

Information literacy and cultural heritage for lifelong learning: applying the model to develop *texttechno* intergenerational literacies

Kim Baker

Library and Information Studies Centre, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa
E-mail address: kbaker.research21c@gmail.com



Copyright © 2013 by **Kim Baker**. This work is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Abstract:

The Information Literacy and Cultural Heritage for Lifelong Learning model is ideally suited to be applied across generations in providing a set of tools to teach text based information literacy and critical thinking skills, as well as technological and media literacies. The techno generations will be able to learn about the value of cultural heritage as well as learn text based information literacy and critical thinking skills, balanced with the development of worldview literacy, and members of the text generations will be able to share their knowledge of cultural heritage and learn how to convey these stories using technological and social media to share and present their stories.

With this model as a basis, courses can be designed by libraries, archives and museums, working together collaboratively, to include members of all generations. Trained facilitators will convey to the techno generations the value of text based collections and cultural heritage, and introduce to the text generations the world of technological media. Following training for all members of the group in the navigation of different Carriers (including print, analogue, digital and hybrid formats), the basic tools of analysis of Content, and the development of the ability to explore questions of Context, practical tasks can be assigned in a sequence of core processes: Discover, Learn, Evaluate, Create, Share, Feedback and Modify, which allow for group work and learning from each other, guided by the facilitators..

Keywords: Information literacy, cultural heritage, lifelong learning, intergenerational literacies, *texttechno*

1 INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational literacies, as noted by Weinstein, have been affiliated with the term “family literacies”, are understood to involve at least two generations, children and adults, and are intended to address the relationships between them through related literacy programmes. (1998). Gagné, et. al., describe their programmes which are designed to impart literacy in adults and children who migrate to Canada, and do not have the necessary language skills, aiming to provide intergenerational literacies by combining programmes for both adults and children together, as well as separately. (2010). Exploring another angle, namely numeracy,

Zevenbergen highlighted the differences in how younger generations process information, shaped by their fluency with technology, in contrast to older generations. (2004).

In this context, this paper intends to highlight how a new model that has been developed for museums, archives and libraries to teach information literacy and cultural heritage for lifelong learning, can be adapted and applied to address specifically, the *textto techno* differences between generations, using their cultural heritage collections as a learning platform. The context of learning is one of free choice, lifelong learning and this necessitates some differences in methodology to programmes offered in formal learning environments such as schools and other educational institutions.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION LITERACY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING MODEL

Since most museums, archives and libraries are currently engaged in placing their cultural heritage collections online, and libraries in particular are focused on the technical aspects of digital curation and preservation, some questions arose. These included questions on cultural heritage itself, such as:

- What constitutes “cultural heritage”? Are there any clear definitions, and if so, are they applied to specific contexts and formats?
- Who decides what is presented as cultural heritage and what is their basis for doing so?
- What is excluded, and why?
- In the context of memory and contested history, who arbitrates the narrative, and what influences them in doing so?

In addition, further related questions arose, regarding assumptions that placing content online leads not only to discovery, but also to use of the collections to create new knowledge. This also led to questions surrounding the digital divide – what about the people who do not yet have access to the Internet? Also, do the general public know how to construct a search query, and find, analyse, evaluate and use information found? While the younger generations may be technologically literate, what about the older generations? And what of the massive volume of knowledge that is not yet online, and is still located in formats that are not accessible through the Internet – again, the older generations could be more familiar with those resources, but the younger generations may never be exposed to them, simply because they are not on the Internet.

These questions led to a natural linkage and convergence between the fields of cultural heritage and information literacy, lifelong learning, and also to the overlap in museums, archives and libraries.

Based on extensive research by through literature review into the collection, recording, and presentation of cultural heritage (both textual and technological) in museums, archives and libraries; an exploration of digital information contexts in the fields of media and communications; an overview of the main information literacy models available; and a review of the core components of lifelong learning and critical thinking skills, a new model to teach information literacy and cultural heritage at the same time has been developed. The model is generic and contextually fluid, able to span different cultures, generations and levels

of learning. The model assumes basic literacy, and provides a way for museums, archives and libraries to converge in the provision of free choice, lifelong learning programmes for the general public. In this way, museums, archives and libraries are enabled to go beyond the provision of access, into actively engaging with the public. The model is ideally suited to span *textto techno* formats and provide intergenerational literacies in the training programmes developed from the model.

