Archaeological Heritage Education: Citizenship from the Ground Up

Tim Copeland[1]

Abstract

Underlying the concept of citizenship is the fundamental human characteristic of identity. In turn identity is a product of memory, both personal and collective, and this is based on experience with both tangible and intangible aspects of the past. This paper will outline how heritage education with children and adults (especially using the historic environment) is mutualistic with learning to be a citizen. Not only does heritage education support the broader aims of developing identities and citizenship, it is a right in itself —it is an essential component of citizenship. However, citizenship also brings with it responsibilities and these need to be considered in relation to the use of the archaeological and built heritage in education and by doing so, help develop and maintain caring and supportive societies.

Keywords: Citizenship education; archaeology; heritage.

Resum. Educació i patrimoni arqueològic: ciutadania des de la base

Inherent al concepte de ciutadania hi trobem la identitat, característica humana fonamental. La identitat, per la seva banda, és un producte de la memòria, personal i col·lectiva, basada en l'experiència d'aspectes tant tangibles com intangibles del passat. En aquesta aportació es pretén explicar com l'educació patrimonial amb infants i persones adultes (especialment mitjançant l'ús de mitjans històrics) forma part de com aprendre a ser ciutadans i ciutadanes. L'educació patrimonial no tan sols reforça els objectius més amplis per desenvolupar identitats i ciutadania, sinó que és, en ella mateixa, un component essencial de la ciutadania. No obstant això, la ciutadania també implica responsabilitats que han de ser considerades en relació amb l'ús del patrimoni arqueològic i arquitectònic en l'educació per tal d'ajudar al desenvolupament i al manteniment de societats humanitàries i solidàries.

Paraules clau: educació per a la ciutadania; arqueologia; patrimoni.

Resumen. Educación y patrimonio arqueológico: ciudadanía desde la base

En el concepto de ciudadanía subyace la característica humana fundamental de la identidad. Por su parte, la identidad es un producto de la memoria, personal y colectiva, que se basa en la experiencia de aspectos tanto tangibles como intangibles del pasado. En esta aportación se pre-

1. The International Centre for Heritage Education. University of Gloucestershire. Francis Close Hall. Swindon Road. Cheltenham GL50 4AZ-UK. tcopeland@glos.ac.uk

tende esbozar cómo la educación patrimonial con criaturas y personas adultas (especialmente mediante el uso del medio histórico) forma parte de cómo aprender a ser ciudadanos y ciudadanas. La educación patrimonial no solo refuerza los objetivos más amplios de desarrollar identidades y ciudadanía, sino que es, en sí misma, un componente esencial de la ciudadanía. Sin embargo, la ciudadanía también implica responsabilidades que necesitan ser consideradas en relación al uso del patrimonio arqueológico y arquitectónico en la educación para ayudar, de este modo, a desarrollar y mantener sociedades humanitarias y solidarias.

Palabras clave: educación para la ciudadanía; arqueología; patrimonio.

> Archaeology is a religious ceremony performed within the realm of the secular religion of the nation —that is Antiquity. Archaeologists act as the «priests» of this religion, as mediated between the past and the present, while its monuments are its icons.
>
> (Hamilakis 2007: 10)

Telling the past

This quotation is surprisingly recent, but does encapsulate an approach to archaeology that is still common on many sites and in many museums. I want to turn this approach to the material evidence from the past «on its head» by examining the model of heritage and citizenship that is implied by such a view and how a very different and inclusive set of attitudes can be developed that enables the «empowerment» of the public to construct their own pasts as individuals and as communities. «Empowerment» is a very over-used word in the UK, and sometimes acts as a «mantra,» but properly used it is a very liberating term and that is what I will seek to do in this opening paper.

The «priest» approach to archaeology can be described as having a number of positivistic aspects which can be illustrated most effectively, and I hope eloquently, through the diagram in fig. 1.

This scheme suggests that the interpreter is seen as the «central processor» of «sacred» information about a site/museum or objects and it is the role of the public to accept what the «expert» considers they should know and how it should be told to them.

We can take the argument further and examine what sort of definition of heritage this implies (table 1).

Facilitating the past

The way that we view the past and the influences it has on identity at national, community and personal levels is intimately related to citizenship. So what
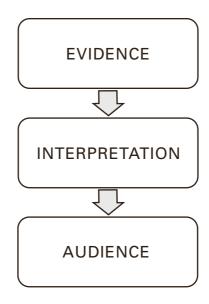
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Figure 1. The information flow in a positivist model.

