LESSON PLANNING FOR MUSEUM EDUCATION
COURSE OUTLINE

Version 2: 18 Jan 2021

The Lesson Planning for Museum Education course was run in September 2020 and even though this was originally scheduled for four weeks, we decided to extend the time to allow the participants more time to absorb and to apply the content. This second running of this course has been reworked based on our experience, including a reduction in the weekly practical work, and a large focus on the course project as the summative assessment.

This course outline will help you to identify whether this will help you in your professional development path and to determine whether you should enrol.

The target for this course is the museum educator working in a museum environment, as well as all associated personnel who can contribute to the linkage of the museum with basic education.

This course is of benefit to all museum personnel who would like to gain a deeper understanding of modern educational practices and the role that museums can play in extending knowledge beyond the textbook and the curriculum. It is our assumption that museums have the opportunity at this time in the history of the world to play a far greater role in education, and that museums have not realised the full potential of the linkage to schools. This is far more than treating museum education as only schools visits and outreach, and explores the potential for long-term, sustainable relationships between the museum and schools throughout the country and the world, with engagement in range of educational materials and activities.

We focus on the "Lesson Plan" as the core of transformation within museum education, including changing the role and responsibilities of the museum, as well as the digital transformation which has been accelerated in education and in museums as a direct response to the pandemic.

During this course we will engage with the participants both individually and collectively, concerning the current experiences and visions, and how these can be enhanced.

We look forward to having you on the course.

Introduction

Motivation

Museums have been integral to school education for many decades and this has resulted in the increased formalisation and professionalism of the practice of museum educational services: through outreach; school visits; through lectures and engagement by expert staff at the museum; and also through digital engagements such as the museum web site and social media.

For the past 15 years we have been promoting the digital transformation of museums, covering the breadth and depth of museum operations and activities, among which are collections

management, professional development in many areas of museum practices, and more recently in museum educational services.

We have also engaged in school digital transformation through work we are conducting with The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Microsoft, focused on special educational needs (SEN) schools, and for schools which lack a fully digital infrastructure. Arising from this we have conceptualised the Lesson Plan for the Digital Age, in which the Lesson Plan is the central instrument for digital transformation in education.

We have combined our expertise in school education and in museum education into this training course to:

- address the urgent need for digital transformation in museum educational services
- inform museum educators on the context relevant to 21st century educational needs
- support museums in expanding their educational reach through digital technologies

Background

Every museum has stories to tell, and every museum can contribute to the advancement of learning through animating their collections in various ways, both for formal and for informal and extended education.

This animation of collections has traditionally taken place as school visits and outreach programmes, but in this new world of the pandemic things are changing fast, and this course addressed the need to adapt in a way in which museums can capitalise on the opportunities to move into digital technologies for education rather than being subject to the threats and risks associated with the removal of direct engagement with schools.

For almost every museum, school learners form the largest cohort of visitors and are integral to the foot traffic measures used to determine the success of museums. The schools and their learners have not gone away but are merely out of direct contact with the museums which they used to visit to gain more in-depth knowledge about various topics in the curriculum. This impact of the pandemic is serious for both the schools and the museums.

Many schools organise school visits for their learners, but these are very few in terms of the potential benefits to the learners, and also the opportunities available within the museum to support various classes in the schools. It may be that the pandemic, even with it negative impact, has opened up the opportunities for a far strong engagement between museums and schools than was considered previously, in which the status quo of school visits was the norm and was not questioned.

It is for this reason that we have structured this course, to increase and to maximise the engagement of museums with schools, and to position museums as central to the provision of knowledge and learning resources to the educational sector, providing trusted content which amplifies and extends the curriculum in each discipline, and which can then inspire young people in their future career choices.

This course is also an introduction to the One-Museum, a centralized repository of museum content which can then be easily shared with all schools – in effect the connection of all schools with all museum in the country, and to the best of our knowledge, this initiative is a world first.

Modules

Each module of this course is a self-contained unit of teaching and learning. Each module addresses a specific topic, and each of these topics is part of the larger context of improving educational practice in schools through increased access to the valuable content within museums.

Each module is structured into topics, practical work and assessments with a linkage for how this module is included into the larger course programme. For this second running of this course, we are reducing the practical content for each of the modules, rather providing self-reflection than formal practical examples.

Module 1: Background and Preparation

This first module introduces the background and structure of the course and positions the course content as an extension of the relationship between museum and schools.

We introduce the constructivist theory of learning as the basis for understanding how learning occurs as learners are challenged by new knowledge. We examine curriculum statements from subjects relevant to the delegates on the course and how the museums can address these more specifically.

The practical reflection involves finding a few matches between the museum collections and the curriculum - to identify opportunities to explore and unlock the full potential of museum collections.

This reflection will be expanded and used through the remainder of this course as the basis for practical work relevant to your museum. This matching between the museum and the curriculum will also include other forms of museum access such as exhibitions, tours, and educational materials.

Module 2: Blooms Taxonomy

Every lesson plan must set learning objectives to be achieved within the lesson.

One of the most widely used method for describing learning objectives is called "Blooms Taxonomy" after the seminal work of Benjamin Bloom in 1956.

