

Touching the Past?

Sarah Dhanjal

Institute of Archaeology, UCL

Public archaeology is concerned with the external image of archaeology, which is often seen as an elitist niche subject. Yet the future of archaeology lies in ensuring support for the subject and training future archaeologists. The demise of archaeology GCSE and the Government's further education policies threaten to make archaeology yet more elitist. If we are to engage the public surely we ought to 'start young' and nurture a sense of ownership and 'agency' in children through schools and museums? This paper describes the design and trial of an interactive archaeological activity inspired by constructivist learning theories. It concludes with some suggestions for good practice in engaging the public in archaeology.

Keywords

Constructivism, education, interactive, interpretation, public

Introduction

Over the summer of 2004, I ran a public archaeology project as part of a Master's degree at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL (IoA). The project examined the potential merits of approaching archaeology in conjunction with constructivism to make it more interactive and aid both formal and informal education. Constructivism has been described as a type of learning that "requires active participation of the learner both in the way that the mind is employed and in the product of the activity, the knowledge that is acquired" (Hein 1998: 34). According to constructivist theory, learning is located in the mind of the learner and influenced by the learner's previous experiences and knowledge; a more detailed discussion is presented below. Most importantly, we must consider the needs of our audiences and how to fulfil them. Therefore, this paper considers the present state of archaeology and how constructivist theories can best be integrated with it. In the practical application presented below, constructivist theory was used to create and test an interactive archaeological activity. The paper concludes with some suggestions for good practice based on this experience.

Identifying a Need: The Public and Archaeology

Most undergraduate students at the IoA now study public archaeology as a compulsory unit in their degrees. It is also possible to read for a Master's degree in the subject. It seems that public archaeology is a fast-developing subject. McGimsey, who coined the phrase 'public archaeology', thought that, "all archaeological data, including the archaeological objects themselves, falls into the domain of public interest and concern" (McGimsey 1972: 5). The study of public archaeology has grown around that debate over who archaeology is for and the factors influencing public interaction with archaeology. This signifies a growing awareness of our 'audience' because we recognise that archaeology is an increasingly popular subject with the general public. The proliferation of television series, books published as 'spin-offs' and many other volumes by academics and fringe authors seem indicative of the position of archaeology in the public consciousness. *Power of Place*, the results of a MORI poll conducted for English Heritage, placed the historic environment and related education as a top priority for

public spending: “Virtually everyone in England – some 98% – believe [sic] that the historic environment is a vital educational asset”, and in addition 87% think it is right that public funding helps to preserve it (English Heritage 2000: 4). Thus, there does seem to be a demand to preserve the past and to know more about it.

How Does the Government Service this Interest in Archaeology?

Firstly, in terms of funding, grant-in-aid to national museums totalled £385m for 2004/2005 and will rise to £423m in 2007/2008 (Beirne 2005: 17). With the retail price index at 3.5%, there is a real terms deficit of 1.8% (Beirne 2005: 17). This is the overall budget – each organisation has its own allowance. Recent strikes by the Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) and Prospect union have tried to highlight chronic under-funding in national museums and its effect on underpaid and undervalued staff. All museums are forced to use increasingly commercial means to fund any academic and educational endeavours they undertake. Everywhere, potential is starved by lack of funding.

Secondly, archaeology is under-funded and archaeologists are underpaid. Little is done to prevent this as planning policy prompts developers to accept the lowest tenders from commercial archaeology units. Budgetary constraints like these often push education to the bottom of any list of priorities.

Thirdly, 2004 saw the phasing out of GCSE Archaeology (UK exams taken at the end of compulsory secondary education, usually at age 16); the final exams will be in 2006. In the House of Lords Baroness Ashton argued that the GCSE system ensures that if a board plans to cease offering a subject, it will be not be allowed unless another board provides the option (Ashton 2004). Unfortunately, this did not happen in the case of GCSE Archaeology. In effect, scrapping GCSE Archaeology has created elitism, as pointed out by Tony Robinson on the ‘Today’ programme (Today 2004). Children whose formal education ends at GCSE level are denied the chance to study archaeology. For those who do wish to study further, it is rather a gamble to enrol on an A/S level (a UK exam taken one year after GCSE level) or undergraduate degree without detailed experience or understanding of what the discipline entails, although it could be argued that this has also been true in the past. One of the arguments for scrapping the course is that not many students chose to study it. However, it was limited to certain schools and colleges, and rarely known by students to be a possibility.

