

# Reading a Difference

the impact of adult lending books  
on Generic Learning Outcomes.





Reading a Difference; an initial exploration in assessing the impact of adult lending books on Generic Learning Outcomes.

Reading a difference

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# Reading a Difference

## Aims

This study aimed to use a novel survey process to investigate the Generic Learning Outcomes obtained by a sample of library users from books borrowed from public libraries in the South West of England to inform future policy and research decisions of the South West Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

## 1. Introduction

This report outlines findings from the 'Reading A Difference' study initiated by Colin Bray at Exeter Central Library, Devon County Council, in the first half of 2006. The aim of this study was to create and disseminate a learning outcome assessment tool for possible use by all public library authorities in the South West of England. This report will go forward to the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the Read South West library reading development group. Part of this work involved the development of a simple survey for use in public lending libraries. The main tasks set were:

-  To coordinate regional data collection and sharing
-  To revise and design a standard survey for use by each library authority in the South West
-  To revise and design the data and collection tools for translation of Generic Learning Outcomes into quantitative and qualitative data
-  To plan for logistical issues involved
-  To write training aides on the use of the survey tool
-  To analyse the regional results and produce a report on the impact of the study

## 2. Background

More people in England go to their local library than to either cinemas or football grounds. Libraries are a valuable public institution offering a wide range of functions and services to the community, including provision for formal and informal learning (DCMS 2003). Learning plays a vital part in the governments Shared Priorities, and a key role in the Museum, Library and Archive Councils Library Impact Measures which seek to measure effectiveness with regard to:

-  Economic vitality
-  Healthier communities
-  Quality of life
-  Raising standards across schools
-  Safer and stronger communities

The book lending function of libraries is still seen as a core function of libraries by the public, while the role of libraries has broadened in recent years. Libraries are expected to provide increasing amounts of formal learning and other organised work, such as reading groups. Such 'formal' activities have been considered relatively straightforward in terms of service measurement. However, the sheer volume of book loans and difficulty of measuring their outcomes means that they are an untapped source of information on the impact

of libraries on individuals and their communities. In exploring informal learning opportunities the library services involved in this survey could start to explore ways of broadening the range of people who use the library service and create new learning opportunities in line with current policies (DCMS 2003, MLA 2006). Informal learning in libraries has been rarely if ever researched. During 2005, Colin Bray, Lending Librarian with Devon Libraries produced a 'Quick Questionnaire' based on the Museums Libraries and Archives Council 'Generic Learning Outcomes' in an attempt to do so. The initial survey asked the following five key questions;

Did this book...

1. Give you entertainment and /or inspiration?
2. Increase your understanding?
3. Help develop your skills?
4. Assist you in managing your life?
5. Change the way you feel about the world?

The initial survey also asked for thoughts on the book, thoughts on the library stock and thoughts on library services. This survey was circulated by inserting questionnaires into books being taken out on loan in March 2005. A subsequent report "Making a Difference – stock evaluation exercise at Exeter Central Library" was produced following 181 returns from 1000 questionnaires sent out. The numerical findings from the first survey are presented in Table 1.

Following the survey in March 2005 and high levels of professional interest in the concept, it was decided that the survey could be expanded to cover other library authorities in the South West, and a further analysis of results carried out. Funding from the South West Museums Libraries and Archives Council (SWMLAC) was made available for the further work to be carried out, and several library services in the South West volunteered to take part. The funding from SWMLAC was matched by printing costs and data entry costs in each participating authority. The level of involvement from each authority varied as detailed in Appendix B. In order to carry out the survey, Devon County Council's Corporate Consultation Service were asked to compile and execute the survey for participating libraries. A number of changes were suggested to the original survey and alterations made in liaison between the Consultation Service, Colin Bray as project coordinator, and the participating libraries in line with the original survey design and aims.

The following report outlines the regional results of the 'Reading a Difference' survey carried out at various libraries across the South West in 2006, and some of the initial analysis of results. Academic advice was provided to Colin Bray from Dr Christine Urquhart during the reporting phase and further liaison made with the Museums Libraries and Archives Council. An attempt has been made in Section 8 to apply this project to the 'Healthier Communities' priority for impact measurement.

**Summary of results from the original 'Making a Difference – Stock Evaluation'  
report, Exeter Central Library – March 2005**

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	n°
Did the book...						
Give you entertainment and/or inspiration?	26	34	24	4	8	176
Increase your understanding?	33	31	22	6	2	169
Help develop your skills?	15	16	30	16	10	163
Assist you in managing your life?	7	8	29	9	13	123
Change the way you feel about the world?	8	18	28	7	9	129

Table 1

### 3. Methodology

This is not a full methodology, due to time constraints on, and history of the project. A full, or even partial, literature search was not possible. Much of the methodology was methods driven due to the historicity of the project. The aim was to develop Colin Bray's initial work and keep within the nature of the study using the original questionnaire as the basis. A very discursive review of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council learning outcomes and some of the surrounding theory suggested that more than one question could be included under each main learning outcome as set out by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council.

#### 3.1 Learning and learning outcomes

This project developed an existing survey specifically aimed at gaining information on borrowers' learning experiences through the books they borrowed. It was not aimed to look at the general learning experience of the library as a whole, though the survey was also used to pick up customer comments on general service issues. The work was based around a specific limited set of questions developed around the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's 'Generic Learning Outcomes' (MLA 2006). In terms of learning, we are looking at the term in the broadest sense, including both informal and formal learning; it was for this reason we specifically talk about 'learning', rather than 'education' (McNicol and Dalton 2003). In fact we are taken one step further in that the term 'learning' assumes student-led rather than teacher-led learning, as we assume that the learning may not even be a fully conscious or deliberate process when entering the library. However, self-led learning is arguably based around formal education:

“As schooling increased in duration, traditional orientations, ways of thinking and lifestyles are recast and displaced by universalistic forms of learning and teaching, as well as by universalistic forms of knowledge and language...education makes possible at least a certain degree of self discovery and reflection.” (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 2002)

In general terms we can consider a definition of learning to be:

“Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.” (Kolb 1984, p38)






Kolb argues that the learning, or knowing, process requires the individual to grasp a representation of experience and a transformation of that representation; that there must be something transformed, some state or experience being acted upon (Kolb 1984). In the broadest sense, learning processes are going on all the time people are awake, if not all the time. What we are interested in are what processes occur when a reader borrows a book from a lending library. With Kolb's work, and others, there appears to be an

assumption of formal learning processes that may, or may not be present in the public library. Perhaps another useful, perhaps more tangible concept is that of Gangé's learning outcomes:

“Learning is best conceived as a series of processes, internal to the individual, that transform individual environment into forms of information leading to long term memory states or learning outcomes.” (Gangé 1977, p244)

Learning outcomes can be categorised in a number of ways, some practical, e.g. skills, others theoretical, e.g. attitudes. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council uses the following general learning outcomes (GLO);






#### Learning Outcomes:

-  Knowledge and understanding
-  Activity behaviour and progression
-  Enjoyment inspiration creativity
-  Attitudes and values
-  Skills

Assessing learning outcomes for library users, as opposed to students at a school or college, is problematic. Libraries, especially public libraries, do not offer formal qualifications, nor have predetermined numbers of students to assess on a set course (Rabine 2000). In public libraries librarians are not necessarily paid nor qualified to 'teach' library users in the use of library materials, and could not be expected to specialise in the spectrum of subjects covered in the typical public library, and the skills of library users vary greatly. Library users also may not see, or wish to perceive, themselves as learners when approaching their book. The public library user can range from the in-depth researcher, someone picking up the latest paperback novel, or the casual reader keeping warm and dry. It may then be problematic to present concepts of 'learning outcomes' to borrowers in a questionnaire. In a previous study it was found that for non-fiction books just over a quarter of readers were borrowing the book for personal learning or study (Timperley and Spiller 1999), a lower fraction for study or learning would be expected for fiction books. Borrowers may not relate their reading experience to a survey on 'learning'. The internality of the learning process and the unpredictability of the borrowers' reasons for borrowing are understandably difficult:

Just exactly what goes on in the moment of textual encounter, of course, remains something of a black box. The altogether mysterious performance of reading and its relationship to the making and remaking of meaning is hard to elucidate.” (Livingstone 2005, p393)

