarvis 2017), combined with the British planning and evaluation tool Generic Learning Outcomes (GLO) (Graham 2013), the research group developed a basis for a new continuing education for museum staff on the topic. The new education was developed during the project period and was tested and evaluated in September 2021 in Östersund, Sweden, on museum staff from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. In this contribution, we analyse the development of the continuing education for museum staff in Scandinavia and present the results of the test and evaluation. The evaluation of the continuing education consisted of both an electronic survey distributed to the course participants before and after the test course. In addition, the evaluation consisted of observations, during the test course, discussion with the course participants during the course and a concluding evaluation based on the GLO evaluation tool. By departing from practice, the Scandinavian research group will implicitly seek to answer the symposia question related to what the societal challenges are and how these looks like from the perspective of heritage institutions. The research group will seek to answer the question related to what possibilities that are generated for heritage institutions. Finally, the research group answers the question of how adult education and learning related to heritage institutions might develop because of these challenges and possibilities, by for example, engaging in new professional development or through the development of new professions related to the heritage organisations.

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Development, Test, and Evaluation of New Continuing Education for Museum Staff in Scandinavia.

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Lasse Sonne, Anna Hansen, Vibeke Kieding Banik, Gustav Wollentz, Martin Brandt Djupdræt

Introduction

The museum institution is changing. The idea that museums are something naturally good has been replaced by result-oriented demands. From the 2000s, the demands on museums were no longer only to manage, research, preserve and disseminate. Now they also need to know their audience by being a new type of resource in society by being relevant, accessible and by contributing to social inclusion and learning (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004, p. 152). Among other things, by contributing as a counterweight to a fragmentation of public discourse. Thus, it is expected that museums facilitate exchanges of opinion, allow for a diversity of utterances, and work for demographic diversity among both visitors and actors (Brenna, 2016, p. 36). Museums are also seen as flexible learning environments, where visitors must play an active role themselves. An expressed goal is to reach out to groups who make only limited use of the museum offerings. Following this, cultural life is now defined as important for bringing people together in a common public, whether it is physical or digital. In recent decades, a change has thus taken place in terms of how museums and museum activities should be understood.

The museums are, in principle, related to all areas of lifelong learning. The area most developed in the Scandinavian countries in relation to the museums' learning activities is the collaboration with the schools (Sonne, 2020, pp. 22-23; Risan, 2020, p. 31; Olesen, 2020, p. 45). The museums' opportunities in terms of adult education and lifelong learning are far less developed. In addition, there is great development potential for museums at the intersection of formal, informal, and non-formal learning. Examples can be courses or learning courses for new citizens with a focus on learning a new language and being introduced to a new culture in a new

host country. In the latest European agenda for culture, culture has been given a completely different weight in European cultural policy. Now, it is explicitly mentioned that culture must be an engine in economic development. This will be realized, among other things, by promoting culture and creativity in formal, informal, and non-formal education and learning at all levels of society. There is also a focus on promoting skills development that the cultural and creative sector particularly needs, including a particular focus on digital and entrepreneurial skills. One goal is to develop new so-called ecosystems for cultural and creative industries with a focus on innovation capacity and cross-sectoral cooperation - i.e., cooperation between the cultural area and other areas in society (European Commission 2018, p. 4).

At present, many employees at the museums do not have the competencies needed to be able to adapt the museum institutions to the new demands of society. There is therefore a great need for the development of new adult and continuing education to be able to handle the new paradigm that museums are now included in.

Therefore, our project goal was to develop new continuing education for museum staff in Scandinavia. We wanted to train the staff in understanding and being capable of dealing with the museum as a space for social interactions and a space for learning. As a part of the Nordplus Adult development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces (Wollentz et al 2021), a new course for museum staff was developed, tested, and evaluated. The goal was to develop new learning in museums seen as a social space. A goal was furthermore to teach staff how different elements in museums can stimulate social interactions. In addition, the course had the goal to teach staff how social learning spaces can be evaluated and why that is important. Finally, the goal was to teach the evaluation of social learning spaces in practice. In this chapter, we present the results of our work with developing continuing education for museum staff.

After its development, the course was tested on 28-29 September 2021 in Östersund, Sweden. The course curriculum, with its learning outcomes, was developed both vertically by the project participants and horizontally by involving the test course participants as co-creators of the course, not least when it came to formulating the learning outcomes in the test course curriculum. The learning outcomes were developed and evaluated through the planning and evaluation tool Generic Learning Outcomes (GLO). In addition, a pre-course electronic questionnaire was sent to the test course participants before the course. The answers from the participants were used to further formulate the learning outcomes. A questionnaire was,

furthermore, sent to the test course participants after the course. This meant that two different planning and evaluation tools were used to plan and evaluate the test course.

24 participants signed up for the test course. The biggest group was from Sweden, but participants also signed up from Denmark and Norway. Most participants had a professional background from museums, most typically as responsible for exhibitions. Two of the participants were from universities in Norway and Sweden. The teachers and organisers of the test course were the University of South-Eastern Norway, the Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity in Sweden, Den Gamle By in Denmark and the Scania Regional Museum in Sweden.

