

extratime for Museums

'Learning is at the heart of our museum. This is why we actively engage young people within and outside the formal learning sector. We enable young people to compare their experiences with those of people from the past and, in the process, they not only learn about history but also explore other subjects and develop new skills, knowledge and experiences.'

(Elizabeth Neathey AMA+, Museum Officer, North Somerset Museum)

Introduction

'[M]useums pre-date schools yet the popular assumption is that schools are for learning (and for preparation of the future) while museums are for the preservation of the past.' (Learning with digital technologies in museums, science centres and galleries, FutureLab, 2004)

In fact, museums go far beyond the realm of historical knowledge. They not only provide opportunities to build on and reinforce the formal curriculum; they can also encourage creativity, help develop aspirations, and enable the development of key personal skills such as research, investigation, problem solving and analysis. In this way museums provide a perfect stimulus and setting for study support.

Providing access to a varied menu of study support activities (also known as out-of-school-hours learning or oshl) is a key aspect of the 'core offer' of extended services that all schools are expected to provide access to by 2010. The term 'study support' covers a wide range of activities that take place outside of normal lessons, that aim to raise achievement and, importantly, where participation is voluntary.

Evidence shows that taking part in study support can lead to improvements in young people's self-esteem, achievements, attitudes to learning, behaviour, and school attendance. For more information on the benefits of, and background to, study support, visit www.continyou.org.uk/studysupportetc.



Teens Through The Time Warp exhibition, North Somerset Museum (see page 4)

About this guide

'The best thing about the day was the lovely staff and volunteers – my two granddaughters (aged 4 and 9) just did not want to leave the museum and we stayed the whole day. The 4 year old started off not wanting to do anything, and ended up wanting to do the lot. It was so fascinating seeing what could be done with the different materials. And free too! Thank you so much.'

(Grandparent speaking about a Royal Albert Memorial Museum activity)

This Museums Mini Guide will give you practical ideas and top tips for developing links between study support clubs and museums. It also includes a range of short case studies so you can see how others have turned their ideas into action.

It does not matter how near or far your 'local' museum is – this guide, funded by the DCMS/DCSF Strategic Commissioning Programme through MLA South West, will support you in getting started.

It will help you whether you want to set up a museum-focused club, or whether you want to find out ways that museums can support a specific activity, club or subject focus.

If you are a museum, it will highlight the benefits of working with study support providers, as well as suggesting a range of ideas and activities that can be offered in and around galleries.

Top tip!

Be innovative in your use of local resources. You don't have to visit a subject-specific museum for a particular subject club. You can find learning opportunities (problem-solving, creativity, research, innovation, teamwork) in any museum.



Young people plan the solutions to museum partnerships

Why involve museums in study support?

'Museums can clearly engage learners in creative and cultural pursuits as well as more vocational aspects of learning – and certainly go well beyond improving school children's performance in examinations.' (FutureLab, 2004)

Museums, galleries, libraries and archives offer a huge resource for study support providers and the young people who attend their activities. There are almost 2,000 venues in the South West alone. Museums stimulate and encourage informal and innovative learning, offer a fresh space to explore ideas, and benefit young people in many other different ways. A diagram mapping specific benefits against Every Child Matters can be found on page 5, but more generic opportunities are listed below.

For schools/clubs

Involving museums in study support can offer schools/clubs:

- access to a wider range of materials and resources to enhance subject-specific learning
- the ability to draw on support from staff/professionals with specific expertise and additional knowledge in subject areas
- diverse learning possibilities (including guided tours, courses, exhibition activity packs, free choice exploration of exhibits, interactive technology and museum 'theatre'), which facilitate motivation and different learning styles
- outreach services and enhancement activities at the school/club site
- opportunities to build trips and visits into study support programmes to celebrate young people's achievements and increase/prolong motivation
- links to existing provision that young people may already be accessing with their families, such as summer or weekend activities in museums – this can be used to motivate them during curriculum time in school.