3 OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL OF INFORMATION LITERACY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

The following table outlines the generic model which was developed from the research undertaken, and which can be adapted to any given social, cultural, political and/or generational context:

Generic Model: Information Literacy and Cultural Heritage for Lifelong Learning		
CATALYSTS:		
<p>Learning environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museums (including galleries) • Archives • Libraries <p>These converge to create courses cooperatively, blending positivist and constructivist approaches. Course delivery is spread to all sites to provide the learners with an integrated learning experience of the different environments. Courses include the exploration of digital and virtual museums, archives and libraries from on-site networked computers. Courses are evaluated and revised based on feedback and learners' needs.</p>	<p>Instructors and facilitators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained as curators, archivists or librarians. • Fully knowledgeable about their collections. • Culturally sensitive and attentive. • Enthusiastic and passionate, able to make the learning experience pleasurable and inspirational. • Fluent in critical thinking skills. • Fully knowledgeable about the content and pedagogy of courses delivered. • Able to facilitate learning in groups, and mediate where necessary. • Sensitive to the different learning styles, and to the feelings of learners. • Able to evaluate and assess final learning outcomes of learners and provide constructive feedback. 	
COMPONENTS: (Carrier, Content and Context)		
<p>Carrier</p> <p>Carriers are print, analog, digital and hybrid formats which may be grouped in collections or individually, and include: books, documents, manuscripts, records, journals, diaries, maps, newspapers, television, film, radio, photographs, drawings, artworks, the Internet, web pages,</p>	<p>Content</p> <p>Cultural heritage includes: cultures, customs, beliefs, rites, rituals, ceremonies, indigenous knowledge, social customs and traditions, arts, crafts, music, political and ideological beliefs that influence culture and behavior, history, practices concerning the natural environment, religious and scientific traditions, language, sports, food and drink, calendars, traditional clothing, cybercultures in the digital world, and emerging new cultures which will become the heritage of the future.</p> <p><i>Related issues:</i> contested history and conflicting narratives, cultural imperialism,</p>	<p>Context</p> <p>This is found by asking questions. Who created it? How was it created? Why was it created? Who decided to collect it as cultural heritage, and why? What was not collected? How does it relate to other cultural heritage practices? How is it described? Who described it and what cultural biases did they have? What was the socio-political and economic context surrounding its creation? When was it</p>

databases, online catalogs and finding aids, social media (Twitter, Facebook, blogs, wikis), objects, artefacts and buildings, physical and virtual museums, archival and library collections.	memory, identity, censorship, multiculturalism, repatriation of human remains (museums), inclusion, exclusion, nationalism and national identity, cultures of practice in museums, archives and libraries, moral rights to cultural heritage, intellectual property, privacy and data security issues, ethical use of information, the role of communications media in the representation of cultural heritage, and critical thinking applied to cultural heritage.	created? Who contested it, and why? Who agreed with it, and why? How is it displayed? Who chose what to display, and why? Who contests the narrative in the display, and why? Whose memory and identity is represented? Whose memory and identity is excluded? Where are the linkages, and where have linkages been omitted?
--	---	--

CORE PROCESSES AND TASKS:

Discover	Learn	Evaluate	Create	Share	Feedback	Modify
<i>Facilitator's tasks</i>	<i>Facilitator's tasks</i>	<i>Facilitator's tasks</i>	<i>Facilitator's tasks</i>	<i>Facilitator's tasks</i>	<i>Facilitator's tasks</i>	<i>Facilitator's tasks</i>
Provide tours of the learning sites, physical and virtual; provide instruction on searching and using tools of discovery; highlight the differences between print and digital carriers.	Facilitate the learning of the group, paying attention to any individual difficulties; outline moral, legal and ethical issues in the use of information, including privacy and data security.	Provide training in critical thinking skills; facilitate group role-play in analyzing information; include media analysis.	Provide training in basic writing, use of computers, PowerPoint, social media.	Ensure a supportive and receptive environment for the presentations; provide further assistance in the use of social media, and media literacy. Information Literacy and Cultural Heritage	Ensure a supportive and receptive environment for the feedback; mediate when any negative feelings are experienced	Provide support for the modification process; note where the courses themselves may need to be adapted, modified and updated based on learner feedback.
<i>Learner's tasks</i>	<i>Learner's tasks</i>	<i>Learner's tasks</i>	<i>Learner's tasks</i>	<i>Learner's tasks</i>	<i>Learner's tasks</i>	<i>Learner's tasks</i>
Searching, using tools of discovery, including catalogs, finding aids and online search engines.	Read, listen, watch, absorb, make notes, integrate, summarize key points.	Critical analysis; question, deconstruct arguments; practice cultural sensitivity; note moral, legal and ethical issues.	Create and write a story of cultural heritage, using visual and audio material.	Orally present the story to the group, using PowerPoint; write a blog entry, or create a page on Facebook, link to them using Twitter.	Receive feedback on own creations; give constructive feedback to others on their creations.	Modify the creations based on feedback, to add context or correct any errors.

