



Generations Working Together

Learning Through Intergenerational Practice



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Introduction



Intergenerational practice covers a very wide range of projects and activities which are undertaken with the aim of bringing generations together. These might be undertaken for a number of reasons: general interest; with a specific objective in mind; to address an issue or conflict or support differing generations, to name just a few. However, all projects and activities will provide a vehicle for generations to interact and become engaged in the issue or activity together. Many will, intentionally or unintentionally, provide learning opportunities.

Generations Working Together (GWT) aims to support and develop Intergenerational Practice throughout educational establishments, youth and community groups in Scotland in order to reduce age stereotyping, improve community cohesion and encourage lifelong learning. Working in a Scottish policy context GWT offers support to: local authorities, schools, college and universities to incorporate intergenerational practice into their learning strategies.

The purpose of this booklet is to highlight “intergenerational learning” as a component of intergenerational practice covering learning at any age. Areas of interest are signposted by links so that practitioners can pursue topics if they wish. Generations Working Together seeks to encourage practitioners to undertake intergenerational practice with specific learning aims and outcomes or to recognise that the intergenerational project they are undertaking, may include some learning outcomes.

What is Intergenerational Practice?

There are a number of definitions of intergenerational practice. The one used by Generations Working Together quoted below was developed by the Beth Johnson Foundation, Centre for Intergenerational Practice: www.centreforip.org.uk

This is a widely recognised definition, easily understood and can be broken down into its component parts.

“Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contribute to building more cohesive communities.”

- Brings people together in purposeful mutually beneficial activity.
- Promotes greater understanding and respect between generations.
- Contributes to building more cohesive communities.

It also helps build social capital. Social capital describes the pattern and intensity of networks among people and the shared values which arise from those networks. Greater interaction between people generates a greater sense of community spirit. Definitions of social capital vary, but the main aspects include citizenship, ‘neighbourliness’, social networks and civic participation.

Further information on the topic can be found below:

Connecting Generations – A Guide to Best Practice
www.goo.gl/pzzW62

Guide of Ideas for Planning and Implementing Intergenerational Projects Together
www.goo.gl/NzrUyo

There are a number of principles of intergenerational practice which should be taken into account when adopting an intergenerational approach.

<p>Mutual and Reciprocal Benefit All participating generations should gain benefit.</p>	<p>Culturally Grounded The needs context and attitudes of cultures differ widely. An approach adopted in one area may not work or be relevant in another due to these differences.</p>
<p>Participatory The participants should be fully involved in shaping the activity and feel a sense of ownership - connecting the generations.</p>	<p>Strengthens Community Bonds and Promotes Active Citizenship Engagement across the generations to emphasise positive connections with the aim of building stronger, better connected communities with increased social capital and citizenship.</p>
<p>Asset Based Build on strengths for success, understanding and mutual respect.</p>	<p>Challenge Ageism Both young and old are victims of ageism. Meeting each other means that they can explore who they really are and what they have to gain from each other.</p>
<p>Well Planned Attempt to create positive changes which are an addition to naturally occurring processes.</p>	<p>Cross-disciplinary or Inter-disciplinary Broaden the experience of professionals to become more involved in working in an inclusive way and to think much more broadly about how they undertake their work.</p>

Within any intergenerational project it is likely that learning will take place across the generations and that learning outcomes will differ depending upon who is involved. The learning outcomes for each generation may not have been recorded or captured. Examples of intergenerational projects and activities are available on page 8.



What is Intergenerational Learning?

In the context in which GWT is promoting intergenerational learning, the definition is as follows:

Intergenerational Learning occurs when intergenerational projects or activities are purposefully planned to include one, or several, learning aims and outcomes across the generations, i.e. both sides learning from or with each other, to gain skills, values and knowledge.

This learning could take place in a formal, non-formal or informal setting but one or more of the primary aims would include an intergenerational learning outcome.

The overarching principle for undertaking the project or activity must be the purposeful bringing together of generations to promote greater understanding and respect and the element of building more cohesive communities.