Arguably knowledge is produced in, and influenced by, spaces of 'textual encounter' such as public lending libraries (Livingstone 2005). Moving on to look at the survey, we will briefly look at the broader outcomes underpinning the library experience:

-  People enjoy themselves and are enriched and inspired by the experience
-  People use the services and facilities to develop their knowledge and understanding
-  People develop skills as a result of using libraries
-  People become more self-confident, questioning, motivated and open to other's perspectives
-  People decide to do something different in their lives (MLA 2006)

As stated earlier, this study is underpinned by a survey process. Survey techniques allow for large quantities of data to be collected relatively easily and inexpensively compared to other methods, though they are limited in the scope, and participants are self-selecting and often tend to be older participants. The personal background of respondents may influence the response, and respondents may also interpret the terms used in the survey differently (Bryman 2004). No demographic data was collected with the survey, as the questionnaire was book, not participant-specific and space-limited due to the requirement to keep to one sheet of A4 and maintain readability. General conclusions could not be drawn regarding overall representation, as multiple responses were possible, with each questionnaire answered in relation to the book and potentially more than one form filled in by any given reader – although survey guidelines limited the number of surveys at two for each individual. The principal drawback with not including demographic data is the inability to consider issues of gender differences, or social exclusion, though the latter particularly is better dealt with using other methods. Issues such as social capital are not dealt with in this study, though are important factors for consideration in follow-ups to this study. Social capital is fundamentally the resources linked to a network, such as a library, where each ‘member’ is provided with the backing of the collectively-owned capital (Bourdieu 1986). In relation to a public library the collectively-owned capital is almost literally owned by everyone within, for example the County, but still requires a special ‘membership’ (library card) to borrow books and associated, often intimidating, boundaries to enter the library, hence access to the capital, in this case ‘learning’. The main aim of this study was to determine the learning outcomes associated with books while also gaining other information on the borrowing experience.

In relation to the terminology, a set of questions covering all the learning outcome subheadings was considered inappropriate for the type of questionnaire proposed because the specific aim was to keep it simple for readers to fill in. A detailed set of questions may have alienated a number of readers due to complexity, and more suited to another method. The following key questions were decided upon to expand the initial set of questions:

#### Learning Outcomes, key questions, did the book...:

##### Knowledge and understanding

- Provide you with insight?
- Help you learn new facts?

##### Skills

- Help develop your skills?

##### Attitudes and values

- Challenge your attitudes?
- Change your opinions?

##### Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity

- Entertain you?
- Motivate or inspire you?

##### Activity behaviour and progression

- Change your daily life?
- Benefit you personally?

There was no time to test the questions with a focus group or pilot a questionnaire so the wording was more in line with the Learning Outcomes than with readers’ expectation of output. It was accepted that, for example, readers of fiction may not need to equate reading a novel with learning new skills (as quite literally ‘physical’ skills). However, it was considered important to try to encompass as much of the libraries’ book stock as possible, hence dealing with fiction and non-fiction or factual works to gauge the type of responses that are made from each. Fiction readers also made many interesting comments about library services and stock in general.

In the original survey the book titles were requested on the survey forms; although this may provide further information the decision not to include them was three-fold. Firstly, it was not expected that enough data would be collected to allow for general conclusions to be drawn about any specific work or author, and that this type of information would not be easily amalgamated into any specific category. Secondly, asking for the

title would require the reader to write the title in, which would increase the time taken to fill in the survey, and may be off-putting because of this. Additionally, some may see that their questionnaire could be traced through title input against lending. Finally, even if readers input the title, it may not be easily legible, nor accurately written or input, and would add considerably to data input time of staff inputting forms. Primarily, the data would not be analysed by specific titles, as it was the Generic Learning Outcomes that were the interest of this study. Staff input time was also an important consideration, as it was down to local library staff to input the data. In relation to non-fiction works, the first three digits of the Dewey Classification System would allow for some generic explorations, depending on quantity of data (Dewey numbers for biographies may have been excluded in data input if they started B/920 as the system was based around numeric input). A particular request was made for analysis of comments from readers who had borrowed health-related books.

Supplementary questions were developed around the learning and library experience to further inform library staff of accessing and using the book stock, and are subject to another report. These were left open to enable the public to make suggestions for the development of library stock and services.

#### **4. Method**

The new 'Quick Questionnaire' (Appendix A) developed above was designed to fit onto one sheet of A4 and electronically circulated to participating libraries for them to print out the required number of copies for their services. Questionnaires were placed into books, in front of the date slip, as they were lent out to adult borrowers. Completed questionnaires could either be returned directly with the book or, in some libraries, placed in a box at the issuing desk when returning the book. Libraries were instructed to check that the first three digits of the Dewey Number were correctly entered for non-fiction books where appropriate. Data from returned forms was then coded, and entered into an online form, with a unique number and library code being assigned to each form for later checking. Each forms data was then sent electronically via e-mail and collated in a database for the final analysis. Final analysis would take a number of approaches; firstly, to take a general look at responses both numeric and open questions. Secondly, depending on time available, a consideration of possible theoretical perspectives of the data provided and influences for future work, and finally to consider implications for the library services involved. Each participating library service would be provided with their raw data for their service to analyse as they wished. Data for this report was analysed collectively to produce generic outcomes, and not to pinpoint any particular service or library. Survey forms were sent out at the beginning of May; the official closing date for forms to be returned for input was the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, though data was input up to the end of July 2006.

## Results

### 5. General responses for closed questions

The following chapters present results collated from the Quick Questionnaires described previously.

#### 5.1 Responses from participating libraries - all

**Number of responses from participating libraries by authority**

Local authority	n°	% of total responses	% response for library
Bath & North East Somerset	47	0.9	?
Devon County Council	2005	37.3	24
Plymouth City Council	168	3.1	17
Somerset County Council	1215	22.6	23
South Gloucestershire Council	875	16.3	21
Wiltshire County Council	1069	19.9	20
Total	5379	100.0	-

Table 2

A very positive response (22%) was received from the main library services (Devon, Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire), with a slightly higher response rate than the predicted 20%. Plymouth City Library and Bath & North East Somerset were relatively small services. It was uncertain as to why the Bath & North East Somerset responses were much lower than any of the other services, as the response did not appear to be accounted for just by the size of service, or methods of distribution described. Overall between the services a total of over 5000 valid survey data was input before the closing date.

#### 5.2 Response by type of book - all

**Q1 Response by general type of book**

Type of book	n°	%
Fiction	3635	68.1
Non-Fiction	1706	31.9
Total	5341	100.0

Table 3

Fiction lending for the four main library services involved in the survey was approximately 66%, and non-fiction lending approximately 34% over the year. Responses were slightly higher for fiction at 68% and lower for non-fiction at 32%. In a survey on learning outcomes, a higher response in non-fiction may have been expected.

### 5.3 Responses by Dewey Number - all

#### Q2 Response by Dewey Number

Dewey n°	Class	n°	%
000	Generalities	94	5.9
100	Philosophy & Psychology	99	6.3
200	Religion	46	2.9
300	Social Sciences	145	9.2
400	Language	36	2.3
500	Natural Sciences & Mathematics	65	4.1
600	Technology (Applied Sciences)	305	19.3
700	The Arts	195	12.3
800	Literature & Rhetoric	28	1.8
900	Geography & History	571	36.0
Total		1584	100.0

Table 4

The high number of returns in the Geography & History classification, and particularly low number in Literature & Rhetoric as well as Languages was notable. As the specific number of loans for each classification was unknown, it could not be determined whether the percentage of returns for each classification differed significantly. A more detailed study of the 'Health' returns is included in this report as a case study. The greater the number of returns the more useful the results for Dewey numbers are. A larger study would further draw out learning outcomes for specific subject areas.

### 5.4 How much of the book read - all

#### Q3 How much of the book read

Type of book	Fiction %	Non-fiction %
I read all of the book	92.8	56.4
I read most of the book	2.7	21.3
I read some of the book	4.0	21.4
I didn't read the book	0.4	0.8
	n=3608	n=1683

Table 5

As would be expected, fewer non-fiction readers read all the book, at around 56%, while more than 92% of fiction readers read all the book. For both fiction and non-fiction below 1% did not read the book at all.