Development: pedagogical approach and learning outcomes

There exists a comprehensive amount of literature about methodological approaches to learning and evaluation of learning that the development group used as background material for developing the test course (see for example Ehlers, 2019; Hattie, 2015; Biggs, 2011; Prøitz, 2016; Andersen, Wahlgren & Wandall, 2017; Hylland, 2017). Participant-centred and self-directed learning were seen as important approaches to learning, partly because the target group was adults, and partly, because according to the literature above, it is seen as the most effective pedagogical approach to learning.

To develop the test course, the project development group discussed different opportunities with a purpose to formulate the learning objectives. Several tools have been developed as well to measure the effects of learning, teaching and education, but the tools have primarily been developed for formal learning institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities (Andersen, Wahlgren and Wandall 2017). They are therefore not as useful in more informal learning environments, such as museums, where it can be more difficult to immediately measure both learning effects and social effects. In addition, the effects in a museum context can be significantly different from the effects of a teaching lesson at a school. While in the formal education course one can measure learning over time via local and national tests set up against predefined criteria expressed in curricula, cultural institutions do not have the same

opportunities. At the same time, a need has arisen to still be able to say something systematic about the audience's learning after visits.

One of the most ambitious planning and evaluation tool specialized for the cultural heritage area has been developed in England by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council project Inspiring Learning for All (Arts Council England, 2019). The project developed a learning tool adapted to the cultural and cultural heritage area. As part of this, a new tool was developed for planning and evaluating learning at archives, libraries, and museums - The Generic Learning Outcomes (GLO).

GLO is a holistic evaluation and planning tool. GLO is based on a constructivist approach to learning, understood in the sense that learning at cultural heritage institutions according to GLO should depart from participation and dialogue. Visitors can also learn from each other in the process. In conversations, they can, as the model also allows for, apply previous knowledge, and combine it with new observations and in conversation come to a common new understanding. GLO thus represents a break with traditional cultural heritage dissemination.

Furthermore, GLO is a tool that can be used to structure learning activities in museums by following questionnaires or qualitative interviews with its five main points. However, it can also be used to create structure in already existing material. One of its strengths, according to its spokespersons, is that it helps museum staff to ask specific questions for both planning and evaluation, and thus contributes to a more fruitful dialogue with visitors (Jönsson and Peterson 2011: 52).

GLO was developed within five areas (see Figure 1 below). The first, ***knowledge and understanding***, is about being able to create meaning or achieve deeper understanding, to create connections and relationships between different things and apply existing knowledge in new ways. ***Skills***, the second point, is understood as knowing how to do something concrete. It can be intellectual skills such as being able to read, think critically and analytically and assess connections, but also the ability to understand numbers, to be able to write, or to handle large amounts of information, for example via information technology. Furthermore, it includes social, emotional, communicative, and physical skills. The next point, ***attitudes, and values*** is about dealing with feelings and perceptions in relation to ourselves and other people. It also includes being able to justify one's own actions and attitudes, and not least how they are

connected. The fourth, *fun, inspiration, and creativity* are about the ability to make others and oneself happy, because it is considered a prerequisite for learning, but also for being able to think and act innovatively and experimentally. It also contributes positively to motivation. The fifth area is *activity, behaviour, and progression*. To live in a post-industrial society requires that people can change the way they have arranged their lives. This applies not only to work, but also in relation to family, studies, and being part of a larger social context. It is thus concerned with the need to be able to be active and exhibit behaviour that is proactive. To be able to master this, it is important to also be able to be proactive when it comes to learning new things and developing new skills. In other words, it is about the ability to be able to implement change on both a subjective and general level (Sonne 2009: 14-19).

GLO has been criticized. Among other things, it has been said that GLO only measures what the visitors themselves say about their own learning. Another criticism is that GLO is not suitable for measuring learning effects over time. A lot of learning happens after a visit to a heritage institution, when there has been time for reflection. GLO has also been criticized as a tool being so broad that it can be difficult to define what learning is and is not. It has also been argued that GLO turns inwards towards the cultural heritage sector itself, as GLO has been developed by archives, libraries, and museums (Jönsson and Peterson 2011: 46-48).

Despite the criticism, GLO is seen as an important learning tool for the heritage area, as it is well suited to measuring other areas than purely economic values. GLO highlights culture as something valuable. This contrasts with many other evaluation and measurement tools, developed by transnational economic organizations such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Economic Forum (WEF). Furthermore, GLO's social constructivist starting point for planning and evaluating learning is in line with prevailing perceptions of how learning best takes place more generally.

To formulate our learning outcomes, we therefore departed from GLO in the way that our course should stimulate the course participants' developments in the following areas as organised by the Arts Council England:

1. Knowledge and understanding
2. Skills
3. Attitudes and values

4. Enjoyment, inspiration, and creativity
5. Activity, behaviour, and progression.

A co-creative method used to further develop learning outcomes for the test course, was designed as a collaboration between the organisers of the course and the participants. A developmental evaluation was sent via a digital questionnaire to the test course participants before the course. 16 of the test course participants answered (Kurs om sociala rum, 2021). The questions asked was the following:

1. How much experience do you have with producing exhibitions from earlier on?
2. Have you earlier on worked with the development of socially stimulating museum environments?
3. What would you like to learn and improve through participating in the course?
4. What type of contents do you imagine at the course? Please select alternatives and comment on them in the comment field
5. Which of these alternatives do you think are most important? Please explain why?