The above principles of intergenerational practice apply; however, the following principle should be additional to the intergenerational learning project.

The activity or project should be purposefully planned to contain a learning outcome (s) which can be identified as having a clear benefit to each generation involved.

There are also two European definitions of intergenerational learning which you may also find helpful. Intergenerational Learning (IL) is defined by the European Map of Intergenerational Learning (EMIL) as:

“The way that people of all ages can learn together and from each other. IL is an important part of Lifelong Learning, where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge. Beyond the transfer of knowledge, IL fosters reciprocal learning relationships between different generations and helps to develop social capital and social cohesion in our

ageing societies. IL is one way of addressing the significant demographic change we are experiencing across Europe and is a way of enhancing intergenerational solidarity through intergenerational practice (IP).”

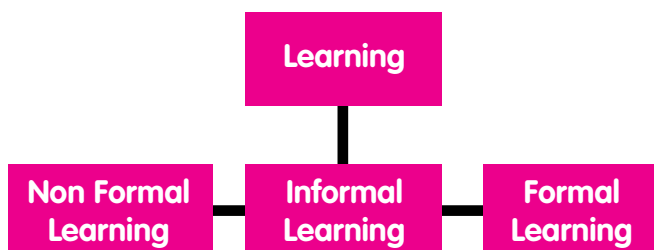
The European Network of Intergenerational Learning (ENIL) defines IL as:

“A learning partnership based on reciprocity and mutuality involving people of different ages where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge”.

True intergenerational learning has learning outcomes for each generation. Youngsters teaching older people how to use smart phones may be learning how to instruct, how to relate to older people, learning how to listen.

These outcomes may not be recorded but they contribute to building confidence and a sense of responsibility, essential attributes at the core of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).

There are three types of learning: Non-Formal; Informal and Formal Learning. Informal and non-formal learning can be easily recognised e.g. when parents or grandparents help children with their reading or writing (informal); adult education classes for pleasure (non-formal). Formal learning is where planned activities result in achieving set objectives for each generation involved. Formal intergenerational learning differs from everyday activity between generations where learning may take place but is not a specific aim of the activity.



Intergenerational activities across all learning settings should be purposefully planned to include learning outcomes which will have a direct impact or benefit to all those involved. Learning outcomes cover: knowledge and understanding; intellectual skills; practical skills; key/transferrable skills and within intergenerational projects might include the following:

- Increased understanding within and between generations i.e. recognising the needs of others;
- Improved communication and interpersonal skills;
- Increased knowledge of practical skills.
- Interactions between the work environment and the learning environment to increase knowledge and understanding.
- An understanding and awareness of local/wider environment.
- Participation in political, social, economic and cultural life while being responsible citizens.
- To learn how to articulate a personal experience and social observation in oral and written forms.
- To learn about history as a living, ongoing process.
- To learn how to develop and document the results of an intergenerational exchange.
- To talk freely and pleasantly about solidarity between generations.
- To break down intergenerational stereotypes and bring different generations closer together.



- To produce a piece of work (drawing/text) showing the importance of the link between generations to jointly construct a society where coexistence is better.

Learning outcomes in a formal setting will relate to learning experiences and outcomes in CfE or at the level of the learning as indicated by the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level. The experiences and outcomes are an essential component of Curriculum for Excellence and apply wherever learning is planned. They signpost progression in learning and set challenging standards that will equip young people to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Further information on the topic can be found below:

Map of Intergenerational Learning - www.emil-network.eu/

European Network for Intergenerational Learning - www.enilnet.eu/

Intergenerational Place-based Education where schools, communities and nature meet
www.goo.gl/Mgq5wR

SCQF Level Descriptors – www.goo.gl/LRvO4A

Why is Intergenerational Learning Important?

Due to changing demographics and greater mobility within families, generations are becoming increasingly isolated from each other and both younger and older groups can become victims of stereotyping and discrimination. Younger adults may no longer have the immediate support of their family for everyday decisions, and those later in life no longer have access to family for support during the ageing process. Both groups are statistically more likely to be subject to inequality, disadvantage and misrepresentation (or under-representation) and both groups have commonalities which, often neither side see.