## 5.5 Learning outcomes for books - all

### Q4 Did this book...

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %	n°
<i>Knowledge/understanding</i>							
Provide you with insight?	13.8	36.6	17.1	7.3	2.4	22.8	4053
Help you learn new facts?	14.6	35.2	13.2	9.6	3.6	23.8	4076
<i>Skills</i>							
Help you develop skills?	4.2	10.7	23.0	16.9	5.2	40.1	3876
<i>Attitudes/values</i>							
Challenge your attitudes?	3.0	13.6	27.3	16.1	5.6	34.4	3860
Change your opinions?	2.1	11.1	25.7	19.8	6.2	35.0	3861
<i>Enjoyment/creativity</i>							
Entertain you?	40.8	40.6	7.3	3.2	2.2	6.0	5073
Motivate or inspire you?	8.8	19.9	28.5	9.3	3.0	30.5	3921
<i>Behaviour/progression</i>							
Change your daily life?	1.2	3.0	23.1	23.3	8.5	40.9	3864
Benefit you personally?	5.5	21.5	21.6	13.3	4.6	33.5	3903

Table 6

The majority of people said that the book they read increased their knowledge and understanding, both for providing with insight and helping them learn new facts. Entertainment value was the next most important, followed by personal benefit. The lowest scoring learning outcome was for changing their daily life. Less than 1% of responses (34) had ticked strongly disagreed for all the learning outcomes, of these over just over 87% were fiction responses, 93 responses ticked either disagreed, or strongly disagreed for all learning outcomes.

## 5.6 Did the reader get what they wanted from the book - all

### Q5 Did you get what you wanted form this book

	Fiction %	Non-fiction %
Yes, mostly	79.3	74.0
Yes, partly	12.8	20.5
No	6.5	4.5
Not sure	1.5	1.0
	n=3574	n=1678

Table 7

More than 92% of fiction readers, and 94% of non-fiction readers said they mostly or partly got what they wanted from the book, while less than 7% for fiction, and 5% for non-fiction said they did not get what they wanted. Around 1% said they were not sure.

## 5.7 Why book borrowed - all

### Q6 Did you borrow this book for

	Fiction %	Non-fiction %
Private study	1.3	26.9
Study for school/college/university	0.3	2.6
Sharing with, or teaching others	0.5	2.0
Personal enjoyment	96.6	57.5
Other	1.3	11.0
	n=3584	n=1662

Table 8

As would be expected more than 96% of non-fiction respondents said they took a book out for personal enjoyment, while around 57% of non-fiction respondents said they took the book out for personal enjoyment. Just under 27% of non-fiction respondents took the book out for private study, compared to just over 1% for fiction respondents.

## 5.8 Was it easy to find the book you wanted- all

### Q8 Was it easy to find the book you wanted

	Fiction %	Non-fiction %
Yes	93.4	90.5
No	6.6	9.5
	n=3477	n=1647

Table 9

More than 90% of respondents said they found it easy to find the book they wanted, with more non-fiction respondents (9.5%) saying it was not easy to find the book, than fiction (6.6%). This should not be translated directly to service, as non-fiction readers may have a very specific requirement, while fiction readers may be more open to what they would like to borrow.

## 5.9 Did the library have a good range of books... - all

### Q9 Did the library have a good range of books in the areas you were interested in

	Fiction %	Non-fiction %
Yes	90.2	73.4
No	9.8	26.6
	n=3484	n=1635

Table 10

More than 90% of fiction readers said the library had a good selection of books in the area they were looking in, whereas more than a quarter of non-fiction readers said the library did not have a good range of books in the area they were looking in.

## 6. Breakdowns and responses for non-fiction books

This section looks at the breakdowns of data for non-fiction books. A full break down of responses for questions 10 and 11 is in a separate report.

### 6.1 Responses by library - non-fiction books

**Number of responses for non-fiction books  
for participating libraries by authority**

Local authority	n°	% of total responses
Bath & North East Somerset	15	0.9
Devon County Council	656	38.5
Plymouth City Council	75	4.4
Somerset County Council	370	21.7
South Gloucestershire Council	223	13.1
Wiltshire County Council	367	21.5
Total	1706	100.0

Table 11

South Gloucestershire Council responses for non-fiction books were less than the proportion for all libraries while Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Wiltshire had slightly higher proportions.

### 6.2 Response by Dewey number – non-fiction

The greatest number of respondents from non-fiction with a Dewey Classification number was the 900 series, accounting for 36% of responses. The greatest number of responses in 910, Geography and Travel (202) responses, 940, History of Europe (173 responses), and 920, Biography (139 responses). A significant number of responses were for 000, Generalities and Computing (79 responses), followed by 610, Medical Sciences (75 responses), 640, Home Economics and Catering (75 responses), and 630, Agriculture (69 responses). A full breakdown of responses by Dewey Classification system can be found in the following table.

**Number of responses for non-fiction books  
by Dewey number**

D	f	D	f	D	f	D	f	D	f	D	f	D	f	D	f	D	f	D	f
1	29	101	1	200	1	301	2	404	1	500	5	600	2	700	1	808	3	900	1
2	2	103	3	201	3	305	5	410	1	501	1	610	5	701	1	813	1	905	1
3	2	106	1	211	1	306	8	413	1	508	1	611	2	704	1	820	2	906	1
4	15	108	1	220	6	307	2	414	1	509	1	612	3	709	3	821	14	909	3
5	23	109	1	232	1	308	1	417	1	510	1	613	25	712	4	823	2	910	28
6	7	110	2	234	1	310	1	420	3	512	1	615	7	720	3	827	1	911	1
9	1	111	2	242	4	311	1	421	4	516	1	616	29	727	1	828	3	914	124
10	1	112	3	245	1	320	2	422	1	519	1	617	1	728	4	851	1	915	14
11	2	113	1	248	2	324	1	423	3	520	2	618	3	730	1	882	1	916	11
18	2	123	1	251	1	326	1	424	2	522	1	621	7	731	1			917	12
28	1	128	1	266	1	327	3	425	1	523	5	622	1	736	1			918	3
42	1	130	19	270	2	328	1	428	4	526	1	623	10	737	1			919	9
44	2	131	16	271	1	329	1	432	1	529	1	624	5	738	1			920	125
70	3	133	7	272	1	330	1	435	2	530	3	625	9	739	1			921	2
74	1	140	14	282	1	331	1	438	3	537	2	629	16	741	5			929	12
82	1	150	54	283	2	332	2	439	1	546	1	630	8	742	1			930	1
94	1	152	1	287	1	333	2	442	1	550	3	631	1	743	1			932	3
		153	2	288	1	338	2	448	3	551	4	634	2	745	22			935	1
		154	2	291	4	339	1	489	1	553	1	635	45	746	17			936	4
		155	6	293	1	342	2	495	1	556	1	636	9	747	3			937	1
		158	8	294	6	345	3			560	1	639	4	749	1			938	2
		171	1	297	2	346	2			565	2	640	2	751	26			939	1
		192	1	299	2	353	1			567	1	641	48	752	1			940	90
		196	1			355	12			574	2	643	5	754	1			941	25
						356	2			575	1	646	7	758	1			942	44
						357	1			579	1	648	1	759	15			943	5
						358	5			581	1	649	12	771	3			944	4
						359	9			582	6	650	3	775	3			946	1
						362	4			590	1	652	2	778	3			947	2
						363	7			591	1	653	1	779	2			948	1
						364	11			595	1	657	4	780	4			949	1
						365	3			597	1	658	7	781	4			951	3
						369	1			598	5	666	1	784	1			953	1
						370	3			599	4	669	1	787	1			954	3
						372	1					681	2	788	4			955	1
						373	1					684	7	789	1			956	3
						374	1					686	1	791	11			958	2
						376	1					688	2	792	4			959	2
						378	1					690	2	793	5			960	1
						380	1					692	1	795	1			968	3
						381	3					693	1	796	22			970	1
						384	1					695	1	797	5			972	2
						385	14							798	3			973	4
						386	2											977	1
						387	3											978	4
						388	1											985	2
						389	1											994	2
						391	4											995	1
						395	3											997	1
						398	3											999	1

*D = Dewey number, f = frequency*

Table 12

### 6.3 How much of the book read – non-fiction

#### Q3 How much of the book read – non-fiction

Type of book	n°	%
I read all of the book	950	56.4
I read most of the book	359	21.3
I read some of the book	360	21.4
I didn't read the book	14	0.8
Total	1683	100.0

Table 13

Around 78% of respondents said they read all or most of the book, with 56.4% saying they read all of the book. A further 21.4% said they read some of the book, while 0.8%, or 14 people, said they didn't read the book.