Table 1. The implications of a positivistic definition of heritage

The positivist definition of heritage	
	Material assets
	Visible evidence
	Tangible evidence
	Monuments
Architecture and environmental beauty	
Nation based	
	Autocratic
	For «the masses»
Expert communicated	
Nationalistic	
Historical	
	Static
	Objective
	Classificatory
	Positivistic
Automatic birthright	
	Rigid
	Intolerant
	Inherited

inferences can we make from such a model and the way concepts of citizenship might be derived from it? (table 2).

How might we develop a contrasting model of citizenship that has an emphasis on the community and the individual where archaeologists are not «priests» but facilitators of involvement in communities, and what sort of definition of the archaeological heritage with its site/museums, monuments and artefacts will this imply? At the base of such a model we would have to consider whether individuals and communities are able to «construct» pasts and if so what type of heritage education, what type of pedagogy, is required to enable them to do so (table 3).

Such a model would change a definition of heritage significantly (table 4).

What does a constructivist model of interpretation look and how is it different from the one that opened this paper? (fig. 2).

Immediately it is clear that as the role of the audience changes then so does that of the interpreter who has to select the appropriate type of evidence to facilitate constructions of pasts and to present them meaningfully. In many ways this diagram could be seen as a spiral as with increasing knowledge, understanding of concepts and developing the skills of the audience (which can include us as professionals) there would be a progression of ability to interact with evidence from the past. Of course, there would also be differentiation in that individuals and groups would begin at different levels of expertise. Whereas such a model appears to diminish the role of the archaeologist and educator from expert to facilitator and from a simple model to a more complex and reflective one, the constructivist approach requires not only knowledge but also the skills of judgement and communication.

Having set the scene in terms of definitions we now need to get down to the detail of how these changing models affect work «on the ground». What relationships are there between citizenship education and heritage education? Perhaps the most important link is through identity. Paul Ricoeur (1995) suggests that «it is as citizens that we become human» and certainly the past determines the levels of identity that we carry inside of us (fig. 3).

Table 2. Positivistic ideal of citizenship

Positivist ideal of citizenship
Belonging and obedience to collective rules
Relation to political authority
Exclusive
Elitist
Civics education curriculum
Forma
Knowledge based
Didactic transmission
Easier to achieve and measure in practice

Table 3. Positivistic and constructivist comparison model of citizenship

Positivist ideal of citizenship	Constructivist ideal of citizenship
Belonging and obedience to collective rules	The individual and his/her rights
Relation to political authority	People living in society with other people
Exclusive	Inclusive
Elitist	Activist
Civics education curriculum	Citizenship education curriculum
Formal	Participative
Knowledge based	Process-led
Didactic transmission	Interactive interpretation
Easier to achieve and measure in practice	More difficult to achieve and measure in practice

Table 4. Positivist and constructivist definitions of heritage compared

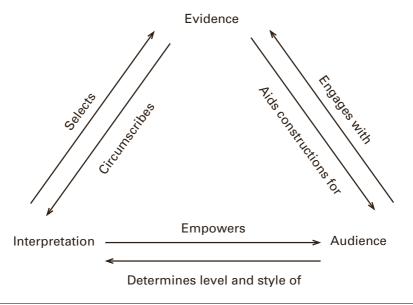| Positivist definition of heritage	Constructivist definition of heritage
Material assets Visible Tangible Monuments	Material assets but also those that are invisible, tangible and intangible, and non-material assets: language etc.
Architecture and environmental beauty	The significance of place in terms of the past and present and future society
Nation based	Social, ethnic, community-based
Autocratic For «the masses»	Individual Participative
Expert	Facilitator of communication
Nationalistic	Concerned with identity and symbols at individual, community as well as national levels Commemorative Inter-cultural Multi-cultural
Historical	Memory-oriented
Static Objective Classification Positivistic	Dynamic Emotional Flexible Constructivist
Automatic birthright	Actively claimed
Rigid Intolerant Inherited	Source of renewal Lever for change Force for mediation between cultures

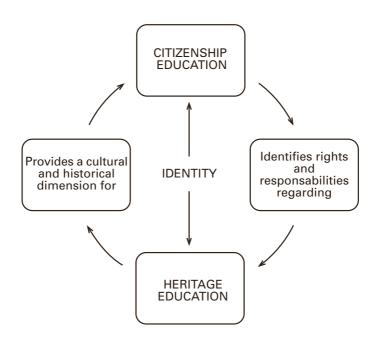**Figure 2.** The information flow in a constructivist model.