When children encounter new concepts through interaction with others, these concepts and ideas are conceptualised into their understanding.

This can work between generations too. Capturing this experience through evaluation for each generation involved can show learning on both sides. While there can be large gains from such learning, by planning intergenerational learning outcomes into activities, the benefits can be even greater.

Further information on the above topic can be found below:

Learning for Active Ageing and Intergenerational Learning – www.goo.gl/M7PfNq



What are the Benefits of Intergenerational Learning?

For youth and children it can improve academic performance and older adults can learn new information and technologies. In general, the breadth and depth of learning improves. Culture, values and traditions can be passed on. Due to the age diversity, the learning is rich in information and experiences. Generations working together stimulate the creative processes and open up the exploration of ideas.

Intergenerational learning develops mutual learning relationships between different generations and helps to develop social capital and social cohesion. Each generation learns about the other and gains a better understanding of the other generations' strengths, fears, and weaknesses. Each generation has resources which are of value to the other and share areas of concern which aids in providing a sense of empowerment.

The following are the main reasons why intergenerational practice should take place:

- Recreates the links between generations and makes it possible to promote intergenerational understanding and respect.
- It can contribute to the development of individual competencies for a more inclusive society.
- Fostering intergenerational dialogue encourages collaboration: generations learn from each other.
- Intergenerational exchange significantly fosters solidarity, active citizenship and personal development, and can strengthen teaching quality.

Further information on the above topic can be found below:

Intergenerational Learning Changes Learning, Changes Lives – www.goo.gl/katX9c

Where Does This Fit Within a Scotland Wide Context?

The Scottish Government has stated that it will offer learning opportunities through life and this aligns with one of the main strategic objectives – creating a Smarter Scotland. However, when looking at both National Outcomes* and the

Scottish Government's five Strategic Objectives* it can be seen that intergenerational practice improves social capital and can contribute to all objectives as stated in the following table.

A link to the case studies listed in the table can be found at <http://generationsworkingtogether.org/networks/case-studies/>

Strategic or National Priority	Description	Examples of Intergenerational Projects
Social Cohesion	Social cohesion brings people together from different backgrounds and promotes development of communities where diversity is valued and individuals share a sense of belonging and work together to make their area a better place.	ICT Community Project Clark Community Choir Intergenerational Allotment
Wealthier and Fairer	Supports activities that address inequalities and enhance skills, employability and job opportunities. It builds on the characteristics of solidarity, cohesion and sustainability to ensure that all of Scotland has an opportunity to flourish.	SILVER Parlez Vous Deaf Awareness Project
Smarter	A focus on improving literacy, numeracy and attainment and on raising and realising ambition for all.	Cool Computing for Couthie Customers Paired Reading Knitting Mania Scotland Reads
Healthier	Will enable people to live longer and healthier lives. The Government would like to ensure that children have the best possible start in life and provide everybody with high quality care when they need it.	Falls Prevention Get to know your Techno Balerno Walking Project
Safer & Stronger	Aims to help local communities to flourish and become stronger, safer places to live. It endeavours to build strong individuals, families and communities by offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.	Cum Ageen dus Welcome Working Rite
Greener	Supports the sustainable use and enjoyment of Scotland's natural and built environment. It also underpins much of Scotland's wealth creation. Focus on the responsibility to protect and enhance Scotland's environment for future generations, redeploying expertise and strengthening communities to develop economic opportunities based on renewable resources.	Intergenerational Allotment Generations Growing Together

When planning to undertake an intergenerational project or activity in a formal setting it may be useful to consider how it aligns with local or national priorities. This may include for example the Local Authority Single Outcome Agreement (SOA), CfE, the Scottish Government's Lifelong Learning Strategy or Skills for Scotland. Equally, the priority might be the Reshaping Care

Agenda; Dementia Strategy; Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland (mental health strategy) or reducing health inequalities. This alignment may assist in setting aims and outcomes for the project or activity.