Top tip!

Link up with other study support clubs in your local area. Decide a museum visit that would suit you all, and share transport and support costs. Build on this by sharing ideas and, where appropriate, create links between the clubs' activities. Your extended schools co-ordinator could help with this.

For museums

Being involved with schools/clubs can help museums to:

- be more flexible with education plans and opportunities to innovate resources that go beyond 'template' curriculum support packs
- improve their understanding of young people's perspective of, and aspirations for, museums
- work with smaller groups for a more personalised approach and increase opportunities for involving young people in the planning and development of exhibitions
- work outside the museum environment with professionals from other sectors, and develop a synergy of ideas and activities
- gain a better understanding of the skills, interests and assets located in the local community
- develop a lifelong relationship with young people and their families who might not otherwise have engaged with museum services, leading to increased levels of participation/visitor numbers.

Case study – Let's do the timewarp again!

North Somerset Museum worked closely with 30 local young people to develop the Then and Now – Teens Through The Time Warp project. This explored the experiences of teenagers from the 1950s to the present day through oral history. The outcome was a public exhibition.

Benefits

- The young people developed and improved skills such as research, investigation and project management.
- Gathering the source material gave the young people a chance to explore their relationship with the older generation, and gain a better understanding of their own experiences by comparison.
- The exhibition benefited the wider community by informing them of other teenagers' experiences, leading to improved understandings of the experiences of different generations.
- The project promoted intergenerational relationships and community cohesion.

Young Roots Heritage Lottery funding was used to support the project. The exhibition attracted over 13,000 visitors and the project has been nominated for Best Heritage Project in the 2007 National Lottery Awards.



Young participants with their exhibition at North Somerset Museum

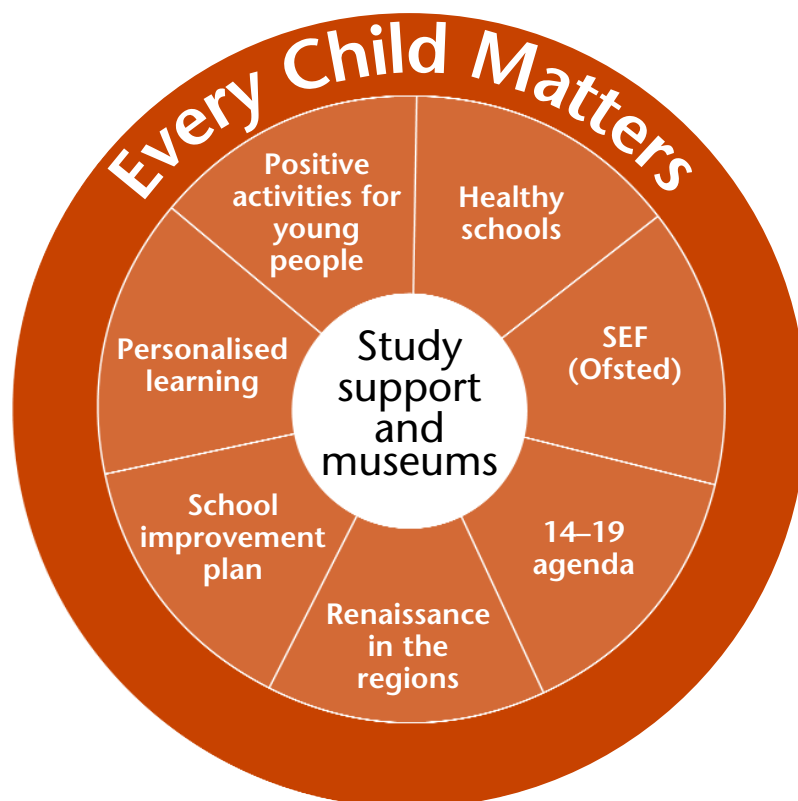
Top tip!