Figure 3. The relationship between citizenship education and heritage education.

Table 5. Citizens' rights and responsibilities in relation to the archaeological heritage

Rights	Responsibilities
to construct a personal heritage	to discover memory, material culture, history and identity
to recognise a common heritage	to have a commitment to:
having a heritage to exchange	protecting the heritage sharing/exchanging the heritage tolerating other heritages
historical competence in terms of understanding the role of evidence and the need for its interpretation	developing a sense of responsibility for the welfare of cultures
opportunities for individuals and groups to bring about cultural heritage change through research and with professional and academic support	understanding and valuing cultural and community diversity and respect for other people's heritages
	recognising that there is a common human heritage with varied components

Citizenship demonstrates the rights and responsibilities that we have to the archaeological heritage (table 5).

However, there is also a reciprocal relationship between community and heritage education in that it provides a cultural dimension for citizenship education:

— enables an understanding of contemporary issues by drawing on experience and knowledge of relevant facts, ideas and processes from the past of cultures,

— demonstrates an understanding of people's cultural needs and wants and the implications of these for social and racial equity,

— enables an understanding of the causes of, and possible approaches to, resolving conflict and controversy in a democratic society,

— enables critical appreciation of decision making processes in the cultural heritage,

— leads to understanding of how cultural heritage values and ethics influence people's decisions and actions, develops informed and reasoned opinions about cultural issues and how they influence political, economic and environmental issues.

These attributes are, and will, be valued in a rapidly changing world where adaptability, community and understanding of issues will be important parts of life as we continue in the task of conserving non-replaceable resources, especially our archaeological heritage.

That there is a congruence of approaches using a new definition of a constructivist interpretation of heritage and the values of citizenship is unmistakeable, but what does this mean in practice, what exactly do we do on site or in a museum. I have to be careful not to pre-empt what my colleagues are going to present so I will discuss generalities rather than specifics (table 6).

Implications and strategies

If a constructivist approach is accepted by interpreters as having more validity for making meaning from the evidence

Table 6. Implications and strategies of a constructivist approach for the interpretation of sites and museums

Positivistic interpretation	Constructivist interpretation
The site/museum is presented part to whole with emphasis on locational and factual knowledge	The site/museum is presented whole to part with the emphasis on big concepts such as chronology, change, evidence and interpretation
Sites/museums rely heavily on guiding and intermediate technology, such as audio-visual techniques	Sites/museums rely heavily on the use of evidence
Individuals/groups are viewed as consumers of knowledge	Individuals/groups are viewed as thinkers with present conceptions and emerging ideas about the past and future
Interpretation is didactic	Interpretation mediates the particular historic environment for people
Strict adherence to set out routes and explanation is highly valued	Visitor exploration is highly valued
Interpretation strategies are aimed at the individual	Interpretation strategies are aimed to encourage discussion

of the past than a positivistic approach, then this must be transposed into practical strategies to help audiences engage with the evidence of sites/museums and to incorporate it into their present knowledge.

The site/museum is presented whole to part with emphasis on «big» concepts of chronology, change, evidence, interpretation

Constructivist approaches work with «big» concepts such as evidence types, change, chronology, and interpretation. Rather than presenting facts in a linear pattern, the individual is made aware of the emphasis on these fundamental ideas so that it is easier for them to reflect, analyse, compare and contrast what they are seeing. Facts are still important in providing a detailed «scaffolding» but they can be assimilated into a broad framework and they become more relevant. The use of broad concepts can also provide multiple entry points for individuals and invite participation irrespective of individual backgrounds, and interests.

The use of the big concepts allows the individual to gain incremental knowledge of the evidence of the past in the landscape. It helps to ensure that visitors do not see every heritage venue as a special and unique case separate from the evidence of all the other sites/museums that they have seen, but as part of a wider historic environment existing all around them. Another way of looking at this is to compare it with developing the ability to speak a language. Learn the verbs and their tenses and the rest is just vocabulary. Learn the concepts (verbs) and each site/museum is another part of the vocabulary of the past.