***National Outcomes:** www.goo.gl/mLyTha
***Strategic objectives:** www.goo.gl/LcLoiJ

Learning in Scotland



A Curriculum for Excellence covers the ages of 3 through to 18. The purpose of Curriculum for Excellence (www.goo.gl/qMfUxH) is encapsulated in the four capacities with the aim of enabling each child or young person to be:

1. A successful learner
2. A confident individual
3. A responsible citizen and
4. An effective contributor.

The skills that children build upon should provide them with a sound basis for their development as lifelong learners in their adult, social and working lives, enabling them to reach their full potential. It can be seen that the skills encompassed through intergenerational learning include those in CfE, skills for learning, skills for life, skills for work.

1. Personal and learning skills.
2. Literacy and numeracy.
3. Core skills of: communication; numeracy; problem solving; information technology and working with others.
4. Vocational skills.

CfE is firmly focused on the learner and opportunities to develop skills may be offered in different ways appropriate to learners' needs. CfE can best be delivered through partnership working where learning experiences and outcomes are planned and delivered together. Personal progressions skills are signposted in the Experiences and Outcomes and ensure that the learner progresses through the levels, building upon and extending skills developed at previous levels.

The curriculum includes all of the experiences which are planned for children and young people through their education, wherever they are being educated. These experiences are grouped into four categories.

- **Curriculum areas and subjects**
The curriculum areas are the organisers for setting out the experiences and outcomes. Each area contributes to the four capacities.
- **Interdisciplinary learning**
How the curriculum should include space for learning beyond and between subjects.
- **Ethos and life of the school**
The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of respect and trust based upon shared values across the school community.
- **Opportunities for personal achievement**
Pupils need opportunities for achievements both in the classroom and beyond, giving them a sense of satisfaction and building motivation, resilience and confidence.

Added to this, because children learn through all of their experiences - in the family and community, pre-school centre, nursery and school - the curriculum aims to recognise and complement the contributions that these experiences can make. It can be seen therefore that intergenerational practice not only fits with curriculum areas and subjects, but with all four categories.

Intergenerational practice can be a highly effective tool for promoting **Wider Achievement**. Through volunteering and community-working with older generations, children and young people can gain skills for learning, life and work and take part in activities that could contribute towards accredited awards such as Duke of Edinburgh, Dynamic Youth and Youth Achievement.

Undertaking formal intergenerational learning will help the school in attaining external partnerships along with developing a coherent and inclusive curriculum. Intergenerational activities should be developed and become embedded within the school, ensuring that the ethos and life of the school as a community benefits all.

Intergenerational activities can cover any of the learning areas within the curriculum.

Expressive arts	Health and well-being
Languages	Mathematics
Religious and moral education	Science

All these topics can be covered in a broad range of contexts between generations and within numerous settings: in school or community; in the workplace; with colleges or universities; in outdoor settings and beyond. There is also wide scope for cross curricular projects or activities while at the same time meeting the needs of young people, working between the generations and developing partnerships. This will lead to interdisciplinary learning.

It has been reported that when young people have completed a project or activity where generations work together as part of the school experience, they are explicitly clear about the fact that there are very real learning outcomes for them and also for the older people involved. They particularly value the fact that they have a say on the themes chosen, how the project developed and how it progresses.

Young people recognise the value there is in being stretched and challenged to work with others in settings that differ from the traditional classroom environment. Whilst this is something they admit to finding daunting, ironically, it is also what they claim to enjoy most. Having benefited from the practical experience of being involved in these very relevant learning experiences, young people are keen to consider ways in which these can be expanded and developed to ensure they become part of life in school and not just a 'one-off' opportunity for a small group of people for a short period of time.

Older people report that they learn a great deal about the younger generation and that they have less fear of younger people. They learn that they can still have a purpose in life and that they have positive transferable skills which are of use to the younger generation.