GENERIC LEARNING OUTCOMES:				
Skills	Attitudes and values	Knowledge and understanding	Behaviour and activity	Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity
information literacy	Cultural sensitivity	development of fluid intelligence, recognition of crystallized intelligence;	engages in continuous lifelong learning of cultural heritage and other areas	lifelong learning for pleasure
cultural heritage awareness	flexibility	ethical use of information;	ability to give and receive constructive feedback	continuously explores new areas of learning in the cultural heritage field, and beyond
worldview literacy	able to apply critical thinking skills in a manner that is culturally sensitive	understanding of moral rights, copyright and intellectual property issues; privacy; data security;	engages in constructive dialog	creates, communicates, presents and modifies narratives in a variety of formats for enjoyment.
critical thinking skills		knowledge of a variety of cultural heritage practices and traditions;	visits museums, libraries and archives to learn more and to enjoy ongoing cultural programs, exhibitions and activities	
lifelong learning		understanding of the resources and activities available from museums, archives and libraries.		
media literacy.	tolerant of different worldviews			
<p>Measurement: Personal Meaning Mapping:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extent of knowledge and feelings • breadth of understanding • depth of understanding • mastery possessed by an individual on a given topic. 				
CONTEXTUAL FLUIDITY				
<p>This model is contextually fluid, and can be constantly updated, adapted and revised in response to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • country-specific contexts, languages and cultures; • feedback from learners, the changing needs of learners, • different groups of learners; • changes to the environment (in museums, archives and libraries) and world events globally; • new developments in the fields of cultural heritage, information literacy and lifelong learning; • new digital media and technological developments. 				

(2013: 127 – 131)

4 APPLYING THE MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF *TEXTTOTECHNO* INTERGENERATIONAL LITERACIES

The model is ideally suited to be applied across generations in providing a set of tools to teach text based information literacy and critical thinking skills, as well as technological and media literacies. The *techno* generations will be able to learn about the value of cultural heritage as well as learn text based information literacy and critical thinking skills, balanced with the development of worldview literacy, and members of the *text* generations will be able to share their knowledge of cultural heritage and learn how to convey these stories using technological and social media to share and present their stories.

With this model as a basis, courses can be designed by libraries, archives and museums, working together collaboratively, to include members of all generations. Trained facilitators will convey to the *techno* generations the value of text based collections and cultural heritage, and introduce to the *text* generations the world of technological media. Following training for all members of the group in the navigation of different *Carriers* (including print, analogue, digital and hybrid formats), the basic tools of analysis of *Content*, and the development of the ability to explore questions of *Context*, practical tasks can be assigned in a sequence of core processes: Discover, Learn, Evaluate, Create, Share, Feedback and Modify, which allow for group work and learning from each other, guided by the facilitators.

To practically adapt and apply the model to design courses which enhance *texttotechno* intergenerational literacies, working groups with representatives from museums, archives and libraries should be convened. The representatives should have expertise in working with the general public, specifically with different generations, and also need to be knowledgeable about their collections (2013: 136).

The working groups can decide on a research design and methodology to adapt the model, and use the standard approaches which include:

- *Formulation of a description of what data is required, and research questions.*
- *Literature review and environmental scan.*
- *Sampling decisions.*
- *Survey questionnaires of existing users.*
- *Follow-up interviews.*

(2013: 136 – 138)

Factors to consider when adapting the model include:

- *Country-specific contexts, languages and cultures:*
- *Feedback from different generations of learners (It is necessary to identify the existing skill sets, cultures, languages, age groups, religious beliefs and educational backgrounds and take these into account when designing courses)*
- *New developments in the fields of cultural heritage, information literacy and lifelong learning:*
- *New digital, media and technological developments*

(2013: 139 – 142)

Once the preliminary research has been completed, and the design of training courses commences, despite any contextual variables identified in the research, courses should all incorporate the main elements outlined in the Model, described in the section on Components (Carrier, Content and Context). (2013: 128). Course designers would also need to understand the various teaching approaches, such as constructivist and didactic, the different learning styles, and different personalities. (2013: 143 -144).

The structure of courses should be designed to be delivered in stages, to match the processes outlined in the Model: Discover Learn, Evaluate, Create, Share, Feedback and Modify.