The work with formulating the learning outcomes as a co-creative process based on pre-evaluation for the test course was a comprehensive process. In this article, we therefore decide to only give some examples of the learning outcomes that we developed.

The answer of the first question gave some indication of the level of experience among the test course participants. 81 percent answered they had only little experience. 13 percent had great experience. 6 percent had no experience.

A representative answer on question 2: *Have you earlier on worked with the development of socially stimulating museum environments?* was:

“I have worked with social stimulation between people, but not between exhibition and visitor”.

The answer is an example of how to construct a learning outcome. By having this kind of information beforehand, it was possible to develop a learning outcome in the following way:

1. The participant should after the course have a greater knowledge of how to work with exhibitions to stimulate social stimulation between the visitors.

Representative answers on question 3 *What would you like to learn and improve through participating in the course?* were, for example:

Tools to develop socially stimulating environments and situations.

The social interaction for learning and how to collect the experiences of the visitors

Methods and practical examples on social interaction

I would like to hear examples about social interaction at exhibitions

As in question 2, it was now possible to formulate learning outcomes based on the participants answers. In this case, we formulated the learning outcome in the following way:

2. The participant should after the course have knowledge and practical experiences in socially stimulating the museum visitor through the development of exhibitions.
3. The participant should after the course be able to connect social interaction at a museum with learning objectives.

Question 4 *What type of contents do you imagine at the course? Please select alternatives and comment on them in the comment field* was answered with three different answers from the participants:

About how social interactive environments are developed (32 percent)

About the links between social interaction and learning at museums (30 percent)

About the different elements that can stimulate social interaction at museums (24 percent)

Based on the participants' answer on question 4, the following learning outcomes were formulated:

4. The participant should after the course have knowledge, understanding and practical insight into how socially interactive environments are created.
5. The participant should after the course be able to understand links between social interaction and learning.
6. The participant should after the course have an insight into the different elements that stimulate learning at museums.

In question 5, *Which of these alternatives do you think are most important? Please explain why?* the participants were given the opportunity to point out the most important alternative to them. Most participants agreed in their answers, and said something like this:

The couplings between social interaction and learning

Especially learning is something I am interested in

The answers on question 5 meant that the course organisers in a learning outcome formulation emphasised the couplings between social interaction and learning as a core area of the course. The learning outcome was formulated in the following way:

7. The participant should after the course have a well-developed knowledge of, and practical experiences with, the couplings between social interaction and learning at museums.

In our development project, we departed from a general theory of social learning that we put into practise. The British education scientist Peter Jarvis has, for example, the opinion that learning does not take place in isolation from a social context. The combination of the concepts of social and learning is important, according to Jarvis (Jarvis 2007: 1-2). Jarvis explains learning as a transforming process of all our experiences through thoughts, actions, emotions that transform ourselves as we continue to build perceptions of an external world in our own

biography. It is therefore not possible to detach oneself completely from a social context when learning something new. According to Jarvis, learning is a social thing and typically something that is also socially constructed (Jarvis 2007: 5-7).

The importance of the social aspect of learning is also emphasized by, for example, the European Union (EU) through the key competences for lifelong learning. A social competence is defined as the ability to work with others in a constructive way and handle conflicts in an inclusive and supportive context. Social competence is also about understanding the widely accepted patterns of behaviour and rules for communication in different societies and environments. The skills include the ability to learn and work with others and seek support, when relevant, and manage their working life and social interaction effectively. The individual should be able to communicate constructively in different environments, collaborate in teams and be able to negotiate. This means being able to show tolerance and express and understand different views and be able to create trust and feel empathy (European Commission 2018: 10).

The competence is based on a positive attitude towards one's personal, social, and physical well-being and towards lifelong learning. It is attitudinally based on cooperation, impact, and integrity. This implies a respect for the diversity of others and their needs and a preparedness to both overcome prejudice and be able to compromise (ibid.). Placing the museum as a social meeting place for lifelong learning is thus very relevant. Not only can it be related to being a good idea in terms of scientific learning theory. It is also linked to political objectives for lifelong learning with a focus on social competence development, and which is part of a broader societal development strategy to create economic, social, and sustainable development.