Consider carefully the individuals or groups that might benefit specifically from working with museums. Ensure clarity between teachers and museum staff about the intended outcomes so that these can be evaluated and can inform future developments. Schools can then add this to their Ofsted self-evaluation form and point to the outcomes with appropriate evidence at inspection.

What can you achieve with museum and study support partnerships?

'We want to develop independent learners who enjoy learning. Working [with museums] in a study support aspect allows freedom from time constraints and subject "boxes".' (Gill Kelly, Deputy Head, Nailsea Secondary School, Bristol)

Study support activities that have been developed in partnership with a museum can contribute to a wide range of initiatives and agendas, as highlighted in the diagram below. All of these agendas are underpinned by the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.



Depending on your group's needs, you can develop activities to target individual or multiple outcomes at any one time. Listed below are some examples of how delivering museum-linked study support can help pupils to meet the desired outcomes of Every Child Matters.

Enjoy and achieve

- increase young people's enthusiasm for learning
- develop skills such as problem solving, evaluation, investigation and analysis
- personalise young people's learning and enable them to receive information in a variety of ways
- increase their opportunities for interactive learning
- enable them to experience new places and sites, thereby expanding their awareness of society and the world.

Stay safe

- help young people to become more aware of, and use, safe and supervised local amenities.

Be healthy

- provide access to information and knowledge to enable them to make informed choices about their health, lifestyle and perspective on society
- enable them to develop relationships outside the teacher–pupil model, and to find role models/mentors in museums and professional staff – increasing confidence and interaction skills, thereby reducing isolation.

Achieve economic well-being

- broaden their understanding of museum services and related careers
- help them to gain information on different subject areas, spheres of opportunity, and life choices beyond their immediate environment.

Make a positive contribution to their community

- enhance young people’s understanding of their local area and history, thereby increasing their likelihood of positively engaging with it
- enable them to contribute to local culture and resources, for instance, developing exhibitions, influencing planning and utilising public spaces.

Case study – With a WHOOSH and a rounder

In July 2007 pupils from two South West schools investigated ways in which museums could enhance their existing study support clubs:

- **Worle Community School** runs a daily after-school WHOOSH (Working Here Outside Of School Hours) homework club in their library. Pupils wanted museums to help them: investigate the history of homework; develop a WHOOSH archive of activities and club members; research ‘old style’ learning methods; discover how homework is approached in other countries; and host a WHOOSH session in a local museum.
- **St Katherine’s Secondary School** runs an after-school rounders club every Tuesday. Pupils devised a range of ideas to link in with museums, including: researching the history and origin of the sport; finding out if it is played in other countries and what the rules are; sourcing historical equipment to play with; dressing up in the clothes other generations would have worn to play the game; organising a game in a museum grounds; playing a match against museum staff; and setting up a rounders club museum at school.

Young people from both schools were able to reflect on their current provision and play an active role in future planning at the club. A local museum is now seeking funding to do further work with these schools.



Worle Community School planning the museum element of their WHOOSH club

How to involve museums in study support

Museums and study support providers can work together in a wide variety of ways. Below are three different models – but there is no reason why you can't mix and match them. Further activity ideas and an essential checklist of things to consider can be found on page 11 of this guide.

Visit museums to enhance an existing club or activity

Museum visits go much further than just providing an outing for history clubs. Whether you are a maths, science, cookery, sports, citizenship, homework or ICT club, a visit to a museum offers the opportunity for students to increase their knowledge and their learning skills.

Going to settings outside the school can enable young people to see themselves differently; shy, boisterous or inattentive learners can transform themselves in a different environment where they can meet new people and interact outside the normal 'labels' ascribed to them.

Ensure that you work with the museum in advance to see how they can complement your particular focus, and share your objectives. Discuss whether they already have a bank of activities and worksheets that you could adapt and use.

Consider the particular group you are working with and share this with the museum so that they can take this into account in their provision. The activities on page 9 outline a few ways in which you can extend the experience once you are back at school.