Lastly, looking to the university system, the introduction of tuition fees also means that those who might have read Archaeology as an interest may choose to pursue other subjects thought to have more lucrative outcomes. This theory is supported by analysis of the number of applicants to archaeology undergraduate courses supplied by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). In 1996, 980 potential students applied to read archaeology courses across the country. In 2004, the number of potential students had dwindled to 545, a slight improvement from 2003, when only 479 applied (UCAS 2005). Tuition fees were introduced in 1998 and have steadily risen with inflation; it cannot be a coincidence that the number of applications has almost halved. It seems that tuition fees discourage the study of subjects for the sake of interest, despite

the useful skills that may be accrued. Universities will soon set their own fees and more means-tested bursaries are anticipated. It will be interesting to see what effect this has on recruitment.

Does Archaeology Have a Place in Education?

A strategic analysis of the situation would suggest that the best way to reach a wide range of people from varied social groups and backgrounds is through schools. The *Power of Place* document reports that when MORI asked people “how they would spend £100 on one aspect of the heritage”, by far the most popular choice (22%) was “education programmes for schools” (English Heritage 2000: 23). Clearly, the public recognises the importance of the past within education.

Unfortunately, archaeology is not a recognised curriculum subject though there are many projects trying to get archaeology into schools. Most museums have an outreach service or offer school events and activities. Imaginations are stretched to work archaeology into the school curriculum through subjects such as history, maths, geography and art. For practical reasons, most of this work takes place with children studying National Curriculum Key Stage (KS) 2 (ages 7-11). It is easier to fit archaeology into the KS2 curriculum, and it is easier for teachers to take this age group on school outings.

The present education system values skills and competences; Henson has identified ways in which archaeology can deliver these: “knowledge – learning about the past, understanding – learning from the past and using the heritage of the past, skills – learning about archaeology” (Henson 2000: 46). Thus, archaeology has the potential to make valuable educational contributions, and archaeologists need to prove the relevance of the subject to a wide range of people. Many aspects of practical archaeology have more potential to inspire than textbooks full of timelines and sources. Physical archaeology as a resource is not drawn upon enough and often schools and teachers are not aware that there are enthusiastic people to help them use archaeology. Only by creating a sense of ownership and agency in archaeology can we ensure a more widespread interest. Archaeology and history can be hard to understand, especially the concept of time, the different mindsets of different times, and the ways in which these affected how people lived. All of the above means that the prehistoric past tends to be ignored in favour of the more resource-rich historic periods.

Finding a Possible Solution

I would suggest that public archaeology bears similarities to science communication, which studies aspects of the public appreciation of science. The communication of science to schools and families has been developing in America since the 1960s. The “Launch Pad” at the Science Museum, London, which opened in 1986, was the first interactive science gallery in the UK. It was inspired by American models such as the “Exploratorium” in San Francisco. “Launch Pad” uses interactive exhibits and is staffed by facilitators (called Explainers) to communicate scientific theories. The popularity and success of “Launch Pad” has led to further interactive galleries both within the museum and beyond. Having worked as an explainer in the Science Museum, I believe that similar methods can be used in the communication of archaeology, where the full potential of interactive methods has yet to be tapped.

How Do We Define Constructivism?

I have previously compiled a detailed discussion of constructivist theory in an unpublished dissertation (Dhanjal 2004). A few of the key points that influenced the current project are presented below.

Each learning theory (of which constructivism is an example) has a theory of knowledge (epistemology) and a theory hypothesising how this knowledge can be learnt (Hein 1995: 21). Constructivist writers such as Piaget (1976) and Bruner (1960) hold that the body of knowledge does not exist external to the learner. Constructivism does not deny that there is a truth, or a right answer, but denies that we will come to know it. Motivated curiosity inspires the learner to construct his/her own body of knowledge. Simultaneously, the learner also adopts his/her own preferred method of learning. Both of these processes occur without conscious effort. It bears a resemblance to Bruner's "spiral curriculum", which claims that, "any subject can be taught to any child in some honest form" (Bruner 1960: 52). The method is also very similar to the hermeneutic spiral outlined by Hodder (1999: 39). Archaeologists would recognise it as the archaeological idea of working from the known to the unknown (Corbishley 1986: 5), although these three examples also seek to increase consciousness of the processes involved.