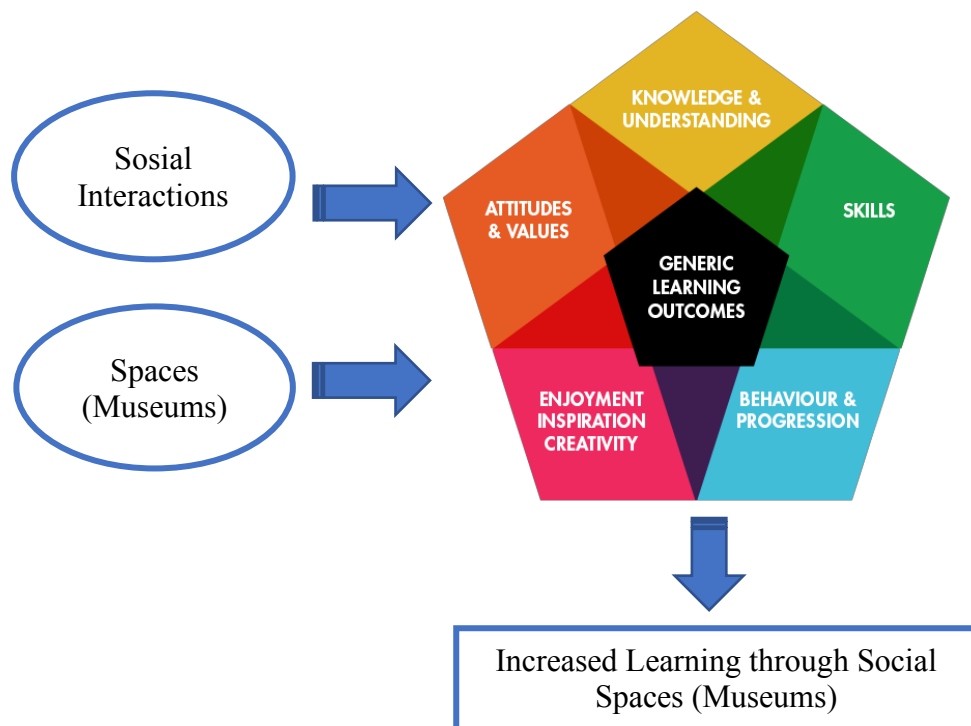
In addition to social learning, we also included the learning spaces, in this case the museums as an arena for social learning. By doing so, we developed the model illustrated in figure 1 where the goal for social interactions and the learning spaces, in this case museums, together with applying the GLO planning tool resulted in our main goal: increased learning through social spaces (museums). By doing so, we further developed the GLO model through practice, from the basis of social learning theory.

An important learning outcome developed for the course was therefore the following:

8. The participant should after the course have developed skills and attitudes in interacting socially with other people (visitors) at a museum as a space for learning.

By doing so, the participants would train their abilities to understand social learning and the museum as a space for learning and be able to put this insight into practice at their own museum institutions.

Figure 1: Increased learning through social spaces.



Sources: A further development of GLO developed by the Arts Council in England based on the Nordplus development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces. The GLO-model is developed by Arts Council England: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/measuring-outcomes/generic-learning-outcomes#section-8>. Other parts of the figure are developed by the Nordplus project group behind Increased Learning through Social Spaces.

Testing the course

Museums have always been regarded as a place of learning (Djupdræt, Sonne, Banik, 2021). However, the previous one-way approach of the museum teaching the visitors by carefully

curated exhibitions have been abandoned by most museums. Today, museums often try to have an approach supporting dialogues, user involvement and participation. In addition, there is an expectation that museums are institutions that contribute to the maintenance and development of democracy by, among others, initiating and being a part of public conversations in an increasingly fragmented society. Hence, its traditional role as also a social arena has been widened. According to a Swedish white paper, museums can contribute to solutions to perceived future challenges (SOU 2015: 224). A Norwegian white paper regards museums and cultural institutions as crucial for promoting social sustainability, critical thinking and a pillar for democracy and free speech in society and an important task is to encourage insight and reflections (NOU 2020-21: 57). It is generally acknowledged that for museums to remain relevant in society they must reach out to those who do not visit today. The best museums shall, according to Graham Black, “inspire, excite, give confidence and help individuals and communities grow” (Black 2009: 3).

Learning is a lifelong experience, and while museums traditionally have not been regarded as a place of formal education and teaching, as indicated above museums are now expected to contribute to gaining new knowledge. However, our understanding of learning should not be restricted to the structured and formal learning usually taking part in the classroom and guided by learning objectives. Learning can also be unstructured and informal and new knowledge happens unintentionally from the visitor’s side. Sometimes it is also referred to as experience (OECD skills, no date). A third understanding of learning is non-formal learning. While it has no defined learning objectives, non-formal learning is more organized than informal learning and may occur either at the initiative of the visitor or because of activities. Those leading the activity will typically be a person with no formal education as a teacher. By actively applying the non-formal learning approach new possibilities have opened for museums and led to a new public and political recognition of the work of museums in terms of teaching and learning (ibid). Hence, museums have become flexible learning environments where visitors are expected to be active participants (Djupdræt, Sonne, Banik, 2021).

In the course, the participant was introduced to the analyses of social spaces in the museum conducted in the project Increased Learning through Social Spaces. In this project a mapping of exhibitions and activities in museums was to analyse where and how social interaction occurred.³⁰ examples from Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish museums were collected and by

analysing those, we found seven elements that supported social interaction (Hansen & Djupdræt, 2021).

The seven elements were divided into three main categories: reflection, physical impact, and activities. Often more than one of the elements is present in the social space at the museum.