### 6.4 Learning outcomes – non-fiction

#### Q4 Non-fiction - did this book...

Fiction	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %	n°
<i>Knowledge/understanding</i>							
Provide you with insight?	24.8	53.5	8.0	3.1	0.9	9.6	1462
Help you learn new facts?	29.2	52.7	6.6	2.9	1.7	6.9	1494
<i>Skills</i>							
Help you develop skills?	9.5	24.1	21.7	11.3	3.0	30.4	1357
<i>Attitudes/values</i>							
Challenge your attitudes?	4.5	17.0	30.7	15.0	4.1	28.6	1344
Change your opinions?	3.7	18.3	29.1	18.5	4.2	26.2	1349
<i>Enjoyment/creativity</i>							
Entertain you?	24.1	40.3	14.4	4.7	2.4	14.1	1517
Motivate or inspire you?	15.7	35.0	23.4	5.6	2.1	18.1	1386
<i>Behaviour/progression</i>							
Change your daily life?	2.0	6.3	26.6	22.1	7.5	35.6	1340
Benefit you personally?	9.7	35.3	19.4	9.0	2.6	24.1	1371

Table 14

Around 80% of responses agreed that they had gained knowledge and understanding from the book they borrowed, 81.9% agreed the book had helped them to learn new facts, while 78.3% agreed the book provided them with insight. More than two thirds (64.4%) of responses said they gained entertainment from the book, while under a half (45%) said the book benefited them personally. A third (33.6%) said the book helped them develop their skills, while around a fifth agreed the book changed their opinions (22%) or challenged their attitudes (21.5%). The lowest score was for change in daily life, where less than a tenth (8.3%) agreed that the book they borrowed changed their daily life.

## 6.5 *Did the reader get what they wanted from this book – non-fiction*

### Q5 Did you get what you wanted from this book

	n°	%
Yes, mostly	1242	74.0
Yes, partly	344	20.5
No	76	4.5
Not sure	16	1.0
	1678	100.0

Table 15

Almost 95% of responses said they got mostly or partly what they wanted from the book borrowed, with 74% saying they mostly got what they wanted from the book.

## 6.6 *Why book borrowed - non-fiction*

### Q6 Did you borrow this book for

	n°	%
Private study	447	26.9
Study for school/college/university	44	2.6
Sharing with, or teaching others	34	2.0
Personal enjoyment	955	57.5
Other	182	11.0
	1662	100.0

Table 16

More than a quarter of responses said the book they borrowed was for private study (26.9%), while the majority said the book was for personal enjoyment (57.5%). A significant proportion, 11% said 'other', though where there is a statement in the 'other' box, it would be possible to recode many of these into the main categories.

## 6.7 *Q7 Comments on the book*

This section looks generally at the comments from those who positively indicated that the book had provided them with a direct learning outcome, to start evidencing and exploring the outcomes.

### 6.7.1 *Knowledge and understanding*

#### 6.7.1.1 *Provide you with insight*

"A good insight into the suffragette movement and the hardship and wonderful work done by the VADs [Voluntary Aid Detachments] in the Great War."

"...insight into just how difficult it can be for a child with social learning difficulties to cope and function when they find it difficult to understand others..."

On the whole where a reader mentioned insight, it was directly in relation to the subject matter of the book. For others, the insight provided was in relation to the author of the work itself: "...more insight into the author than...", or "...gave me an insight into Gertrude Jekyll's own writing...". Other insight was more profound: "How small mankind is in the face of nature".

#### 6.7.1.2 *Help you learn new facts*

"...it was informative...I think I have absorbed quite a lot even though I am in my 80<sup>th</sup> year..."

"I learnt a lot about the war years and Judaism from it."

From a broad range of categories, those revealing that they had learnt new facts used the term 'informative' most often. It is in terms of information that other comments were also made: "...as a confused beginner, a great deal of helpful, easy to understand information", "...helpful information for people at all levels, inspired me to want to get started..."

#### 6.7.2 *Skills*

##### 6.7.2.1 *Help you develop skills*

"Helped me nurse myself back to normal after coming out of hospital..."

Although many of the skills mentioned were practical, there were examples of other important skills such as communication: "The book...is helpful if you are looking for something for, someone whose English is not their first language". Most of the skills mentioned in the 'further comments' section related to practical work such as art, carpentry or DIY, with other topics including sporting skills.

##### 6.7.2.2 *Challenge your attitudes*

"An enlightening, if often uncomfortable read...ultimately underlining the unrelenting bleakness of women's lives, especially Afghanistan."

"This book has made me think about art in a way I have never considered before..."

As well as the above, previous comments such as: "How small mankind is in the face of nature", "If everyone read this book it could change the world" could demonstrate challenges to attitudes.

#### 6.7.3 *Enjoyment inspiration and creativity*

##### 6.7.3.1 *Entertain you*

"It's a laugh all the way through, great for anyone in the business of buying and selling..."

"...A book to enjoy, but not buy..."

"A good fun look at science of the universe."

In terms of entertainment, terms around ‘enjoyment’ or ‘interest’ appeared as key words: “I enjoyed reading this book”, “...very interesting from an historical point of view”. Others found the works enthralling or entertaining.

### 6.7.3.2 *Motivate or inspire you*

“This book inspired me to keep believing in my goals in life.”

“...I found it inspirational for an art project.”

Readers used texts for artistic inspiration, either unrelated works like the quote above looking at a book on natural history, or more directly using books on art techniques or DIY projects. Other examples included a book on swimming motivating a reader to improve their technique, or a recipe book to try out new food. Others were inspired to visit, or even in one case actually move to an area after reading a particular book. Sometimes the motivation was to purchase a work after reading the libraries’ copy of a work, or to read a critical work on a particular writer, or read more on the subject. The first quote is an example of works providing inspiration, another “...story of courage, leadership and heroism is told with such understatement as to be an inspiration in itself.”

## 6.8 *Q7 Comments on non-fiction books for those who did not agree with learning outcome statements*

The section looks generally at the comments, from those who indicated that the non-fiction book had not provided them with a direct learning outcome, either disagreeing with statements or saying they don’t know. There were fewer statements appearing with these categories than the previous section.

### 6.8.1 *Knowledge and understanding*

“...account of gypsy life, gave me a new understanding.”

“A few interesting facts about the similarities between man and the great apes...”

Although there were not many explicit statements of insight, some readers did make comments such as; “Author does not seem to be an aviator...some technical details seem misunderstood.” The reader has provided their own insight as to why they think there is a, perceived, deficiency in the work. Where ‘negative’ comments appeared on the book, in that it did not meet the readers’ needs, the readers often provided insight into why they did not like the book. There were few comments relating to learning outcomes and facts, though one is worth highlighting: “This is a book of facts, dates and values...”.

### 6.8.2 *Skills*

“...It’s hard to learn splicing from a book and much easier to have someone show you”

Apart from the above comment, no other comment in this section could be found to directly relate to skills.

### 6.8.3 *Attitudes and values*

“...extremely controversial account...”

Other comments suggested that the book was not challenging the reader: “rather lightweight”, or not the book they wanted: “turned out to be no use”. However, comments such as “thought-provoking” or “very revealing” were made.

**6.8.4 *Enjoyment inspiration and creativity***

“Very interesting from a historical point of view...”

A number of comments said the book was interesting, good, or a pleasure to read. Other comments stated that the book did not provide what the reader had wanted, or that the book was not well written.

**6.8.5 *Activity behaviour and progression***

“The digital camera is now not a mystery to me, ...I will be able to produce better photographs.”

“The book itself was poorly written, but told me what I wanted to know.”

The comments relating to changes in daily life appeared in conjunction with progression, statements suggesting that they had learnt a skill; to use a database, to paint differently, to approach books, art, or subjects, in a different way. Although a number of comments said the book did not meet the readers requirements, a number of comments suggested that the book had benefited the reader “...enough to satisfy an enquiring mind...”, “...very interesting..”.