It is clear that 'generations working together' by the very definition, needs to be built around the 7 design principles set out in CfE: challenge and enjoyment; breadth; progression; depth; personalisation and choice; coherence and relevance – if it is to fulfil its purpose. There is a colourful explanation of the learner journey available at: www.goo.gl/fJM16b



Colleges and Universities

Colleges and Universities take forward the core elements and skills of CfE which are:

- personal and learning skills that enable individuals to become effective lifelong learners
- literacy and numeracy
- the five core skills of communication, numeracy, problem solving, information and communication technology and working with others
- employability skills that prepare individuals for employment rather than for a specific occupation
- essential skills that include all of those above and
- vocational skills that are specific to a particular occupation or sector

As part of the Strategic Objective 'Smarter', the Scottish Government published their strategy for post 16 education, **Putting Learners at the Centre: Delivering our ambitions for post 16 education** www.goo.gl/6jfpMF

This document sets out the reforms of post 16 education and (through Opportunities for All) states that all post 16 year olds should have a place in the education system which is appropriate for their needs and circumstances. Within these reforms, and subsequent legislation, emphasis is placed on planning for community learning and development (CLD) in each local authority area. These reforms also look for greater integration and movement between higher education institutions. Those in intergenerational practice are in an ideal position to be able to assist with this reform through intergenerational project work.

It is recognised that CfE will create new expectations and will have implications for transitions between school and further learning.

Essential Skills in Scotland's Colleges evaluates the role that colleges play in taking forward key skills that have been gained through CfE. Read more at: www.goo.gl/n2vqYS

The contribution of this part of the post-16 education system ranges from engagement with some of our most disadvantaged young people and adults as they embark on the journey into sustainable employment through to meeting the current and future skills of a substantial proportion of our employer base and workforce. This is an area where intergenerational practice has been shown to be very effective through mentoring, providing effective support and learning opportunities.

The Scottish Funding Council Strategy

(www.sfc.ac.uk/corporateplan) sets out how changes are going to be made and how the role of colleges and universities will change to outcomes for learners, employers and the economy.

As with CfE, vital for the development of colleges and universities will be:

- partnership working - there should be a significant shift towards learners and local communities;
- a move towards a networked approach which will support local and economic growth. A wide range of public, private and third sector providers play a critical role in meeting Scotland's labour market needs and responding quickly to changing priorities.

Further information on these topics may be found by following the links below:

Beyond the Senior Phase University Engagement with the Curriculum for Excellence
www.goo.gl/S63kQb

Delivering for Scotland: University outcome Agreements 2012-2013 – www.goo.gl/lmfXAN

Community Learning and Development

Community Learning and Development (CLD) covers a wide range of educational activities, provides opportunities for learners, families and adults and aims to strengthen communities. It is often delivered in partnership with educational establishments but can be delivered by local authority services, third sector organisations or volunteers.

CLD contributes positively to the delivery of many Scottish Government policies and these are highlighted in the **CLD Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs)** at www.goo.gl/0VFjxA

Improving the life chances of young people in Scotland is a major priority. The CLD strategic guidance has an increased focus on early intervention and prevention, family learning, and post-16 provision. CLD supports learning which begins at birth and continues throughout people's lives. Therefore, it is promoting the implementation of the Scottish Government's education and lifelong learning strategy.

CLD programmes and activities take place in community and educational settings and bring important contexts and experiences to learning. These play a particularly valuable role in promoting and enhancing learners' achievement and in making it relevant to lifelong learning. Through this, CLD contributes directly to the purposes of CfE, and supports learning that is important in developing skills for learning, life and work. By working together in partnership, services, agencies and educational establishments increase significantly the life chances for learners who may need different



interventions to achieve their potential. Often, these learners find the reason for learning becomes much clearer to them through the contexts and relevance that come from CLD.