Figure 2. The categories and elements that inspire social interaction in museums

Reflection		Physical impact		Activities		
Surprise	Reminiscence	Objects	Staff interaction	Activities alone	Collaborative activities	Games & competition

During the course we presented the seven elements and had a session where the participants discussed them and if they have come across or used some of the elements. We will first describe the seven elements and then reflect on aspects mentioned in the discussion with the participants of the course.¹

Surprise. This element is about the visitor experiencing something unexpected. What this may be varies from person to person depending on previous knowledge and experience. However, it is possible to construct elements in the exhibitions that are directly intended to surprise. And when visitors are surprised, they turn to others and wonder with them about what they are experiencing. It helps to turn surprises into good social elements, and the response from visitors also suggests that doing so is a factor that makes the visit more entertaining, which also can strengthen the learning that can occur.

Reminiscence. This element focuses on people connecting something in the exhibition to events or experiences in their own lives. Through recognizable objects and situations, people feel like sharing their own personal memories and experiences with others, which make these elements spark social interaction. In this way, learning is created not only about the objects on display in the museum, but also about events, objects, memories, and stories important to the members of the group.

¹ A more detailed review of the seven elements is found in Djupdræt, Martin Brandt & Anna Hansen. 2021. "Måder at skabe sociale oplevelser og læringsrum på museerne", in Wollentz et al (eds). *Museet som ett socialt rum och en plats för lärande*. Östersund, Jamtli förlag: 43-70 and in Banik, Vibeke Kieding; Martin Brandt Djupdræt, Anna Hansen, Lasse Sonne & Gustav Wollentz (forthcoming). *The museum as a social space and a place for learning*.

Objects. Objects are to be understood as physical elements such as museum objects, reconstructions, scenography, or graphic elements. The concept thus covers the museum's classic features in an exhibition. The objects can create social interaction when they capture the visitors' attention or curiosity, and following that, initiate conversations, interaction and learning between the visitors.

Staff interaction. This element is about the interaction between the museum staff and the visitors. It can be staff who act as guides, are part of a learning programme, are available to answer questions, or who plays a role as a historical person. No matter what role the staff takes, the important issue is that they are present in the museum and can make the museum's visitors interact with them and with each other.

Activities alone. This element is about activities designed for one person to try it out alone, but the activity is also designed to be interesting, fun, or exciting for those who do not take part in it themselves but watches someone else who do. This creates a social relation between the people who perform the activity and those who watch.

Collaborative activities. This element is an activity that you must collaborate on to solve. In this, the social interaction becomes a necessity because one cannot do the activity alone.

Games & competition. Games and competitions are engaging and can contribute to social interaction, either when individuals compete against each other or when trying to help each other. It can be activities where the participants compete against each other, or where one or more people compete to complete something at a certain time, for example digitally against a computer.

Reflection from the participants. In the discussion of the elements during the course, the participants were free to choose what they wanted to focus on and which elements they liked to share their experiences about. The most common elements they choose were connected to the two reflective elements *surprise* and *reminiscence*. The participants were primarily museum staff, and one explanation could be that the elements connected to *Physical impact* and *Activities* were already well-known tools used by exhibition planners, but the *Reflection* elements gave them a new insight, by being an explanation to why the elements they already

knew could have a successful social impact. The participants reflected on what the elements meant to the visitors and their use of the museum. An element frequently mentioned in the discussion was how visitors strive to find meaning that connect their museum experience to their own life, and here the social connection with other people has an important function and significance. Our own sense-making and sense of identity is both based on our own experiences (like reminiscence) but it is also closely linked to the dialogue with others and the reflection in the attitudes and actions of others that is ongoing. Meaning making and identity are thus both individual and collective.²

Creating social spaces in practice

The first day of the course ended with a workshop where participants had the opportunity to create and shape concepts for designing social spaces in dialogue with others. Prior to the course, we encouraged each participant to reflect upon and write down some words about an exhibition/museum production where social interaction is significant. We wanted it to be either a production they were currently involved in or that they wished to realize in a potential future. We asked the following questions: What does the exhibition consist of? What is the focus and purpose? Is there any social interaction among the visitors and what does it consist of?

14 participants answered the survey with different examples, ranging from an exhibition detailing the 1900s in the region of Skåne, an exhibition on the experience of sleep and its health values, and an exhibition on traditions in Mexico. The connecting element was that each example included meaningful social aspects that the participant wanted to develop. Based on the examples provided beforehand, we divided the participants in 4 groups with 4-5 people in each group. One course leader was joining each group to answer questions and assist if needed. The goal of the exercise was to actively use the elements that stimulate social interaction presented earlier during the course (see above), to make the case more social. Furthermore, we