Most museums have education officers or school link workers who can help you and are keen to work with you.

Develop museum-related activities in your club

Even if you have limited resources to get out and about, there are plenty of ways in which you can involve museums in your activity.

If you are working on a specific project, you might find that local museums have relevant resources or artefacts in their lending boxes. Museum staff might be able to come and work with you on your project, and provide advice and support on setting up displays or how best to research ideas and document materials.

Staff may also be able to come and talk to your group about your subject and help illustrate how traditional subjects are relevant to the 'real world'. For example, if you are a maths club a local museum might help highlight how maths was studied in the past, how they use maths or statistics today to help run the museum, or give examples of famous local mathematicians and their influence on the community.

Top tip!

Involve pupils and their families as much as possible in planning activities – for example, young people could create a poster of the club and what is involved, and then brainstorm how a museum could help enhance this.

Set up a museum club

You might decide you want to set up a specific 'museum club' (such as young explorers, exhibition taskforce) to develop ideas further. This could focus on understanding museums and how they work, exploring museum-based skills and activities such as setting up exhibitions, curating, archiving/ researching information, presenting displays and celebrating particular subjects or locations. Ways to develop your club could include:

- using websites such as the 24 Hour Museum (see page 12) to design themed projects on different museums or create a list of 'top things to do and see' for other young people to use
- inviting museum staff to come and give talks on their sector and the different jobs and functions people have
- paying regular visits to different museums or using technology to access those that are more remote or specialist
- promoting your club among local and national museums – there may well be opportunities to take part in designing 'real life' exhibitions, informing the development of museum learning programmes, and 'testing' new materials or displays
- involving your immediate community – older relatives or community members could add extra sparkle to your club by acting as 'live exhibits' and describing 'how it was in their day'; they may even act as additional adult supervisors on visits, subject to the necessary Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks.

Don't forget to read the essential checklist on page 11 if you are planning to set up a brand new club or activity.

Top tip!

Design a simple flyer for your club, showing how others can link to and support your activities. Add relevant contact details and contact times. Highlight your interest in linking in with local cultural events and facilities. Display it on the school website and send it to local museums. Follow it up with museum visits to discuss how to take your ideas forward.



Tried and tested ideas

'Museums offer a valuable opportunity for schools to develop shared and interactive study support activities which enhance the delivery of the extended schools programme. These activities add variety to study support whilst helping students to connect with their heritage and bringing to life the area in which they live.' (North Somerset Extended Schools Team)

Whether you're looking for activities to offer on site at museums or back at your club, the activities in this section will provide you with more than enough to get you started. They can be adapted to enhance specific-subject areas or as a programme of activities for a designated 'museum' club. The activities are not age-specific and can be changed to suit your group's needs or interests.

At the museum

1 The blindfold walk

Working in pairs, take it in turns to be blindfolded, and act as a gallery guide. The guide supports the other person to explore a gallery in the museum using their other senses – sound, taste, touch, smell. Describe the experience and what the gallery was like when blindfolded. What could you learn about the museum that might otherwise be missed? How do impressions differ when you can look around? *Great for encouraging different learning styles and encouraging the use of descriptive language – it could lead to the club developing a piece of creative writing as a group.*

2 Word play

Try to find among the museum's signs, displays and stands words that your group has never seen before, and write them down. Follow it up by researching the words and their meaning, building a museum dictionary or writing a group 'nonsense' poem with all the new words and descriptions discovered. *Great for a language club – you could translate the museum!*

3 Different world

Imagine the museum visit is a trip to a different island. Think about who 'lives' there, what the island looks like, and what the language is. You could expand the idea with various activities, drawing a map of the museum, for example, as if a traveller to a new land. With more time, the group could write a travel guide for others who may want to visit. *Great for geography and citizenship.*