We cover this taxonomy in this module as the basis for structuring the learning objectives of the lesson plans, and practical reflection will explore existing lesson plans and educational materials in terms of how they reflect this taxonomy, with a further reflection on how the lesson plans could be upgraded to make these learning objectives more explicit in how they align to the needs of learning.

Module 3: 21st Century Skills

The year is now 2021, and the 21st century has already completed 20% of its duration. Trends are emerging in this century which distinguish this century from those that have preceded it. These trends concern the nature of life and work, with new terms in common usage such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), Digital Transformation, and Digitalization, each of which reflect the changes we are part of and reflect these trends.

We must prepare our learners for life and work beyond the curriculum – a curriculum which is still largely rooted in the 20th century. We must understand the situation which the learners are moving into when they leave school, for further learnings in disciplines which are only now emerging, and for jobs have not as yet been defined or created.

This module outlines a range of new skills, with specific reference to the museum environment, and how these skills should be introduced into lesson plans both to complement the curriculum and to extra-curriculum objectives.

We ask you to reflect on these 21st century skills in your own museum, and the extent to which these are relevant, and how you can exploit these new skills.

Module 4: Lesson Plans for Digital Learning

The first three modules of this course have prepared the participants on this course for positioning lesson plans as the core instrument transformations in teaching and learning. In this module we propose a structure for lessons plans, considering the scope and scale of these to support effective learning for this new world environment.

Lessons plans are used in a museum context for a range of teaching and learning instruments, such as text and video materials, stories, case studies, biographical information, practical work, projects and many others which can be used as learning activities within a lesson plan, and which are suited to the museum environment.

A mid-project practical is conducted at this time, with the requirement to create the skeleton of a lesson plan which accommodated you materials in the light of constructivist teaching and learning; Bloom's Taxonomy; and the 21st century skills. This can be filled in over the next few sessions as we reach the end of the course when this lesson will be the basis for the final practical.

Module 5: Engaging the Learners using your Collections

One important component of the modern lesson plan is how it creates learner engagement, moving towards participatory modes of teaching and learning rather than the continuation of the static transfer of knowledge from teacher to learner as has been with us since the 19th century.

Such engagement includes the participation of learners in activities which may be conducted at the museum or by the learners in their own school or community in the sense outlined by Nina Simon in the Participatory Museum[1]. Learners gain far more through doing things rather than merely reading, and this is at the heart of the effectiveness of learning through constructivist learning practices – through activities rather than through book learning. Consequently it is fundamental in this new century that all lesson plans include activities which stimulate learning and that these can be done both physically at the museum and also remotely and virtually.

You will reflect on the modes of engagement in your skeletal lesson plan and to see how you can flesh this out by including specific activities which will engage the learners.

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[1] http://www.participatorymuseum.org/read/

Module 6: Digital Storytelling / Games for Teaching and Learning

In this module we explore storytelling as an effective educational instrument highly suited for museum education, and then extend this to the realm of digital, creating digital storytelling as a specific form of engagement. This is highly relevant given that much of the engagement with learners during school visits takes the form of animation of the museum collections and exhibitions through such stories.

Digital story telling is presented as an extension of storytelling in which learners do not only listen to stories, but also create their own stories using digital technologies, using materials provided and using materials gathered through their own research. This represents the CREATE level of Bloom's Taxonomy, considered as the highest form of learning – being learning through building.

Your reflection for this module is to include storytelling as one mode of engagement, and specifically how you can use the materials to enable the learners to tell their own stories, or to tell the existing stories in their own words.

Module 7: Lesson Delivery

The penultimate module outline the delivery of lesson plans in a classroom setting, considering both physical and virtual classroom environments, This module is directed to the educators who will use the lesson plans produced by the museums, and shows how they can use the lesson plans in practice, using materials which link up to the museum collections.

The reflection for this module concerns your understanding of the challenges of putting these lessons into practice, and specifically how to accommodate issues in the classroom and how to respond to these issues.

Module 8: Publishing the Educational Content and Establishing Relationships

The final module explores opportunities for publishing the lesson plans and associated educational materials to enable access to a wide population of schools.

We make specific reference is made to the One-Museum portal, one of our own initiatives which we have developed as a free virtual museum service for museums and users to enable museum content to be shared and accessed in a single repository. This removes the requirement that every museum establish their own virtual museum environment, which is an expensive and risk-prone undertaking. We position the One-Museum as a model for the future in which knowledge is integrated rather than being located in multiple place which s difficult to discover, and this integration is a core element of the trends to digital transformation in both the museum and the educational sectors.

Beyond the One-Museum, we also discuss how you can put your materials and lesson plans online using your own web sites and can couple these with the One-Museum portal.

Assessments

Simple self-assessments are provided at the end of each module, to help you to measure your own learning and we are available to assist when further support is needed.

A practical is the final part of this, which will be the completion of the lesson plan developed in skeletal form in module 4 and which will have been extended in modules 5, 6 and 7.

Costs

The cost of this course is R2500+VAT per person, payable in advance, with the exception of official purchase orders from government bodies.

Application

An application form has been made available online and a Word application form is also provided.

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