² This dualism between the individual and the collective is also described around sense-making by Karl E. Weick (Weick, K. E., K. M. Sutcliffe & D. Obstfeld. 2005. "Organizing and the process of sensemaking". *Organization Science* 16 (4): 409-421). The dualism is described concerning identity around different aspect like psychology (Mead, George Herbert. 2005. *Sindet, selvet og samfundet: fra et socialbehavioristisk standpunkt*. Kbh: Akademisk Forlag: 191), network society theory (Castells, Manuel. 2009. *The Power of Identity*. Wiley-Blackwell: 6ff) and social anthropology (Jenkins, Richard. 2016. *Social identitet*. Aarhus: Academica: 44ff, 98ff). An overview of the topic can be found in Frello, Birgitta. 2012. *Kollektiv identitet - kritiske perspektiver*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

wanted to participants to relate it to GLO in terms of what kind of learning that could be stimulated through the planned social interaction. We had the following time plan:

- 20 minutes - individual reflection and development of their case in relation to the elements and GLO.
- 20 minutes in a group - each person briefly presents their case to the others in the group. A case is selected to focus extra on.
- 45 minutes - the group works together with their selected case based on GLO and the elements.
- 20 minutes – we all gather, and each group presents its case.

Based on the feedback received and the evaluations, many participants appreciated working on a specific case in dialogue with others and found the elements and GLO useful to work with.

Evaluating social learning spaces

The second day started with a presentation on how to evaluate social spaces and why (Wollentz, 2021). In the presentation, focus was placed on the fact that we had noted that socially interactive environments were seldom evaluated in the Nordic museums we had visited within the project, and that the museum sector therefore needs to improve systematic evaluation and understanding of when, why, and how spaces in museums become social, and what kind of learning social interaction stimulates. Furthermore, it was argued that it is a benefit to be clearer with how to evaluate different learning outcomes, since the learning paradigm has been criticized for not being clear in enough in distinguishing between different forms of learning (Biesta 2013).

We presented three different methods that were used in the project: 1). a survey with seven questions. Five related to the different GLOs, and two related to the value of the social dimensions. 2). Observations noting social interaction in groups based on a scheme. 3). Semi-structured interviews following the GLO but adding a social dimension. Emphasis was put on the value in combining several different methods to reach as nuanced picture as possible, where also social interaction without reflection is acknowledged, and which allows for many different

forms of social interaction, including the ones not intended by those producing the exhibition or designing the activity. We showed how observations could note forms of social interaction that surveys would not, which often seemed to be based on preconceived ideas of what social interaction means, what a museum experience should consist of, or who is a learner. We also argued for the value of semi-structured interviews when the subject at hand is emotional or sensitive, since it is possible to note emotions through the way a person speaks or gesticulates. The format of semi-structured interviews is also beneficial in the context of difficult subjects, since it allows for follow-up questions in a way that surveys do not. Surveys, on the other hand, are useful since they can be quantified more easily and are not as time-consuming as observations or semi-structured interviews. In sum, all three methods are useful depending on the context and time at hand – especially in combination with each other.

Evaluating social learning spaces in practice

The presentation on different forms of evaluations was followed by a practical exercise where participants could try the three different forms of evaluations (surveys, observations and semi-structured interviews) in four different exhibition spaces of the museum of Jamtli: one was the permanent exhibition detailing the cultural history of Jämtland, one was a photo exhibition of different kind of Nordic food and landscapes, one was an art exhibition focusing on Nordic myths, and one was an exhibition on how food connects to different values and identities in the past and in the present. In other words: we encouraged participants to practically apply these evaluation methods in very different forms of museum spaces, where the social interaction expresses itself in different ways. The participants were divided into three groups, to test the methods in combination with each other. Since there were not many visitors at the museum at that time, the participants evaluated each other. In such a way, it was both a practical exercise of testing different forms of evaluations and a role-playing activity of pretending to be a visitor to the museum and engaging in conversations. Interestingly, our own evaluation of the course noted that some participants found it useful to take the role of a museum visitor themselves, since it forced them to shift perspectives in a meaningful way. However, others found it challenging and would have preferred to test evaluation methods on “real” visitors instead.

The exercise was followed by a joint discussion where everyone was encouraged to engage in a critical discussion of pros and cons of the different methods and how they relate to different kind of museum spaces. We also wanted participants to reflect upon how the methods can be combined to receive a layered and informative understanding. The discussion was very active, and many of the participants were providing input in how evaluations can be applied as well as how these three methods can be complemented with other aspects. It was stimulating to note how engaged the participants were, revealing that the subject of how to evaluate socially interactive spaces is important and relevant. This means that there is considerable potential in developing this further in future projects.

Course evaluation result

The evaluation of the course was conducted in relation to the planned learning outcomes formulated through GLO and an electronic questionnaire developed in Crowdsignal after the course. The GLO-evaluation was conducted in the final session of the course (GLO-evaluation, 2021; Museet som et social rum, 2021).