Sites/museums rely heavily on the use of evidence

A constructivist approach prefers, where possible, to use primary sources along with manipulative, and interactive materials and the skill of the expert lies not in presenting information to the visitor but in identifying the most appropriate evidence and suggesting the types of questions that can be asked of it. Presenting ready synthesised information that relies on the authority of others can stifle enquiry. Sites/museums make the problems and solutions immediately relevant —they can be investigated readily. Using a single example of evidence and identifying characteristics and meaning can be seen as «specialisation». Using many examples of similar types of evidence, carefully selected by the interpreter, can lead to «generalisations» around the identified «big» concept. Using a variety of sources will also help to match individual's group's interests and learning profiles

Visitors are viewed as thinkers with present conceptions and emerging ideas about the past

Constructivist archaeologists/educators use visitor responses to drive interpretation. Careful evaluation of visitors' prior knowledge and values allows the archaeologist to frame the presentation to suit the audience.

Visitors bring with them their own conceptions of the past to sites/museums. The idea of «emerging» means that these conceptions can be developed. An important requirement in helping visitors make meaning at sites/museums is to ascertain what they are bringing to the location. It will always be important to work from and with the familiar as well as using the «strange» and new. Clearly, careful evaluation of audience pre-conceptions is as valuable as post-site/museum experience in designing an interpretation. There is also a need to provoke, and value, thinking through open-ended questions and encouraging individuals to ask questions of each other. Asking individuals to elaborate on their initial response to evidence enables its re-evaluation and helps make connections between contexts as well as developing their own hypothesis. Archaeologists will readily admit to each other that there is more than one interpretation of a site/object and this must also be present when working with the public.

Interpretation mediates the historic environment for visitors

Professionals inquire of visitors' own understanding of concepts before sharing their own interpretations. There is always a danger that the «expert» definition or explanation of evidence will eliminate visitor questioning.

Interpretation is at the interface of the individual and the evidence and provides the «scaffolding» to enable the visitors to make their own constructions. The onus should be on the visitor doing the thinking and sites/museums need to value risk-taking by visitors through asking questions and engendering relevance. Reflecting this in static interpretation boards is difficult, but not insurmountable; often it begins with the archaeologist being honest. I have produced boards using different colours to show the status of the knowledge there is about a site/ museum or artefact: RED, things we know for certain; BLUE, things that we are guessing at; GREEN, things that we would like to know. Taking the visitor/

community into our confidence in this professional manner helps them to see how archaeologists are problem solvers and not all (in fact very few) problems have clear-cut answers, and a number of valid answers. This enables the archaeologist to provide a «scaffolding» of dates and other known information not just in a passive transaction of knowledge, but as a foundation for thinking as an active process. Once the methodology has been understood at one part of the site/museum, visitors might be encouraged to repeat it in others through creating their own questions, making use of the evidence of the site/museum and suggesting solutions. It is crucial for the interpretation to avoid making the problem too simple by giving more information than was necessary as often it is the over-simplification of sites/museums that confuses the visitor.

Getting individuals or groups of people to ask questions in an area of knowledge is difficult because of the «this is a stupid question I know but…..» (There is no such thing as a «stupid question». If you do not know the answer then how can it be stupid). I recently had to learn German. I tried every time of course to penetrate this concrete language with no progress. I then discovered Michelle Thomas' course. He teaches two learners and all three of them can be heard on the CD, Thomas teaching and the other two attempting to construct sentence using verbs etc. Of course, the effect of this is that YOU become the fourth person and try to undertake the language task at the same time. At last there was something that worked. I dislike passive taped tours around sites/museums with the expert in command so I have put together some historic trails with the professional giving their own view but with two «visitors» ask-

ing «how do you know that?» and «what about that feature over there?» The real visitor becomes a part of the virtual tour group and gets confidence in asking questions of the expert.