**6.9 *Was it easy to find the book you wanted – non-fiction***

**Q8 Was it easy to find the book you wanted – non-fiction**

	n°	%
Yes	1490	90.5
No	17	9.5
	1647	100.0

Table 17

The majority, 90.5%, of responses said that it was easy to find the book they wanted in the library.

**6.10 *Did the library have a good range of books... – non-fiction***

**Q9 Did the library have a good range of books in the areas you were interested in**

	n°	%
Yes	1200	73.4
No	435	26.6
	1635	100.0

Table 18

Almost three quarters (73.4%) of responses said that the library had a good range of books in the areas they were interested in.

## 7. Breakdowns and responses for fiction books

Responses for questions ten and eleven in relation to service are in a separate report, an exploration of learning outcomes for some comments appears in section 9. This section provides more detail on the breakdown of responses for fiction books.

### 7.1 Responses by library - fiction books

**Number of responses for fiction books for participating libraries by authority**

Local authority	n°	% of total responses
Bath & North East Somerset	32	0.9
Devon County Council	1338	36.8
Plymouth City Council	92	2.5
Somerset County Council	833	22.9
South Gloucestershire Council	644	17.7
Wiltshire County Council	696	19.1
Total	3635	100.0

Table 19

The proportion of responses for each library for fiction was similar to that for responses for all books. Devon County Council libraries accounted for more than a third of responses for fiction, with the other three main libraries each accounting for around a fifth.

### 7.2 How much of the book read – fiction books

**Q3 How much of the book read - fiction**

Type of book	n°	%
I read all of the book	3350	92.8
I read most of the book	97	2.7
I read some of the book	146	4.0
I didn't read the book	15	0.4
Total	3608	100.0

Table 20

95.5% of fiction respondents said they read all or most of the book, with 92.8% saying they read all of the book. Only 15 people, 0.4% said they did not read the book at all. Of those saying they read some of the book where a comment was made (40) all suggested that they stopped reading the book due to the nature of the book.

### 7.3 Learning outcomes for books – fiction books

#### Q4 Fiction - did this book...

Fiction	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %	n°
<i>Knowledge/understanding</i>							
Provide you with insight?	8	27	22	10	3	30	2570
Help you learn new facts?	6	25	17	14	5	34	2562
<i>Skills</i>							
Help you develop skills?	1	3	24	20	6	45	2501
<i>Attitudes/values</i>							
Challenge your attitudes?	2	12	25	17	6	38	2498
Change your opinions?	1	7	24	21	7	40	2494
<i>Enjoyment/creativity</i>							
Entertain you?	48	41	4	2	2	3	3527
Motivate or inspire you?	5	12	31	11	3	37	2516
<i>Behaviour/progression</i>							
Change your daily life?	1	1	21	24	9	44	2505
Benefit you personally?	3	14	23	16	6	39	2513

Table 21

Almost 90% of fiction respondents said that they felt the work entertained them, around a third felt that they had gained knowledge or understanding, with 35% agreeing that the book they read had provided them with insight, and 31% agreeing that it had helped them to learn new facts. The lowest score for fiction respondents was for whether the book had changed their daily life, where only 2% agreed, and only 4% felt it had helped develop their skills.

### 7.4 Did the reader get what they wanted from the book - fiction

#### Q5 Did you get what you wanted from this book

	n°	%
Yes, mostly	2833	79.3
Yes, partly	456	12.8
No	233	6.5
Not sure	52	1.5
	3574	100.0

Table 22

More than 92% of fiction readers said they mostly or partly got what they wanted from the book, with almost 80% saying they mostly got what they wanted. 6.5%, or 233 respondents, said they did not get what they wanted from the book.

## 7.5 *Did you borrow this book for - fiction*

### Q6 Did you borrow this book for

	n°	%
Private study	47	1.3
Study for school/college/university	11	0.3
Sharing with, or teaching others	17	0.5
Personal enjoyment	3461	96.6
Other	48	1.3
	3584	100.0

Table 23

96.6% of fiction respondents said they borrowed the book for personal enjoyment, while 1.3 said they borrowed it for private study, and 0.3 for study at school, college or university.

## 7.6 *Q7 Comments on the book for those that agreed with learning outcome statements*

The section looks generally at the comments, from those who positively indicated that the book had provided them with a direct learning outcome, to start evidencing and exploring the outcomes.

### 7.6.1 *Knowledge and understanding*

#### 7.6.1.1 *Provide you with insight*

“...It offered a fascinating insight with the clash of cultures in the 50s...”

“I found two of the short stories insightful, and they made me aware of different aspects of well known events.”

Of those who said that the fiction book provided them with insight, the majority writing related comments appeared to be in relation to specific historical events; for example giving a “clearer picture” of occupation of China, or “enlightening” in relation to post partition Hindu and Muslim relations, or “illuminating” in relation to the Cold War. More abstract insight included the philosophical content of science fiction writing, or insight into dysfunctional families.

#### 7.6.1.2 *Help you learn new facts*

“I know this is really fiction, but it was jam-packed full of facts – wonderfully researched...”

“...you learn some history, as well as entertainment.”

It was immediately apparent that from those books where readers mentioned facts, that the majority of them were historical novels. Additionally, readers appeared to appreciate when there was evidence of the authors carrying out research for their work: “...makes you appreciate the work involved in the research...”. Combining historical fact with fiction enabled readers to learn more about history, or almost a bonus to learn something as well as being entertained. Other books opened up queries on facts that the reader hadn't previously queried.

## 7.6.2 Skills

### 7.6.2.1 Help you develop skills

“It is one of those easy-going books which teaches you good manners and respect...”

Very little was revealed in relation to developing skills within the comments for those saying the book had helped them develop skills, though some made comments like the above.

## 7.6.3 Attitudes and values

### 7.6.3.1 Challenge your attitudes

“Prior to reading this book, I had not been aware that prejudice lay at [its] heart.”

Few who highlighted that the book had challenged their attitudes revealed this in their comments, though terms such as “thought-provoking” or “eye-opening” were made.

## 7.6.4 Enjoyment inspiration and creativity

### 7.6.4.1 Entertain you

“A brilliant read, very entertaining and each character is memorable.”

“...very witty and delightfully entertaining author...it was difficult to put this book down.”

“Just a relaxing, entertaining read.”

The majority of fiction readers said, perhaps not surprisingly, that the books entertained them. Many said they found the book enjoyable in some way, while others mentioned ‘escapism’, ‘relaxation’, or ‘diversion’ or ‘time-filler’.

### 7.6.4.2 Motivate or inspire you

“...the prose is so beautifully structured that it demands to be read slowly, to be savoured.”

“...it really inspired me to consider different religions and racism in more depth.”

Within the fiction comments, most of the inspiration or motivation was internalised within the book. Readers comments were on their motivation to read the book in question: “a compelling read”, “inspiring”, “wonderful prose”, while a few found the story had motivated them to learn more on issues or subjects in the book: “...will certainly want to find out more”, or find out more on religions as described in the quote above. A couple of comments were around inspiration to others: “...should be read in schools to inspire children to have an interest in history”.

## 7.6.5 *Activity behaviour and progression*

### 7.6.5.1 *Change your daily life*

“Science fiction is entertainment, but some books will help change or form new concepts.”

Apart from the comment above, the general comments around fiction books did not immediately reveal explicit changes in daily life, though the insight comments provided suggest they may influence peoples opinions and therefore actions. Other comments by those saying that the book changed their life included “The book is quite informative and eye-opening”; others suggested a life change due to the actual act of reading as a diversionary behaviour from personal problems or other life events: “This book is too interesting...keeps my mind and brain active with no time for personal problems”.

### 7.6.5.2 *Benefit you personally*

The comments in this section appeared to be more in terms of entertainment, as below.

## 7.7 ***Q7 Comments on the book for those who did not agree with learning outcome statements***

The section looks generally at the comments from those who indicated that the book had not provided them with a direct learning outcome, either disagreeing with statements or saying they didn't know.