Some suggestions for each stage of the process include:

Discover

Here, site tours can be given to orientate the learners to the learning environments, following which, basic skills and training in framing questions, designing search strategies and finding resources are imparted. (2013: 144 – 145) Examples of task questions include:

- How many libraries are there in [name of country or city], and where are they located?
- Find a book which describes the traditional cuisine of Muslims
- Look up and find the titles of journals that focus on cultural music
- Search through newspapers to find reports of celebrations of a particular heritage event
- Find an online exhibition that showcases the discovery of ancient ruins
- Find a blog which discusses the artistic traditions of a particular cultural group

Learn

Once all learners are familiar with and comfortable with the Discovery process, they can then proceed to the Learn process. Here, tasks are more focused on assimilating information, and examples include: (2013: 146).

- Read the first two chapters of a book, and make textual notes summarising their content
- Listen to two recordings of speeches by two cultural leaders and make textual notes on their main points
- Watch a documentary online, and bookmark the places in the video where key points are made;
- Read newspaper articles about a cultural dispute, and identify the main points of the different views

Evaluate

This process evolves from the previous stage, and entails the analysis of the different points of view, weighing up their merits and demerits and assessing validity. (2013: 147). While this may appear to be an advanced skill for children, the nature of the tasks and the content used can be adapted to simplify to their level of understanding.

Examples of subject selection can include:

- analyzing the main arguments of different eyewitness testimonies and interpretations of an historical event and assessing if any of them are invalid, and why
- identifying and comparing different methods used in cultural artworks, comparing and deciding if any one method is better than the other, and why
- identifying missing links in a cultural narrative on the Internet

Create

The Create stage is the process that allows for the most exchange of literacies between generations. Older generations will be able to share their skills in creating stories in text formats, and younger generations may in turn assist the older generations in the use of technology to convey their creations.

Tasks can include:

- tracing a family tree in the archives and drawing pictures and writing names on paper
- telling a story about a family recipe that has passed down through the generations
- writing and sharing a memory of a cultural event, with illustrations
- compiling an online blog article of religious ceremonies, with digital photographs

Learners should be encouraged to provide additional context from other sources to add to their story, and link the story where possible. (2013: 148)

Share

This stage allows the learners the opportunity to share their creations with the group, both verbally, and supporting their presentations with technological enhancements (including the use of PowerPoint and social media such as Facebook, Twitter and/or Blogs). (2013: 149)

Feedback

This stage requires the facilitator to demonstrate how to give constructive feedback to participants, and learners then give their feedback to each other on their creations. Facilitators should be alert for any negative responses to feedback, and coach learners accordingly to both give constructive feedback, as well as receive constructive feedback. (2013: 149).

Modify

The final stage of the process would be entail the modification of the creations, based on the feedback received, and this can include correcting errors, adding additional information or media and refining the creation into its final form. (2013: 149)

5 CONCLUSION

Given that the learning experience of this model is designed for free choice, lifelong learning, the courses based on the model should be delivered in a manner which leads to enjoyment and pleasure. The opportunity to progress from passive learner, when first learning the basic skills, to active creator and then assessor, is intended to break down communication barriers between different generational and cultural groups, as well as impart skills and various literacies as outlined in the generic learning outcomes component of the model.

The model is also designed to impart awareness of the different carriers of information and cultural heritage, both analogue, and digital, and thus provide a basic ability to navigate both text and technological media. It is designed to empower the younger generation by exposing them to traditional print collections that they may never have been exposed to (in countries where access to the Internet is easily available), and to introduce the older generations to the Internet and social media. In developing countries where Internet access is limited or not affordable by the general public, museums, archives and libraries can provide a critical role in development by serving as gateways to the Internet from their physical locations.

Finally, an essential component in the model is the necessity to continuously review course content and design, based on feedback from participants, as well as making revisions to include the rapidly evolving technological developments. The model is intended to be fluid to accommodate the rapid pace of global change, and to facilitate continuous intergeneration dialogue.

6 REFERENCES

Baker, K. 2013. *Information literacy and cultural heritage: developing a model for lifelong learning*. Oxford: Chandos Publishing

Gagné, M., et. al. 2010. Literacy for life: an intergenerational literacy program. [Online]. Available: http://www.academia.edu/542701/Literacy_for_Life (2013, May 13)

Weinstein, G. 1998. Family and intergenerational literacy in multilingual communities. CAELA ESL resources. [Online]. Available: http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/Famlit2.html (2013, May 12).

Zevenbergen, R. L. 2004. The Emergence of the Millennial: Intergenerational Differences in Contemporary Workplace Numeracy. Griffith University : Centre for Learning Research. [Online]. Available: http://www98.griffith.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/10072/2052/25851_1.pdf?sequence=1 (2013, May 12)