In order to understand where the theory of constructivism came from and how it developed, it is now necessary to turn to the original theories. John Dewey, the author of *Education and Democracy* (1916), is often referred to as the grandfather of constructivism. Dewey was very critical of the teaching styles in America at the time. He felt that learning by rote separated the mind from the body's reaction to educational stimuli, and he valued prior experience and learning from everyday situations (Dewey 1916).

Lev Vygotsky developed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory (Vygotsky 1930). This posits that a child has a range of cognitive development that he or she may reach unaided, and that a further range of cognitive development can be reached if the child is aided by a more advanced learner. The more advanced learner may be another child or an adult who 'scaffolds' the experience. Both Dewey and Vygotsky emphasised the social element of learning. Dewey thought that a child's discussions and experiments with peers was an important part of learning. Similarly, social interaction plays an important part in Vygotsky's ZPD theory.

Vygotsky (1930) highlighted the role of memory in learning. He thought that children were marrying past experiences with present situations. Piaget (1976) also wrote about the importance of prior experience, defining the processes of accommodation and assimilation in the cognitive development of the child. When a learner observes something or is informed of certain facts, either of the two processes may occur. If the observation or facts are in accord with the learner's previous experiences and ideas then they will be assimilated. Accommodation occurs when the learner's ideas are in discord with the new 'facts'. If the learner feels that the doubts are verified, he/she will change his/her theories and accommodate the new information, otherwise it will be discarded (Piaget 1976: 356-357). This is an important point in this context as it reflects the process of forming archaeological interpretations.

Bruner thought that teaching ought to be devised using the “most fundamental understanding that can be achieved of the underlying principles that give structure to the subject” (Bruner 1960: 31). The concepts on which a subject is based ought to aid the learner in adding and evaluating knowledge, so Bruner thought that “instruction in these subjects should begin as intellectually honestly and early as possible” (Bruner 1960: 54). He also felt that the context of the concepts being taught should be clear (Bruner 1960: 31). Bruner looked at the importance of language in learning: how we feel the need to name and discuss things. We learn by drawing ideas together, expressing them and discussing them (Bruner 1983: 128).

Ernst Von Glasersfeld (1983, 2000) has written about the application of constructivism to mathematics. Perhaps the most interesting of his ideas is that we can use indisputable facts as part of a constructivist framework. He uses the study of history as an example, saying that one must learn facts like dates by rote, but that in the way we look at history the interpretation is open to construction (Von Glasersfeld 2000).

It is hard to be concise about what constructivism is, and it seems that each writer emphasises different elements. Each person’s vision of constructivism will be unique, as it will be influenced by his or her previous constructions and experiences. Interesting as the theories are, they can only really be tested by practical application.

Previous Applications

Hein (1995, 1998) has written about the use of constructivism in museums, and Cope-land (1998, 2004a, 2004b) about the application of constructivism to archaeological sites. Of course, it would be better to get the public involved in real archaeological fieldwork, but due to the increasingly professional bias of archaeology and issues of insurance and health and safety this is not always possible. Other more interactive archaeological facilities, such as those at the Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC) in York, and The Dig at the Museum of London, aim for children to come to a pre-specified conclusion. This does not constitute a truly constructivist activity, as it implies that there is a correct answer. A constructivist activity should pose a question or challenge and must encourage thought processes in order to reach a solution.

Planel (1990: 275) writes that Bruner thought it was important to teach children subjects in an academically rigorous and legitimate way. Short of doing real fieldwork, it is important to make any activity that is going to approximate it in as lifelike a way as possible. This does not necessarily mean including excavation in the activity. Digging can be enjoyable and it does add to the sense of excitement and discovery, but in many cases it can distract from the educational points of the activity (for a discussion of these see Dhanjal 2004). Therefore, in order to mimic the process of archaeology, I created a mechanical interactive that did not include the digging element.