### 7.7.1 *General comments*

Immediately apparent from the comments from those who did not agree with statements was that a significant proportion did not like the book they had read:

“This is most unusual, I don't remember abandoning a book before.”

“Was disappointed and disgusted by this book – does modern literature need bad language...”

“First few chapters failed to gain my attention.”

In danger of being overly simplistic, but the main thing learnt, was that they did not like that author, genre or style: “Others may enjoy this book - I just found it did not live up to my expectations from reviews I had read. It is only personal taste”. Of those respondents who disagreed with all the learning outcome statements, all had comments attached that suggested strongly that they did not like the book.

Others appeared to look to the books purely for diversion, for entertainment: “Did just what I wanted it to...a good diversion when you are in pain.”

There also appeared to be a higher number of general comments on the library stock or other comments not directly related to the book for those who did not agree that they had a direct learning outcome.

### 7.7.2 *Knowledge and understanding*

“I am interested in the history of life in...I was disappointed in this book, I found it irritating...”

“Gave insight into the conditions faced by soldiers in the First World War.”

“Readable, but rather too factual in parts...”

A few comments related explicitly to insight, by those who did not agree with the learning outcome statements. However, with the negative statements, there were statements of insight in relation to the book and reader themselves: “...I selected in haste... this book lacks plot, logical progression...”. We can see that the reader has gained not only insight into the structure of the book and their reason for rejecting it, but a construction on explaining why they had selected such a book in the first place. Other comments also suggested a reasoning process based on insight as to why they felt they had not gained anything from the novel. As these books were fiction, there were a few comments stating that the readers did not expect to get anything from them, other than entertainment: “I generally borrow the books from the library for relaxation...”, “This book was for light entertainment, I did not expect to learn anything useful from it!”.

### 7.7.3 Skills

“I am beginning to appreciate the varying styles of the fictional narratives that I read...”

Perhaps not surprisingly, apart from the comment above, not many comments explicitly related to skills from those who said they had not gained any in the learning outcome comments.

### 7.7.4 Attitudes and values

“...characters you cared about and a subject matter that makes you think about the direction the world is heading in.”

In relation to opinions, a number of comments appeared to indicate a change of opinion relating to the author, particularly if the reader felt the book was not to the expected quality: “...sub-standard Wodehouse, Jeeves would not have given it his approval.”. The second heading quote above indicated a possible change of opinion, as did a few other quotes including: “...they made me aware of different aspects of well-known events.”.

### 7.7.5 Enjoyment inspiration and creativity

“Had to read the book without putting it down all day. No housework done...”

Of the positive comments from those saying they did not get motivation or inspiration, the comments related to direct enjoyment and motivation: “I really enjoyed this book, and would like very much to read others from the series.”, “I like history and crime, and all the mediaeval and Roman-based fictional crime books fulfil these interests.”, “I enjoyed it so much, my partner is now reading it...”.

### 7.7.6 Activity behaviour and progression

“From the beginning, I realised the thoughts expressed were nonsense, but persevered up to page 39, where my opinion did not change.”

“Fantastic read – women over 40 should all read it”.

Again, not many comments suggested much impact on the readers’ daily life. Of the comments that did, the impact appeared to confirm their position, rather than change it. For those readers who said they did not get

any personal benefit, a number said they got enjoyment from the book, used the book for stress relief or entertainment.

### 7.8 *Was it easy to find the book you wanted- fiction*

**Q8 Was it easy to find the book you wanted - fiction**

<b>Fiction</b>	<b>n°</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	3246	93.4
No	231	6.6
	3477	100.0

Table 24

93.4% of fiction respondents said they found it easy to find the book they wanted.

### 7.9 *Did the library have a good range of books... - fiction*

**Q9 Did the library have a good range of books in the areas you were interested in**

	<b>n°</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	3144	90.2
No	340	9.8
	3484	100.0

Table 25

Less than 10% of readers said the library did not have a good range of books in the area in which they were looking.

## 8. Breakdowns and responses for health-related books

Data was extracted for a set of health-related books using the first three numbers of the Dewey system.

### 8.1 Responses by Dewey Number

**Q2 Response by Dewey Number – health-related**

Dewey n°	Class	n°
155	Psychology (child)	6
158	Psychology (popular)	8
360s	Social problems and services	26
610s	Medical sciences	75
641	Nutrition	48
649	Parenting	12
Total		175

Table 26

The largest number of responses in this section were under Medical Sciences, the next highest Nutrition. It should be noted that as the first three numbers of the Dewey Classification system were used, the categories chosen may cover other areas. For example, under Nutrition some borrowers took these out just to get recipes, though others were looking for specific health-related recipes, such as for a gluten-free diet.

### 8.2 How much of the book read – health-related

**Q3 How much of the book read – health-related**

Type of book	n°	%
I read all of the book	78	44.8
I read most of the book	48	27.6
I read some of the book	44	25.3
I didn't read the book	4	2.3
Total	174	100.0

Table 27

Due to the lower number of responses in this section, direct comparison with previous sections cannot be made. A slightly lower proportion of readers read all of the book (44.8%), while more than half (52.9%) read most or some of the book.

### 8.3 Learning outcomes – health-related

#### Q4 Health related books - did this book...

Health related	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Neither %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know %	n°
<i>Knowledge/understanding</i>							
Provide you with insight?	31.8	23.5	5.7	2.5	0.0	6.4	157
Help you learn new facts?	28.2	54.5	7.1	1.9	0.6	7.7	156
<i>Skills</i>							
Help you develop skills?	12.7	42.0	24.0	6.0	2.0	13.3	150
<i>Attitudes/values</i>							
Challenge your attitudes?	8.8	25.7	30.4	12.2	1.4	21.6	148
Change your opinions?	8.1	21.6	33.8	18.2	2.7	15.5	148
<i>Enjoyment/creativity</i>							
Entertain you?	11.6	24.5	29.7	9.0	3.2	21.9	155
Motivate or inspire you?	22.1	40.9	20.1	5.4	0.0	11.4	149
<i>Behaviour/progression</i>							
Change your daily life?	8.1	19.5	34.9	18.1	2.7	16.8	149
Benefit you personally?	15.7	43.8	15.0	9.2	0.7	15.7	153

Table 28

For those responses on health-related books, the highest were again in knowledge and understanding, with 82.7% saying the book had helped them learn new facts, and 55.1% saying the book provided them with insight. 63% of responses said they agreed that the book motivated or inspired them, and 59.5% saying that it benefited them personally. The lowest score was for changes in daily life, 27.6% of respondents saying that the book changed their daily life.

### 8.4 Did the reader get what they wanted – health related

#### Q5 Did you get what you wanted from this book

	n°	%
Yes, mostly	117	68.4
Yes, partly	43	25.1
No	11	6.4
Not sure	0	0.0
		100.0

Table 29

93.5% of readers said they mostly or partly got what they wanted from the health-related book, with 68.4% saying that they mostly got what they wanted. 6.4%, 11 responses said they did not get what they wanted from the book.

### 8.5 Why book borrowed – health-related

#### Q6 Did you borrow this health-related book for

	n°	%
Private study	52	30.4
Study for school/college/university	8	4.7
Sharing with, or teaching others	11	6.4
Personal enjoyment	68	39.8
Other	32	18.7
	171	100.0

Table 30

Most responses, 39.8%, said they borrowed the book for personal enjoyment, while 35.1% said they used the book for study, with 30.4% using it for private study.

### 8.6 Was it easy to find the book – health-related

#### Q8 Was it easy to find the book you wanted – health-related

	n°	%
Yes	152	87.9
No	21	12.1
	173	100.0

Table 31

Again the majority 87.9%, said that it was easy to find the book they wanted.

### 8.7 Did the library have a good range of books... – health-related

#### Q9 Did the library have a good range of books in the areas you were interested in – health-related

	n°	%
Yes	132	76.7
No	40	23.3
	172	100.0

Table 32

Around three quarters (76.7%) said that the library had a good range of books in the area that they were interested in.

### 8.8 Q7 Comments on the book

This section looks generally at the comments from those who positively indicated that the book had provided them with a direct learning outcome in relation to health. There were only a few comments for those who felt they did not get any learning outcome from the books.

### 8.8.1 *Knowledge and understanding*

“To understand and research my illness.”

“Help dealing with my new baby...”