Intergenerational learning can build on these fundamental principles bringing added value and a sense of purpose along with the sense of community. COSLA and the Scottish Government have stated that working in partnership yields better outcomes when looking to 'Work and Learn Together to Build Stronger Communities' and that it is important to embed links with Community Planning Partnerships. They state that maintaining and building the involvement of communities in decision making (not only of CLD but more widely) should be a priority. It can be clearly seen then, that intergenerational learning has a significant part to play in schools' (and other educational establishments') participation in Lifelong Learning and CfE.

Further information on these topics may be found by following the links below:

Think Community. An exploration of the links between intergenerational practice and informal adult learning – <http://shop.niace.org.uk/thinkcommunity.html>

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong Learning covers the areas of work based learning, learning while at work and post work learning. This may be in a formal, non-formal or informal setting as noted earlier. The former two are either based in the workplace or take place in an educational establishment usually part time, perhaps full time, distance learning or in the evenings too. This area can greatly benefit from the practice of intergenerational learning through peer support and mentoring. This form of learning is about investing in the capabilities of employees. By the incorporation of intergenerational learning the knowledge and skills of older, more experienced employees can be utilised, giving them an insight into younger generations and new ways of thinking and communicating.

Post work learning may fall under the auspices of CLD but not always. Many retired people go back to education to undertake Highers or even a degree, as they did not have the opportunity or time when they were younger. Post work learning, particularly non formal learning such as evening classes for interest, plays a vital role in the health and well-being of older adults perhaps, in some circumstances, keeping depression and loneliness at bay. It can be seen that intergenerational learning activities here can form an essential part in reducing isolation and prejudice, helping to build social capital and cohesion.



Further information on these topics may be found by following the links below:

Intergenerational Learning and Education in Later Life - www.goo.gl/BGkyZX

Why we need to foster Intergenerational learning? - www.goo.gl/5Un5x9

Eagle – European Approaches to Intergenerational Lifelong Learning - www.goo.gl/TOATBp

The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland – www.goo.gl/XBUEK3



What is an Intergenerational Learning Activity?

Noted below are two intergenerational learning projects which can be viewed in more detail along with others at: <http://generationsworkingtogether.org/networks/case-studies/>

1. Cool Computing for Couthie Customers

Aberdeenshire Libraries provide ICT support to customers seeking to learn how to utilise digital technologies. As demand had exceeded what the support staff could provide during core time, the service investigated the possibility of training senior pupils from local schools to become ICT mentors in order to manage and maintain the ICT learner waiting lists.

Providing the volunteering opportunity to senior pupils meant they would acquire new skills such as communication, organisation, planning, time management as well as being responsible and confident citizens making a valuable contribution to older adults within their local community.

The purpose was to reduce ICT waiting lists whilst bridging the digital divide across Aberdeenshire by helping people who had no previous or limited IT skills become confident, independent online information searchers.

The outcome for older people included becoming computer literate and being able to independently access information online and communicate with family and friends using email or social networking sites. There was the benefit of being able to shop, bank, communicate and access information which enabled them to participate in the digital world and feel part of society. They all thoroughly enjoyed learning/working alongside the young volunteers both sharing stories with each other about what they had been doing since their last sessions. These learning sessions not only provided the older adults with the opportunity to learn a new skill, they were also a social outing where both young and old become friends.

The outcomes for younger people included becoming confident and effective tutors delivering quality sessions to library learners. Young volunteers stated that the volunteering opportunity in the library was unique to any other they had been involved in as they developed existing skills and learned new ones. They said they felt valued and responsible as their learners were really appreciative of them helping them with IT skills, at the same time they were aware they must complete the relevant paperwork correctly and ensure their learner achieved their learning goal. A number of volunteers said they were able to discuss in great depth their volunteering role in both university applications and interviews, and believed their volunteering contributed to their acceptance onto the degree courses for which they applied.

Within the community this project broke down stereotypes regarding age (both young and old) which strengthened relationships between the local schools and older adults in the community. The pupils taking part demonstrated that young people have good qualities and excellent skills which they used to benefit the older adults in their local community.



2. Troon Coastal Rowing Project

The Scottish Fisheries Museum is supporting an initiative to restart the intercommunity boat building and rowing competitions that for many years were a strong feature of life in the coastal communities of Scotland.