4 Who lives there?

Find a person in one of the museum exhibits, such as a famous character from history, a local legend, or a character like a Roman warrior. Write a short story about this person and what they might do, see and feel if one night they came to life in the museum. What would they think of the other exhibits? What would they say to another 'museum resident'? Let your imagination run wild! *Great for history and creative thinking.*

5 Mathematise the museum!

Count the number of stairs or steps from the entrance to the first exhibit. How many paces are there from the café to the toilets? How many different shapes can you see? How many two- and three-dimensional objects? Find an example of a geometric pattern, draw it out, and, when your group gets back to the club, identify the shapes and formats involved. *Great for maths and engineering skills.*

Back at the club

6 Virtual tours

Become 'investigators', finding out what museums are in the area, taking virtual tours and writing a 'pocket guide' for other local young people on what's available. Set up telephone interviews with museum staff to develop communication and confidence skills. Prioritise what your group would most like to see/visit and plan a future trip. *Great for general communication and research skills.*

7 Conservation card sort

Design a series of questions about how objects are stored and displayed, considering issues of temperature, bright lights, fragile items, materials that hold exhibits together, and so on. Design an answer sheet. Cut out the statements and work in pairs to match them up. For example: Question – Museums must keep objects away from bright lights because...; Answer – Exposure to bright light can cause fabrics, paper, wood and photographs to fade. This activity may be facilitated by a museum officer during a visit. *Great for archiving and display skills.*

8 My treasure box

Explore personal interests by gathering 'treasures' from home or items your group finds or uses in daily life. Record in a notebook where each item was found, when, its cost, and so on. Decorate a treasure box to fit the collection in, and describe the items using key vocabulary, such as 'antique', 'artefact', 'heirloom', 'natural', 'man-made' and 'valuable'. Ask a museum outreach worker to help sort, group and label items to describe the collections. *Great for PSHE and personalised learning.*

9 Mini museums

Make a mini museum of the school or local community, gathering objects that highlight something special about the place, or can tell a story. Think about helping future visitors or pupils to understand its history. Find a place within the school where the collection can be displayed and perhaps find old records or photographs of the school for comparison. If physical space is limited, create the collection online as part of a website. *Great for citizenship and local history.*

Case study – Gifted and talented Saturdays

Bath and North East Somerset's (B&NES) Heritage Services Learning team have worked with the Children's Services Able Pupils team for more than five years. Each year they deliver about 25 Saturday morning sessions for gifted and talented pupils at the Roman Baths, Victoria Art Gallery, or Fashion Museum. Each term a programme of activities is developed and pupils choose which activity they would like to attend.

In 2007, with help from Renaissance in the Regions funding, the teams ran a three-day summer school linked to the Fashion Museum's exhibition 'Pick of the bunch – a celebration of floral frocks'. Pupils explored the exhibition and visited a local garden centre to get inspiration for their own design work. They printed summer T-shirts and produced giant flowers for display at the museum.

The sessions offered young people the chance to explore their design skills using a variety of different media. One participant said: 'I really liked going to the Fashion Museum and getting out of the classroom. The design activities were good too.' Lindsey Braidley, Learning and Programmes Co-ordinator, B&NES Heritage Services, positively endorses the partnership work: 'Our experience shows that getting to know your gifted and talented co-ordinators, either in children's services or local private schools, is beneficial both to you and them.'

Essential checklist

Below is a summary of some key issues you will need to consider as you begin to set up a museum club or add a museum aspect to your existing study support activities. Taking the time to get everything right will really maximise on the enjoyment and benefits of working with museums. More detailed information can be found at www.continyou.org.uk/studysupportetc. Remember, it's not about you doing and delivering everything yourself. Make sure you involve a strong team (including young people) to support you and delegate responsibility to them for addressing some of the questions/issues below.

Find out what's needed

- What gaps are there in your existing study support/oshl programme that could be supported by visits to, or links with, a museum?
- What do you want to achieve through adding a museum element to your club?