It was clear that a number of people used the libraries to gain knowledge and understanding of a variety of health issues, from general information on exercise to specific information on illnesses affecting the reader personally: “Insight into possible medical condition”.

### 8.8.2 *Skills*

“Improving my yoga skills”

“To find some fitness exercises for the over 80s”

Learning new skills ranged from learning new exercises or new diets (e.g. gluten-free), to the challenges of a new baby.

### 8.8.3 *Attitudes and values*

“...assist me understand my son who has learning difficulty.”

“An insight into deafness.”

Although most comments were not explicit, as the above, there is implied challenges to attitudes and values in learning about new perspectives: “Very eye opening”.

### 8.8.4 *Enjoyment inspiration and creativity*

“I work in this field, so found it very helpful and inspiring”

“Learn other techniques, consolidate and affirm what I already know.”

Explicit comments relating to enjoyment or entertainment were, as perhaps could be expected, largely absent in this area, though enjoyment and motivation could be derived from some of the activities already mentioned: “Learning how to play with and develop my child at home”.

### 8.8.5 *Activity behaviour and progression*

“To help me change my fast life, ...to slow down”

Apart from the comment above, the information sought appeared primarily to deal with changes that were already occurring within the readers’ lives.

## 9. Learning outcomes from all fiction comments

Dr Urquhart, The University of Wales Aberystwyth.

### 9.1 Bloom's taxonomy

In formal education, Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives (Bloom 1956) in the cognitive domain is frequently used to help assess the type of learning outcome that could be expected or which was achieved. The group led by Bloom produced other taxonomies of learning objectives, less used, but which might be applicable to the learning that could be taking place in the reading of fiction, and interaction with library services. Bloom's taxonomy of affective learning outcomes may be more applicable to the learning associated with emotional understanding of a situation or people. The outcome 'entertain you' seems insufficient to encompass all the types of engagement that may be taking place with fiction books, and fiction services. Many of the comments on the books indicated that readers were relating to the books they had read, indicating that they were critically reviewing the content and appraising them not just for themselves but for other readers as well. Other comments indicated that the books had 'affected' the readers in some way, and that they had understood a particular setting better. It may be useful to discriminate the types of affective learning outcome that may be associated with the entertainment gained from reading a book, particularly a fiction book.

### 9.2 Analysis of comments for affective learning outcomes

A random sample (10%) of the comments was examined, using Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives in the affective domain. The aim was to assess whether it might be possible to devise a more detailed set of learning outcomes that would better represent the range of learning outcomes indicated in the comments, and fully represent the learning associated with fiction books. The sampling included all three types of comments (Q7, Q10 & Q11), as respondents often did not restrict their comments to one aspect.

Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives in the affective domain covers appreciation, enthusiasm, motivations and attitudes. There are five major categories, going from the simplest (receiving) to the most complex (characterisation). These objectives were aimed at classroom learning at the time they were developed, and it may not be easy to transfer these ideas to individual reading, and open-ended comments made on a questionnaire to be completed by informal learners. However, Bloom's taxonomy for the cognitive domain has been used in a variety of learning situations, and the taxonomy for the affective domain seems a good starting point for assessing any difference made to the views or understanding of fiction books borrowed from the public library.

#### Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives in the affective domain

Category	Definition
Receiving phenomena	Awareness, willingness to hear, selected attention
Responding phenomena	Active participation, making suggestions (when requested, or voluntary)
Valuing	Accepting the worth of a thing, assuming some responsibility (commitment)
Organisation	Organises values into priorities, recognising inter-relationships, adapting behaviour to value system.
Characterisation	Having a value system that controls behaviour, showing internal consistency

Table 33

Many of the comments on the pages reviewed are not detailed enough to sort them into definitive categories although all, almost by definition, show some evidence of 'receiving' or 'responding' as the respondents have participated in the questionnaire survey and many have made suggestions. The following illustrates

examples drawn from the comments on the questionnaire of categories in the taxonomy. It is quite difficult to judge which category is the best fit sometimes, but generally the ‘valuing’ comments could be distinguished from the ‘responding’ comments by the degree to which the respondents showed awareness of some of the other reader groups served by the library service or some of the organisation issues.

### 9.3 *Receiving phenomena*

“Perfect selection for library stock. Not something I would buy for myself, but I’m really pleased I borrowed it and read it from the library.”

“Really makes you appreciate the work involved in the research let alone the writing of such a novel. A fascinating read.”

“A good idea to rotate stock between libraries.”

“I have enjoyed every Jodie Picoult book I have found in the library. I was introduced to her work by TV’s Richard & Judy programme. Unfortunately I am rarely lucky enough to find her works on the shelves – presumably they are popular and therefore regularly borrowed.”

“I found the story very moving and the insight into the reactions of the various characters absolutely believable.”

“I found this book very amusing. I think the conception of retirement homes abroad is very interesting.”

“This fiction book provided interesting and informative background about the lifestyle of the people and the climate conditions in Alaska.”

“This had potential to be a great fantasy novel. Unfortunately Kenyon lacks the ability to write a good sex scene and so creates farce where she intends erotica.”

“Thought the book would be pleasurable in its content but found it lacked pleasure and meaning for me. Made me ask the question why am I reading it? Which I suppose is a good question but did not make me feel any better or give me more than I have.”

### 9.4 *Responding phenomena*

“To provide information on books of a similar genre so if I like crime fiction, recommendations of the authors to look for.”

“Phillipa Gregory’s books should be read in schools to inspire children to have an interest in history.”

“Possibly the most inspiring and thought-provoking book in the library or at any rate in the 500s sections. More of Ervin Laszle’s books please.”

“Update books on issues which are continually developing, e.g. cancer.”

### 9.5 *Valuing*

“Sadder and wiser! I had thought the Challenger was the best battle tank we had produced. Not so it appears.”

“A few more latest best sellers wouldn’t go amiss. Being so near Cornwall – very poor selection about speaking and writing Cornish even though it’s of little use nowadays.”

“Try to find more books from Russian writers of the great patriotic war so as to at least try to give a more balanced approach from which we can form an opinion.”

“This is the first novel by Anna Smith and it shows a really good understanding of life in a poor community in the 1960s. I could imagine life like this in the early 1900s but was a little surprised and saddened to see it still going on.”

## 9.6 Organisation & Characterisation

No comments on organisation and characterisation were found. Out of the selection no comments seemed to fit into the higher level categories of organisation or characterisation, but this type of outcome would probably have to emerge from interviews or focus group work with readers. Identifying whether such outcomes had been achieved would probably need some discussion and reflection, and more detail about the previous knowledge and opinions of the readers.

## 9.7 Description of affective learning outcomes

With most taxonomies of learning objectives, there are associated lists of verbs that may be used to assess whether particular lists of verbs that may be used to assess whether particular objectives have been met. Looking through the comments that could be associated with ‘receiving’, ‘responding’ and ‘valuing’, the following verbs and phrases might characterise the learning associate with the affective domain.

### Receiving.

- Become more conscious about the life or lifestyle in a particular place or time.
- Interested me in unexpected ways.
- Could relate this to other books I have read and previous knowledge.
- Provided insights.

### Responding

- Make suggestions on improvements to the service.

### Valuing

- Make constructive suggestions on library services with awareness of the needs of particular groups.

For book borrowing the phrases associated with ‘receiving’ seem the most appropriate set of outcomes to use. The phrases associate with ‘responding’ and ‘valuing’ are possibly more appropriate for reading groups or similar consultation groups where participation is expected.

## 10. Discussion

Initially this study set out to execute a 'quick questionnaire' in libraries throughout the South West to assess learning outcomes through book lending. It was immediately apparent that, although a simple questionnaire could be set up, the concepts and theory behind those questionnaires was far from simple, straight forward, nor well established for the setting. Much literature on learning was based around formal education settings, while it appeared that much of the sources on learning in libraries was for libraries connected to universities and, again, related to formal education settings. Very few studies appeared in relation to informal learning connected with public libraries, though we accept some sources may have been missed due to the limited time scales. However, Dr Urquhart also suggested to Colin Bray that there were not many studies on informal learning, especially in relation to public libraries and learning outcomes. With the tight timescales a questionnaire was devised that would try to achieve an initial impression of learning outcomes, and the potential scope of such surveys, hopefully feeding into a larger study.