The Children and Community Directorate (Duke of Edinburgh's Award Team) in South Ayrshire are taking this project forward by promoting and developing this initiative in all our coastal communities with schools and communities.

Boat building participants met every day Monday to Friday for 5 months. All participants worked together to build a St Ayles Skiff which is a 22ft (wooden) rowing skiff.

The outcomes for adults (who are mostly retired) working with school pupils and the project has enabled them to reconnect with their young people in the local community, increased their levels of confidence, self esteem and mental wellbeing. The joint work with young people has encouraged adults to take a "buddy" role in supporting young people's involvement in the project, improving intergenerational links, understanding and respect. Interest in the project has come from other agencies that are looking at the wider positive impacts in terms of mental health and life skills benefits.

The outcomes for pupils have been the benefits of cross curricular work, gaining their Duke of Edinburgh's Award accreditation, learning new skills, working with others outwith the school environment and the increase in their confidence, self-esteem and teamwork. Likewise, this initiative has improved intergenerational links for young people too.

The interest in the project is increasing in Ayrshire communities with schools and community groups visiting the Troon boat shed and making enquires about replicating the project.

The positive health and wellbeing results are very evident, with many of the older retired boat builders very enthusiastic to turn up every day.



Who Participates in Intergenerational Learning?



Many people think of intergenerational learning activities as being between grandparents and grandchildren (which it can be) however, most teacher/pupil, leader/scout or youth group member relationships are also intergenerational.

Anyone can participate in an intergenerational project, but it must be remembered that the principles must be adhered to in order for the full benefit of intergenerational practice to be gained, i.e. mutual and reciprocal benefit, participatory and strengthening community bonds.

The question may arise as to 'what is a generation?' For many people this could be

when it is possible to become a parent, the grandparent/grandchild divide, or something around 20 years. There is no right response to this question but researchers take a generation to be 25 years. This is because in that time they can see a significant difference in people's tastes in clothes, music, fashion trends and other similar social habits. What this means for an intergenerational project is that the generations working together could be 10 and 35; 25 and 50 or 55 and 80. Combinations of these ages are also acceptable, e.g. 12 and 55, along with multigenerational activities which include a number of generations.

Planning Activities Including Formal Learning Outcomes

Many intergenerational activities take place on a regular basis but, although carefully thought through, the formal planning processes are not captured. For those coming to this area for the first time the following information should help in the formal planning process.

Decide on the aims and then the learning outcomes and ask the following questions:

- Who are our partners?
- Who are our learners, from which generations?
- What do we want our learners from each generation to achieve?
- What are the learning opportunities that will be provided?
- How will we evaluate it?

Remember that learning outcomes should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time limited – in order to be evaluated.

Capitalise on what is already available in the local community, there is no need to look very far afield when planning activities. When looking for inspiration, go to the case studies on the Generations Working Together web site. Many practitioners have read a case study and realised that they can adapt the project to work in their own environment. There are many local organisations, employers and groups who will be happy to become involved, just contact them. Be prepared that in some instances planning may take a little time due to avoiding such things as exam timetables, holidays, and the end of the financial year!

Below are a number of helpful points which have been collected from those who have undertaken intergenerational projects.

1. Generations Working Together local networks can provide inspiration, support and guidance. Why not take all partners along to



meetings so that all involved understand the basic principles of intergenerational practice and see what others are doing in their projects.

2. Involve participants in planning and designing the project or activity, this creates a sense of ownership and provides mutual reciprocal benefits. Make a small sub group if necessary so that planning can actually take place. Some people may not want to take part in the project when they find out what is involved. Alternatively, others may join at a later date and need to be 'brought up to speed.' This should be a participatory process with no one group or person dominating.
3. Identify learning outcomes and shared priorities. There may be other outcomes and priorities important to groups or educational establishments, not just learning outcomes.