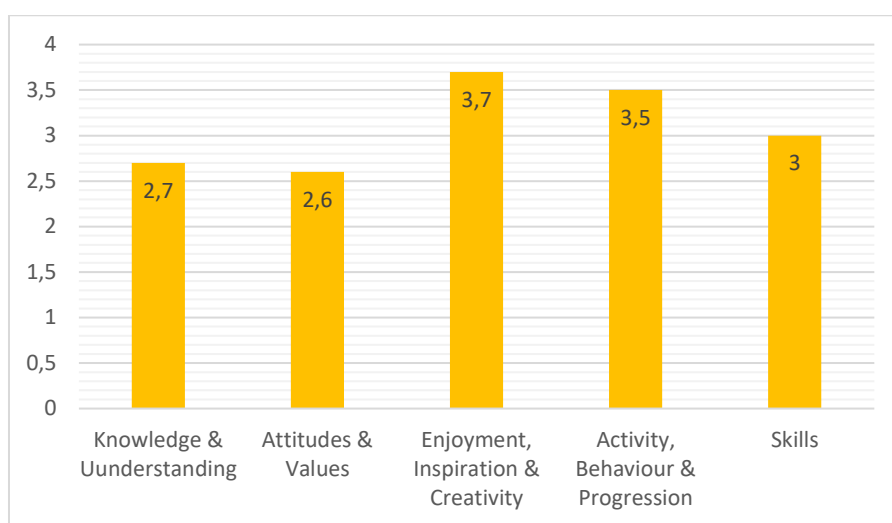
GLO evaluation

The GLO evaluation was conducted as a so-called café evaluation method. Most of the participants in the course participated in the evaluation (apart from two participants that had to leave early). The method organises the evaluation as group discussions at “café tables” between most typical four course participants. Each table has one leader who is also the referent for the table. The other participants circulate from table to table until all participants have taken part in the evaluation at all tables. In our evaluation of the course, we had five tables. Each table had one question related to an area in the GLO planning and evaluation tool. By doing so, we were able to evaluate on the learning outcomes that were developed before the test course.

In figure 3 and 4, we see the result of the GLO evaluation. A first impression is that the different areas of GLO are rather equally represented. Enjoyment, Inspiration & Creativity gets the highest score with 3.7 or 24 percent followed by Activity, Behaviour & Progression with 3.5 or

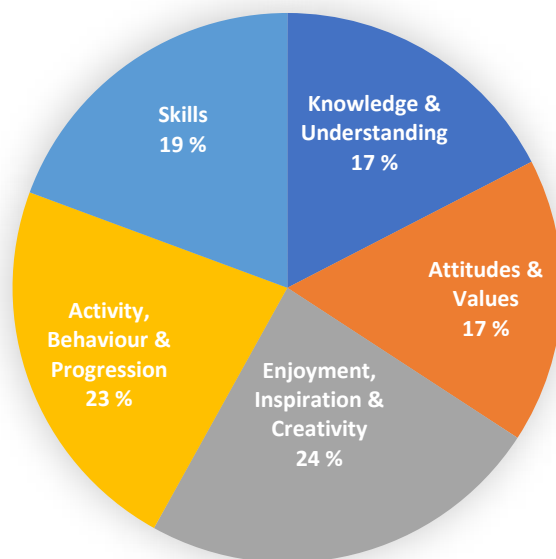
23 percent. An interpretation of this could be that the participants had fun during the test course and that they were active learners during the learning process. The result shows that the intention of having a learner-centred approach and that the participants should be socially engaged most likely worked during the course.

Figure 3. Result of GLO evaluation (average). Test course in Östersund, Sweden, 29 September 2021 (1=low, 5=very high).



Source: GLO evaluation material developed by the project participants in the Nordplus Adult development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces. 29. September 2021.

Figure 3. Result of GLO evaluation (division). Test course in Östersund, Sweden, 29 September 2021.



Source: GLO evaluation material developed by the project participants in the Nordplus Adult development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces. 29. September 2021.

In addition, the areas of Skills, Knowledge & Understanding and Attitudes & Values scored almost equally with 3.0 or 19 percent, 2.7 or 17 percent, and 2.6 or 17 percent respectively. This meant that the participants developed new theoretical knowledge practical skills during the course, and at the same time felt they were challenged on their attitudes and values. One area the participants emphasised was that preconceived notions were challenged during the course. In the case of knowledge & Understanding, the participants especially emphasised an understanding of how to evaluate social spaces, for example, by using GLO. Regarding Skills, the participants emphasised that they had learned concrete practical methods to evaluate, not least through GLO. Regarding Attitudes & Values, the participants, for example, emphasised new perspectives and insights as something that changed or challenged their attitudes and values together with the exchange of new idea with other participants in the course.

Enjoyment, Inspiration & Creativity had the highest score. The participants especially thought it was inspirational and fun to meet colleagues from other museums to talk and socialise with. The area of Activity, Behaviour & Progression was almost as high. According to the participants, they felt it stimulating to work with the evaluation methods in practise. The

participants also felt it stimulating for their behaviour that the learning activities has a high focus on the participants. For example, the participants were given the opportunity to test themselves in the role of a museum visitor and have insights into how it is like to be a visitor and not only an employed at a museum.

Evaluation of co-created learning outcomes

The result of the co-created learning outcomes was measured in a post course evaluation in a digital evaluation tool. 10 of the participants in the test course answered the evaluation questions formulated in accordance with the pre-course evaluation. The answers gave insight into whether the learning outcomes had been reached as intended or if adjustments/improvements ought to be considered before a next course. In this article, 8 learning outcomes were formulated based on the pre-evaluation.