Visitor exploration is highly valued

A constructivist approach encourages and accepts visitor initiative. It is necessary to allow individuals or groups to frame and articulate their own questions and to encourage searching for answers at different parts of a site. If new constructions are to be made then ease of access, ability to orient one's self to the site/museum and available time are important factors for consideration. Three dimensional maps of the site/museum are invaluable in the first respect as they reinforce the «place» concept as well as allowing positioning within the site/museum. If the linear route is dispensed with, and the «big» concepts' used as a structure, then it should be possible for visitors to explore more widely. Comfort is also important in that it can extend visitor «stay» times if there is somewhere to rest and is familiar. Comfortable places to rest or reflect also help visitors to seek relevance in what they see or have been introduced to and give the opportunity to think through their point of view. Such modern features may alter the site/museum, but if sites/museums are not seen and made meaning of, why are we keeping them?

Interpretation strategies are aimed to encourage discourse

The process of construction does not take place in a vacuum. It is much easier to seek assimilation or accommodation of concepts when they can be verbalised and

thought through out loud. One fundamental way for visitors to change or reinforce conceptions is by offering opportunities and resources for talking. Having the opportunity to present one's own ideas to the «expert», as well as being permitted to hear and reflect on the ideas of others, is an enabling experience that reinforces self-determination and ownership. Meaning making is enhanced through social discourse as ideas are tried out with peers. Many sites/museums and historic settings structurally discourage co-operation and discourse and therefore the possibility of higher order responses. At other times it is the provision of «expert» testimony about the site/museum that inhibits dialogue. Often it is the non-negotiability of the ideas about the site/museum that leads to visitors giving their own opinions in whispered asides. One of the most effective strategies that I have seen used on historic sites/museums are «community» or «family» guide packs which require work in pairs or small groups around the site/museum and then the meeting up to share perspectives. These have a successful formula and with increasingly challenging material might make for a useful template for other sites/museums.

Assessment and evaluation seeks to discover visitor perspectives and improve interpretation

Constructivist assessment has three main aims each of which reinforces the concept of individual experience and difference which is a cornerstone of constructivist approaches:

— Monitoring meaning making development in terms of knowledge, experience and expertise

— Identify difficulties in using evidence
— Provide insight into interpretation and intervention strategies.

It is important to listen to visitor responses as much can be revealed by the way visitors talk to each other or to the «expert». The way visitors use language can help to assess the nature of their understanding and constructions and can help the interpreter to refine, to extend and to modify his/her ideas. Observing visitors engaging with evidence through «shadowing» or «chasing» can enable the effectiveness of chosen examples of evidence to be evaluated.

More formal techniques can be used in focussed sample assessment and evaluation: discussions in groups, the writing of simple logs during the visit, using «word-stems» to frame and scaffold responses: «I expected to see... I learned that... the most surprising thing... the greatest insight was...». Assessments such as these enable the interpreter to re-focus visitor activity through careful evaluation of the objectives of the interpretation and to undertake another cycle of construction themselves.

If I was asked to name just ONE of my preferred outcomes for a constructivist view of heritage education it would probably be that individuals and communities know the valid questions to ask of evidence for the material past and how to interpret and represent their findings, and as important is that their answers are accepted as having value and not just acknowledged cosmetically. This is real empowerment and can deepen the sense of belonging and ownership which are essential for active citizenship.

Conclusion

Although everyone has a relationship with the past, I think that we as archaeologists and educators all enjoy our special relationship with *the evidence* from the past. I suspect that at some time or other we all do savour having the «sacred» knowledge that we share. It is a satisfying feeling to have our own identities confirmed through being accepted as expert. However, none of us would be here unless we had our own agenda, our own wish to be «missionaries» of archaeology and to help a public that ultimately pays for our particular passions realise that they are getting good value for their money —a rather grudging view of citizenship. However, more importantly, we are here to exchange our perspectives on «empowering» individuals so that they can feel the growing self-esteem, the self-knowledge and the motivation to enquire that studying the material traces of the past brings and thereby awareness of identity and active citizenship.

Having been involved in heritage education for a large part of my career as an archaeologist, teacher, head-teacher and now a university lecturer in archaeology and education, it is still a temptation to tell people the answers to the questions that they ask about the archaeological heritage (and hopefully see a halo appear around my head!). However, I believe that to do so as «expert» probably will «de-skill» the enquirer and develop that nasty disability known as «learned helplessness». Yes, we do have to work harder, we do ask individuals and groups to think more intensely, but it is my experience that, as well as developing close professional relationships with a wide range of people, I also get further insights into the archaeology.

If I have disturbed your archaeological world then that is a good starting point from which to use the next few days to construct a new view of the relationship between the evidence for the material past and education and citizenship.

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