4. Identify someone who is going to lead – this could be a volunteer or even two people rather than just one person. Also, identify key people within all groups and organisations involved, someone who can take responsibility for making things happen. Remember not everyone will be able to attend all meetings and a key contact can be crucial in moving things forward.
5. Take time to prepare all parties and include them in discussions before the project or activity starts. This allows for: discussion about fears; queries to be answered; enables discussion around differing needs and support. For example, the question of how the older people are going to travel from their care home to a community venue.
6. It may be necessary to hold separate meetings with the different groups involved before bringing everyone together. This is important where there is potential or perceived conflict between groups and can have implications for timescales.
7. Think about sustainability from the start and think about the effect or consequences that will result by the project finishing.
8. Groups involved may have a clear intergenerational divide e.g. primary school children and grandparents, university students and older adults in sheltered housing, newly retired and very frail older adults, but may also be multigenerational i.e. including members from a number of generations. Remember older people are not one homogenous group.
9. There are a number of circumstances where additional or special planning may be required. For example, when including those with dementia, hearing or vision loss or for example with ethnic minority groups a translator may be required, or someone from that ethnic minority community who is part of your planning group and can lead or facilitate the activity. Alternatively, it may be a conflict situation where one group will not enter the 'territory' of another in a local area.
10. Disclosure is not difficult and should not be a problem. There are many people/resources who can assist with queries: An Introduction to the protection of Vulnerable Groups; Disclosure Scotland or the Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS).
11. When the project is over ask yourself the question – Can this partnership flourish in other projects?

Further information can be found below:

Invitation to Intergenerational Immersion - www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIVZ41KVasM or www.goo.gl/5zxr49

Beth Johnson Foundation Resources - www.centreforip.org.uk/resources/toolkits-and-guides

Generations United - www.gu.org/RESOURCES/LearningActivities.aspx

Adding Quality to Life through intergenerational learning through universities – www.goo.gl/4UIQq8

National Standards for Community Engagement - www.scdc.org.uk/what/national-standards/

An Introduction to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) – www.goo.gl/gXkwjE

Disclosure Scotland - www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/

CRBS – www.crbs.org.uk/

Evaluation

Evaluation is something we do all the time when we look back on activities and does not have to be an onerous time consuming process. Evaluation of the intergenerational project or activity should not be a separate item but part of ongoing evaluative work, incorporated into whatever system is currently being used. We tend to do it, in particular, when something goes wrong, but we also need to do it when activities go well. It can be very simple to record using post-it notes and asking participants to write down something they know now that they did not know before starting the project, or it can be an element of a formal tool such as 'How Good is our School?' or 'How Good is our CLD?'

Talking, listening and reporting the effect intergenerational learning has had within the school or community is often anecdotal. However, evaluation should be built into the work so that when planning for the future, decisions can be made on what to support, what needs changed and what has been successful. It also answers the question 'why are you doing this?'; learning outcomes and benefits are recorded and can be clearly seen. Evaluation needs to cover all generations involved, not just those within the educational establishment. In some cases the evaluative process should begin before the project in order to establish 'where are we now' and the effects of change can be measured.

Be careful, often people describe the work undertaken but do not discuss the **difference** that it has made. This difference becomes evident



through recording elements of the evaluative process.

In order for the learning to become embedded in the curriculum or learning objective, it is important to evaluate against the aims and outcomes of the learning project – this means that you have to set the learning aims and outcomes before you start! It is always important that the journey from start to finish is recorded and you know the starting point of learners.

A quick round of questions on day one about expectations and current knowledge is a good place to start. Remember, at the end to revisit these expectations to see if they have been fulfilled.

Further information on the helpful points can be found below:

Generations Working Together – <http://generationsworkingtogether.org/resources/evaluation/>
How do you know intergenerational Practice Works & Evaluating Intergenerational Projects are both resources from Beth Johnson Foundation - www.centreforip.org.uk/resources
Evaluate Support Scotland - www.evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/
Education Scotland - www.educationscotland.gov.uk/
Evaluating Community Projects - www.jrf.org.uk/system/files/1859354157.pdf



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