The responses received were on the whole positive and similar proportions for fiction and non-fiction received. In general almost all responses suggested that the reader got at least some form of learning outcome from the book borrowed, and the majority got what they wanted from the book. Where a learning outcome was not indicated this was often due to a failing in the book not meeting the need of the reader. The reader then felt they had not gained what they saw as a particular learning outcome, though in critiquing the book in the comments, the reader often revealed what we may categorise as a learning outcome. The learning outcomes were stronger for non-fiction books than for fiction books. For areas such as skills this is particularly understandable as, even with non-fiction books only, a certain portion of the stock deals directly with learning new skills, in areas such as woodwork, art, or cooking. Obviously with fiction, 'entertain' was the statement most agreed with, while other statements were perhaps surprisingly lower, such as 'motivate or inspire'. In part this may be due to an expectation not to gain learning outcomes from fiction items, though this may have been reflected in a lower number of returns for fiction books. Instead it appears likely that the terminology in some headings was not directly translatable by readers to fiction; this is perhaps borne out by the ability to find statements that could confirm the learning outcome position within the disagree statements, rather than disagreeing with the terms used. In developing an assessment tool the ability to quantify learning outcomes has been demonstrated to some degree, but the statements used should be refined through the use of 'focus groups', or similar, and piloting such that they are more in keeping with the language borrowers relate to.

The placing of questionnaires within books was successful in getting the questionnaires circulated for most of the libraries. It was also a cost-efficient method of achieving a 'mass' result from library borrowers. However, the data provided is ad hoc and, although can be generalised to assess levels of learning outcomes in relation to lending, we cannot develop a statistically representative sample of learning outcomes in relation to people using the library. For future studies a way of creating a random sample for borrowers should be explored using the user database to ensure only one questionnaire goes to each person sampled; this would then provide important data on gender, age or other differences that may occur for certain groups of borrowers. It must also be remembered that the learning outcomes are not wholly book dependent, particularly in an information technology age and it is important to look at ways of capturing the learning outcome of the library experience as a whole for all users (and to determine how to attract non-users).

The other area that appeared, to a non-expert, to be lacking was a discourse around learning within public libraries. Of particular interest to the libraries involved was aspects of health-related books, which could be explored, for example, from a Foucauldian perspective through works such as 'The birth of the clinic', or 'A history of sexuality'. We of course do not only want to measure levels of, but measure for, learning in libraries; assessing learning outcomes is a way of measuring successes, having a theoretical perspective and discourse is the basis for improving the learning processes. We could see with health-related books and other resources in libraries that they were particularly important in the areas of knowledge and understanding, especially personal health issues.

It is clear that an assessment tool for learning outcomes can be developed for use within public libraries, and that there is scope for further research on the learning processes to inform policy and the end users. Alongside the theoretical approach to surveying learning outcomes, there are practical outcomes to be explored by public libraries in studying this data. Approximately 50% of all respondents offered opinions on library services and stock beyond the range of this report. The willingness of the public to engage with library services in this way was in itself positive and the comments made can be used to inform service changes and reaffirm what libraries are currently doing well.

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## Quick Questionnaire

We would be very grateful if you could spend a few moments to complete this questionnaire. Most questions are about the book you found the questionnaire in, and should be completed when you have finished with the book. All your answers will be treated in confidence, and will assist your library in developing library services for you.

- Q1 Is this book:**  
 Fiction .....  Go to Q3  
 Non-fiction/Factual.....  Go to Q2

**Q2 Please write the first 3 numbers from the library label on the spine of the book, in the box below:** (if unsure which numbers, please check with a member of staff when returning your book)

- Q3 Which of the following most applies:** (tick one box only)
- I read all of the book .....  Go to Q4
  - I read most of the book .....  Go to Q4
  - I read some of the book .....  Go to Q4
  - I didn't read the book .....  Go to Q6

**Q4 If you read all or part of the book, did this book:** (tick one box per category)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know / Doesn't apply
Motivate or inspire you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide you with insight?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help you develop skills?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change your daily life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change your opinions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Benefit you personally?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help you learn new facts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Challenge your attitudes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entertain you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Q5 Did you get what you wanted from this book?** (tick one box only)
- Yes, mostly .....
  - Yes, partly.....
  - No .....
  - Not sure .....

- Q6 Did you borrow this book for:** (tick one box only)
- Private study .....
  - Study for school/college/university .....
  - Sharing with, or teaching others.....
  - Personal enjoyment .....
  - Other (please write in box below).....

**Q7** If you have any further comments on the book please write them in the space below:

**Q8** Was it easy to find the book you wanted? (tick one box only)  
Yes .....   
No .....

**Q9** Did the library have a good range of books in the area you were interested in? (tick one box only)  
Yes .....   
No .....

**Q10** If you have any thoughts or suggestions on the library stock, please write them in the space below:(You only need to do this on one of your questionnaires)

**Q11** If you have any comments on, or suggestions for, the library service please write in the space below: (You only need to do this on one of your questionnaires)

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. Please return your completed questionnaire in the front of your library book, or place it in the box provided at the returns desk. You may if you wish complete further questionnaires for other books you have borrowed.

**If you, or someone you know, needs this questionnaire in another format or needs assistance completing it, please call 01392 000000**

## Appendix B – Lending profiles for main library services – participating libraries

### Devon County Council

Principal Libraries	Adult fiction issues	Adult non-fiction issues	Active borrowers
Barnstaple	146237	75146	15143
Bideford	54297	24042	4958
Crediton	37399	14662	3129
Exeter Central Lending	141355	141915	28242
Okehampton	44296	14163	3484
Sidmouth	65862	28905	5325
Tavistock	87297	44636	7729
Teignmouth	49717	19423	4094
Tiverton	79436	40987	7729

Table 34

### Somerset County Council

Principal Libraries	Adult fiction issues	Adult non-fiction issues	Active borrowers
Taunton	182200	131000	21145
Yeovil	144000	85500	15750
Frome	86900	57400	10431
Chard	58250	27900	4270
Minehead	67900	30900	4759
Burnham	68650	29750	5768
Priorswood	38900	11800	1790
Wincanton	31900	14000	2243
Watchet	10450	3850	630
North Petherton	11700	3400	704
Shepton Mallet	23200	11250	2679
Milborne Port	7600	3400	488
Williton Mobile	17500	4300	1246

Table 35

### South Gloucestershire Council

Principal Libraries	Adult fiction issues	Adult non-fiction issues	Active borrowers
Bradley Stoke	93426	57740	8087
Cadbury Heath	33102	10959	1842
Chipping Sodbury	11564	3743	608
Downend	59243	23908	5089
Emersons Green	40855	25777	2952
Filton	40430	14602	3482
Hanham	65292	23430	4355
Kingswood	41254	15918	4739
Patchway	16446	5340	1913
Staple Hill	35635	11923	2148
Thornbury	60622	30332	5989
Winterbourne	24923	6892	2008
Yate	115613	50819	10232
Yate Mobile	23128	4300	683

Table 36

## Wiltshire County Council

Principal Libraries	Adult fiction issues	Adult non-fiction issues	Active borrowers
Albourned	6730	1898	314
Amesbury	30474	10200	2796
Box	4750	2045	352
Bradford on Avon	50712	33326	5466
Calne	46761	23143	6032
Chippenham	81057	42975	9356
Corsham	41294	18787	3586
Cricklade	11196	3842	973
Devizes	75949	45572	8034
Downton	19809	6237	1020
Durrington	13302	3449	681
Ludgershall	5792	1506	461
Lyneham	2706	760	511
Malmesbury	31391	15254	3252
Market Lavington	4978	1738	291
Marlborough	33510	15597	3875
Melksham	57699	24997	5121
Mere	13357	6334	1091
Netheravon	3390	814	163
Pewsey	16872	6883	865
Purton	6510	1987	567
Ramsbury	4857	1653	345
Salisbury	166809	104370	20866
Tidworth	11575	4620	2013
Tisbury	7967	3073	470
Trowbridge	107131	61088	9628
Warminster	81901	42298	7293
Westbury	35504	13034	3519
Wilton	21928	8706	1029
Wootton Bassett	49777	23062	4889

Table 37



