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Evolving the NHS Scotland information literacy process model

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1. Introduction

This article charts the work of NHS Education for Scotland's Knowledge Services Group (hereafter referred to as KSG) in developing and promoting the *Information Literacy Process Model* (hereafter referred to as the model). Our aim was to create a 'friendly' model of the process which would support staff throughout NHS Scotland in adopting and developing information literacy in their everyday practice and thus, enhance patient care.

2. The evolution of the model

We identified seven basic phases and began our attempts to mirror the mental and physical processes involved in "doing" information literacy. This proved to be particularly tricky and eventually resulted in a fairly complex model of the process (See Figure 1). We quickly realised that this model, although developed from our reading, discussions with colleagues, librarian networks and the Information Literacy Framework Steering Group, was confusing, cluttered, possibly intimidating and definitely user-unfriendly.

The model was refined to highlight and clarify

the seven phases of information literacy by removing the looping and representing the process as a continuous cycle which can be entered at any phase (See Figure 2). Bearing in mind that this model will be used in promotional material, it needs to be relevant to its audiences, easily recognised, supportive and readily associated with information literacy. Additionally, as we developed further resources, we intended to use the colours of the arrows as 'codes'. The information literacy portal (NHS Education for Scotland 2009) uses the colours to help users with navigation. For example, resources relating to formulating a question are colour-coded red, those linked to the source stage are beige and so on.

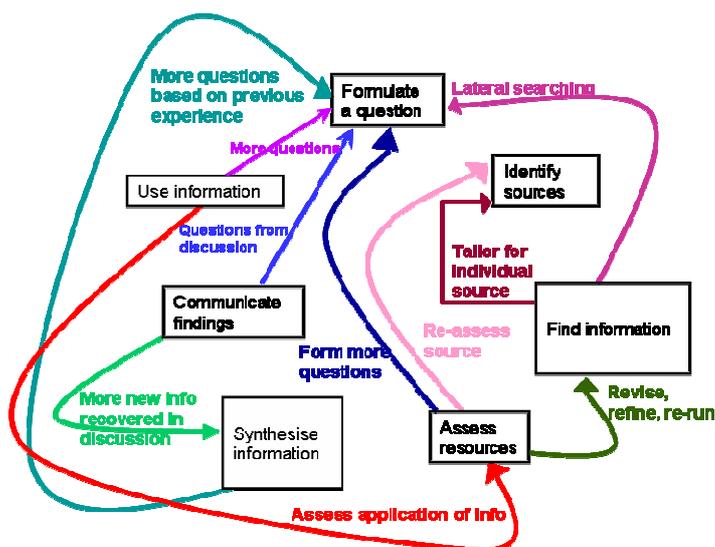


Figure 1: Primitive diagram of the Information Literacy Process



Figure 2: The NHS Scotland Information Literacy process model

3. Application of the Information Literacy process model

Explorations and applications of the model can be found in the Information Literacy Framework: *Better Informed for better health and better care* (NHS Education for Scotland 2009). The process and model are explained and explored in the information literacy portal and two self-paced courses - *ILS for administrative, clerical and support services staff* and *ILS for healthcare practitioners* (NHS Education for Scotland 2009) - are also available online. KSG is currently working to embed information literacy processes and principles in all of the training materials underpinned by the Information Literacy process model.

Although we do appreciate that supporting and promoting the development of information literacy and knowledge competence in NHS Scotland is a long-term project, the current acceptance and recognition of the model is encouraging (for full details, please contact the authors directly). For example Social Services Knowledge Scotland (SSKS) and NHS Quality Improvement Scotland have adopted our model. This suggests that the model is accurate and easy to understand and apply. Our information literacy products are released under a Creative Commons licence to enable other organisations to re-use and/or build on the work we have done. The only stipulations of the licence are that the derived work is non-commercial in nature, it is not an exact copy of the original, and that KSG is cited as the creator of the original works.

4. Next steps

Further promotion of the model is planned with the aim of demonstrating the relevance and applicability of information literacy throughout NHS Scotland. Our ultimate goal is to motivate and persuade colleagues to participate in information literacy activities, and hopefully to suggest further developments to meet the needs of NHS staff. This is a challenging task as the workforce is extremely diverse, comprising healthcare support services, administrative and clerical staff as well as healthcare professionals.

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