Find the right time for your club

- If you are introducing a new museum club, when is the best day/time of day and what is the best frequency to attract members?
- What special considerations need to be made to ensure your club times tie in with hours when museums can support you?

Keep it safe

- What are the health and safety considerations of your provision, including any training and checks for staff and insurance cover for activities?
- Do you need to undertake a risk assessment for your planned activities, including off-site visits? Have volunteers or external staff had CRB checks?

Check out the site in advance

If you are visiting a museum, go and see the space first. Find out about toilet, refreshment and 'break-out' locations. Look at what learning resources are already there and what you might want to take with you. Consider any special needs among your member group that need planning for.

Link in with museum staff

Set up a pre-meeting with museum staff, either in person or over the phone, so they are clear on your objectives and needs. Do they know you are a study support club? Do they understand this can mean different operating times and a different learning focus, for example?

Know your worth

The multiple benefits of visiting and engaging with museums mean you are more than justified in using your core school budget to help finance. In addition, promoting awareness and use of museums among young people supports the sector's education and public engagement targets. Consider this when negotiating discounted or free entry for your group. Detailed funding guidance for study support can be found at www.continyou.org.uk/studysupportetc.

Join it up

Link up with other schools and the extended schools team in your area. Talk to your local museums services officer or equivalent – you can find details through your regional MLA. Write down what you hope to achieve, and work and plan together how you are going to get there. Joining up with others increases awareness of needs and available opportunities, facilitates ideas, and helps with securing funding and sharing resources.

Useful resources

Below are just a handful of the hundreds of excellent museum-related websites that exist to support learning in this area. Wider information and resources on study support can be found at: www.continyou.org.uk/studysupportetc.

South West links

MLA South West – www.mlasouthwest.org.uk

Comprehensive information and links for museums, libraries, archives and the public in the South West.

Molli (The Museum Open Learning Initiative) – www.molli.org.uk

A partnership project between the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, and the Telematics Centre. Molli produces online learning resources that link to local exhibitions.

MLA South West regional directory – www.mlasouthwest.org.uk/index.php?ID=340

List of all the museums, libraries and archive services in the South West in a searchable format. Direct links to museums that are mentioned in this guide include:

- Royal Albert Memorial Museum – www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2650
- North Somerset Museum – www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Leisure/Museum
- The Fashion Museum, Bath – www.fashionmuseum.co.uk

National links

24 Hour Museum – www.24hourmuseum.org.uk

Multiple links, interactive tools and activity ideas for museums and cultural centres across the UK.

Show Me – www.show.me.uk

The 24 Hour Museum's youth website.

Exhibitions Net – www.exhibitionsnet.com

Lists and links to museums and galleries across the UK – searchable by region.

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council – www.mla.gov.uk

National development agency for museums, libraries and archives in the UK.

Campaign for Learning through Museums and Galleries – www.clmg.org.uk

Organisation supporting the role of museums in learning. Focuses on specific learning areas, for example, how museums can support mental health, cultural awareness and identity.

Inspiring Learning for All – www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk

A great resource for museum, library and archive services to assess their impact and improve their services for learning.

Group for Education in Museums (GEM) – www.gem.org.uk

A national membership organisation promoting the importance of learning through museums and galleries.

Key reports

Sharing the learning, MLA South West Hub Museum Education Programme Delivery Plan 2004–2006:

www.mlasouthwest.org.uk/docs/Sharing%20the%20Learning.pdf

Inspiration aspiration partnership – arts, cultural organisations and schools working together Daisi (Devon Arts in Schools Initiative), March 2007:

www.daisi.org.uk

Learning with digital technologies in museums, science centres and galleries

Roy Hawkey, King's College, London for FutureLab, September 2004:

www.futurelab.org.uk/resources/publications_reports_articles

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This Extra Time Museums Mini Guide is one of a series of **free** guides to setting up and running study support clubs in and around your school:

Engineering

History

Libraries

Magazines

Modern foreign languages

Science

Sport and maths.

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