

# Talis Elevate: three approaches



## **Asynchronous**

BA1: key readings;  
throughout semester

MA: complementary  
material; between 'theory  
weeks'



## **Synchronous**

MA: in-class activity;  
familiarisation with platform



## **'Blended'**

BA1: webinar activity;  
replacement for practical  
class

# Synchronous

MA group, in-class activity  
(employability skills: critical reading of job descriptions)

- During first of two theory weeks on this module
- Ensured all students were familiar with Talis Elevate platform before using it for asynchronous guided SDL
- Done F2F but could work online? (comments a little 'laggy')

Week 17 in-class activity: Employability Skills (Applications)  
Read one or more of the job descriptions here, and highlight/annotate it based on what we have cover... Show more

<b>Job title:</b>	Digitisation Conservator
<b>Post number:</b>	new
<b>Grade:</b>	Grade C
<b>Role group:</b>	Service Delivery
<b>Group:</b>	Collections
<b>Department:</b>	Collection Management / Conservation
<b>Reports to:</b>	Conservation Digitisation Manager
<b>Location:</b>	St Pancras, London
<b>Date:</b>	October 2017

**SECTION 2**

**Job purpose:**

To examine, prepare and conserve items from the British Library's collections for imaging as part of in-house, philanthropically funded or commercial digitisation projects. Any conservation work is guided by conservation professional ethics and the principle of minimal intervention.

To enable the workflow of items in the imaging studio by condition assessing, preparing items and working closely with project colleagues to enable digitisation of items.

**Key areas of responsibility**

To undertake the condition assessment, preparation and practical conservation of items from the Library's collections selected for digitisation using appropriate conservation practices and under limited supervision.

To develop treatment options for items requiring conservation within the guiding principle of minimal intervention which enables items to be digitised while adhering to conservation professional ethics.

**Class comments**

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You will be required to provide training to staff and volunteers.

**Equality and Diversity**

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- Collaborative activity could support cohort community off-campus
- Making personal/anonymous comments can integrate shy learners into discussion, facilitate SDL & open debate, + alleviate 'stupid questions' issue

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MA group, poster critique - support for assessment (research proposal: poster presentation)

- Image mark-up as alternative to text-based/video sources
- Useful for T&L based on visual content
- Resources can include image/text but must be a single file



World War saw great amounts of cultural property from churches, museums and private estates being looted by the German Army. Even though in Europe in the 1930s there already existed preventive regulations that were followed by the **1954 Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict** they still prove not to be enough to fully safeguard the material heritage.

### Conflicts in Iraq

The most destructive war can be for cultural heritage are **invasions of Iraq** by the American army in 2003, and most recently by Islamic State in 2014. It was not only institutions such as the Mosul Museum and the Iraq National Museum that suffered looting and violent devastation of historical monuments – **the massive looting still poses an ongoing threat for historical and archaeological sites throughout this politically unstable country**, and large percentage of destroyed cities and monuments are on the long waiting list for the decision of authorities on what approach should be taken in order to rebuild and reconstruct them.

**A great challenge is also posed by the way conservation professionals communicate with the inhabitants of the destroyed cities to find the best solution for reconstructing lost heritage amidst conflicting values of both groups.** Research should be conducted on how to best cooperate with Iraqi civilians who are the most important stakeholders of those reconstructions and conservation works.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY**

**It is essential to remember how big a role conservation and preservation of endangered cultural heritage play for local communities – for them the destruction of their heritage is equal to the destruction of their spirit.**

serve as examples of how **proper documentation, cataloging, and digitization can have immense impact on how much of cultural property is saved** - in both cases large quantities of undocumented artifacts were lost or destroyed.

### Lack of cooperation between the cultural heritage community, the military and the local communities

poses probably the greatest and most delicate challenge. It is a potential area for further research and development. **Educating** both occupying troops and the locals on the importance of cultural heritage should be practiced as a large percentage of looting is executed by these two groups.

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The poster features a central image of a destroyed mosque with a green dome. Text on the left discusses the 1954 Hague Convention and the impact of conflicts in Iraq. Text on the right discusses the challenges of reconstruction and the role of local communities. A comment thread on the right contains three comments with replies, and a 'Help' button is visible at the bottom right.

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- Clicking on comment highlights pin/highlighted text, & vice versa

The image shows a poster about cultural heritage in Iraq, with several text annotations and a comment thread on the right. The poster text includes:

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## 'Blended'

After lockdown

BA1 group, practical module  
Support students in preparing for assessment (treatment proposal + justification) through application of key theory

- Asynchronous reading activity in Talis Elevate (1 x theory source, 1 x case study) followed by synchronous webinar in Collaborate Ultra

### Week 26 reading: Object case study

Please read this case study of the treatment of the upholstery on an 18th century sofa, for display in a 21st century museum gallery space. How does this link with last week's reading? What was the object's significance and values, how might they be characterised using Barbara Appelbaum's methodology (see week 25 reading), and how did they affect the conservators' decision-making during the project? [Show less](#)



replacement materials. The project was limited at all stages so as to create a digital label for the gallery, while extensively documenting both the treatment and the collaboration between the conservators and the curator.

#### Object history and description

Spencer House, St James's Place, London, is recognised as one of London's most important eighteenth century houses. In 1756 John, 1st Earl Spencer (1734–1783), instructed the architect John Vardy (1718–1765) to design the building and furnishings. In the autumn of 1758 James 'Athenian' Stuart (1713–1788) superseded Vardy and completed the first floor rooms, but the architectural climax of the ground floor remained Vardy's 'Palm Room', so named for its carved and gilded palm tree columns. The original suite of furniture in this room probably comprised a sofa, eight chairs and four stools made by the London cabinet-maker John Gordon.<sup>1</sup>

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24/03/20	⋮
Preservation + interpretation (Appelbaum)	
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Multidisciplinary approach (curator contributes to Appelbaum Quadrant III & IV?)	
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Appelbaum: quadrant IV.	

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Material aspects

better understanding of the object!

Non-material aspects

understand the historical context

does it have monetary value

**How does characterising an object in the way Appelbaum suggests help conservators to make decisions?**

Use the annotation tools to brainstorm ideas here

why people are interested in it

purpose of conserving the object

I: Object-specific materials - what are they?

Cotton fabrics

Screws

Oil gilding

III: Object-specific history, values, & predicted future  
the designer and maker

show how it was originally



Use the information about the sofa in the case study to add its material & non-material characteristics to each of Appelbaum's quadrants here.



Traditional joinery methods

Pest Vulnerabilities?

18th century upholstery technique  
how made in the eighteenth century

II: Non-object specific material properties & ...

Interiors history of the room

the historical period

John Gordon

A set including sofa, 8 chairs, 4 stools

IV: Non-object specific art/cultural history, & related ...

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- Guided SDL suggested taking same approach to assessed object

**How might you apply  
Appelbaum's method to  
your own object?**  
(key/jug/tin/tankard)

# Reflections

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- Material for which there was an end goal & defined questions in the resource description (e.g. blended approach) showed longer in-source activity
- Sources that were directly applicable to the assessment (e.g. example treatment report / research posters) also performed better than abstract/complementary resources
- MA: Analytics show that most comments were made as 'class' rather than 'personal' – students comfortable with one another following ½ year+ of F2F interaction?
- BA1: students in blended scenario had clearly read the sources, yet didn't leave 'class' comments! (did lack of in-class familiarisation activity affect this?)