In accordance with learning outcome 1, “The participant should after the course have a greater knowledge of how to work with exhibitions to stimulate social stimulation between the visitors.” an answer was, for example, that

I got a better understanding of which elements stimulate social interactions in exhibitions.

Learning outcome 2 “The participant should after the course have knowledge and practical experiences in socially stimulating the museum visitor through the development of exhibitions.” was answered in the following way:

Yes, I got many practical insights into how to create an exhibition.

Regarding social interaction at a museum with learning objectives, an answer on learning outcome 3 “The participant should after the course be able to connect social interaction at a museum with learning objectives”, was for example:

Several good examples on the use of GLO that made one reflect on our own's own work in the museum.

In learning outcome 4, “The participant should after the course have knowledge, understanding and practical insight into how socially interactive environments are created”, the practical aspect was emphasised. An answer in the evaluation after the test course was, for example:

Very good mix between theory and practise.

Learning outcome 5, “The participant should after the course be able to understand *the couplings* links between *the* social interaction and learning” emphasised that the course participants should be able to understand the link between social interaction and learning. The evaluation indicates that it is doubtful if this learning outcome was reached. In a weighted average of four questions, the participants’ answers indicate that the connection between social interaction and learning is the area they had understood the least, out of the four areas the questions concerned (2.10 of 4.00). Second lowest was learning outcome 6, “The participant should after the course have an insight into the different elements that stimulate learning at museums (2.50 of 4.00).

This indicates that regarding learning outcomes 5 and 6, the course organisers still need to make some improvements, in order to explore the links between social interaction and learning on one hand, and the connection between elements that stimulate learning and social interaction on the other. This might however not be a surprise since we are dealing with a new transdisciplinary approach to museum and exhibition studies combined with social studies and education science.

Further information might be found in the answers on learning outcome 7, “The participant should after the course have a well-developed knowledge of, and practical experiences with, the *couplings* between social interaction and learning at museums”. One of the course participants answered:

I would have liked to talk more about the links between learning and social interaction.

Other comments also addressed the lack of pre-knowledge before the course that might have made the couplings between social interaction and learning clearer. One participant wanted “*relevant theory and research literature connected to the practical exercises*. «Another

participant answered that there should have been *“more clarity in the prior knowledge and the target group the course is aiming towards.”*

Thus, the evaluation of learning outcome 7 also address the important question about who the test course participants were. A clear majority was museum staff, working with exhibitions at their own museums. Most of the participants did not have a pedagogical education such as schoolteacher or the like. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the concept of learning was a new concept to many of the participants.

Learning outcome 8, “The participant should after the course have developed skills and attitudes in interacting socially with other people (visitors) at a museum as a space for learning”, which is about developing skills and attitudes in social interaction. One participant answered in the following way:

yes, important with social interaction.

The answer was shallow, but at least somehow reflected that the participant had been made aware of that an intention with the course was to raise awareness of the importance of social interaction, in this case at museums.

Concluding remarks

In the Nordplus development project Increased Learning through Social Spaces, we developed, tested, and evaluated a new course as a part of adult and continuing education for museum staff in Scandinavia. Our ambition was to train the museum staff in understanding and be capable of dealing with the museum as a space for social interaction and a space for learning. As a part of the course, the museum staff test group was taught how different elements in museums can stimulate social interaction. The course, in addition, had the goal to teach staff the importance of why, and how social learning spaces should be evaluated. Finally, the goal with the course was to teach evaluation of social learning spaces in practice. Of course, the long-term ambition with such a course, would be to change museum professionals’ way of thinking about learning and social interaction and inspire them to work in a different way in future exhibitions. This

change would be both part of the learner's identity and way of thinking, which in turn would affect the museum organisations' way of approaching these issues.

The results of the evaluation showed some interesting results. The GLO-evaluation showed that the participants enjoyed the test course, and that the test course affected their behaviour and progression. An area scoring lower, was the GLO-area knowledge and understanding, leading us to conclude that this part of the course could be developed further when the course is adjusted. The course developers also need to pay attention to the GLO-areas of attitudes and values; and the GLO-area skills. Again, these are areas that should be taken into consideration for improvements when the course is adjusted.

The post-course evaluation also gave useful results. The test course participants gave, in general, positive feedback. The most important area for improvements, however, seems to be in the coupling between learning and social interaction/social spaces. This area is important to improve in the adjusted course because it was at the very centre of the idea with both the development project and the test course as such. The result probably shows that a two-days course is a too limited amount of time to learn, process and internalize the concept of combining thoughts on social interaction and learning, which was new to many participants. Making the connection between the concepts and seeing them as intertwined also implies a change of the museum staff's competencies and the museum institution into a learning organisation. These fundamental changes or reforms however take more time than 2 days. On the other hand, the result of the evaluation showed that there is an interest among museums to take part in the new paradigm of, for example, adult and lifelong learning. Nevertheless, it is important to be realistic about how fast this change might come. The test course showed that staff at the museums want to be part of the change, but that it will take strong efforts to change both the competencies of the staff, and with that, the orientation of the museum institution.

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