Creating an Interactive Exhibit

An ‘interactive’ is an exhibit in which one or more parts can be manipulated to achieve different outcomes, while a ‘mechanical interactive’ has been defined as one that does not use a computer screen (Gammon 1999). The interactive encourages the process of

interpretation. It is said that, “We remember: 20% of what we read, 30% of what we hear, 40% of what we see, 50% of what we say, 60% of what we do, 90% of what we see, hear, say and do” (Smith 2000: 5), which suggests that the more interactive and socially active an exercise is, the more memorable it should be.

The National Curriculum KS2 inspired the academic aims of the interactive described in this paper (Table 1): The concept of decay and preservation, which helps us to look at the survival of objects, is also tackled in KS2 Science. Other curriculum links are possible, but will not be covered here.

KS2 History Curriculum Heading	Attainment Target (NC Online 2005)	Interactive Aim
Chronological understanding	Pupils should be taught to place events, people and changes into correct periods of time (1a)	To aid children’s understanding of chronology by practical application
Historical enquiry	Pupils should be taught to ask and answer questions, and to select and record information relevant to the focus of the enquiry (4.1)	To encourage children to form interpretations
Historical interpretation	Pupils should be taught to recognise that the past is represented and interpreted in different ways, and to give reasons for this (3)	To recognise that there are many interpretations and start to think about why, through forming interpretations and seeing those of archaeologists and other children
Organisation and communication	[Pupils should be taught to] communicate their knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways (5c)	To express and record their ideas, aiding the formulation and communication of interpretations and helping to exercise literacy skills

Table 1. KS2 attainment targets and corresponding aims of the author’s interactive.

The interactive took the form of a wooden box, cannibalised from a shelving unit made by a well-known Swedish furniture shop! It contained four removable trays painted to simulate four different stratigraphic layers (Fig. 1), each layer representing and containing a selection of artefacts from a different time period: Victorian, Tudor, Saxon and Roman – all history topics that most children at KS2 will encounter at school. The children were provided with dating sheets for identifying and dating the layers.



Figure 1. The finished interactive, painted in a range of earth colours.

The artefacts were kindly provided by John Shepherd at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC). We agreed that an extra dimension could be added to the activity by creating assemblages for the children to explore and asking them to interpret the artefacts individually and then as an assemblage. Each of the assemblages contained a range of building materials, ceramics and food remains such as bone and shell (Figs. 2-5). The items chosen had many duplicates in the collection and were deemed to be quite robust. We also agreed that the educational value outweighed the potential for damage, and in fact the artefacts incurred no damage.

Mystery objects were included to add an extra dimension to the activity, especially for children more able to explore the thinking processes involved. Some of the genuine artefacts were quite hard to identify, and a few replica artefacts were included to evaluate the children's reactions to them.

The author consulted Ben Gammon, head of Science Live at the Science Museum, who mentioned that only seven items are normally stored in a person's short-term memory (Gammon pers. comm.), so some method of recording ideas was needed. Simple context sheets were therefore created to aid the participants' memories and to help the author with evaluation of the activity.

Results

The interactive was tested in a series of three trials. One was at a London primary school with 10-11 year olds. Another was at the IoA (during National Archaeology Day 2004), with 7-10 year olds. The last was at Butser Ancient Farm, with 8-10 year olds. The children's experiences were recorded by means of observation (by myself or by helpers), by the context sheets and by a post-activity interview. Here I have combined the information gained from the three samples. I wish to discuss some of the strands of interpretation that the children produced and possible reasons for them.

The children had varying experiences of archaeology. The school-children had taken part in a project about the Bronze Age with the East Sussex Archaeology and Museums Project (ESAMP) and had some idea about what archaeologists do. As for the other children, the more they knew, the more confident they were with the activity. One child had read a popular children's archaeology book and was eager to share ideas about radiocarbon dating.

As part of the evaluation the children were asked to put cards with 'Roman', 'Saxon', 'Tudor' and 'Victorian' written on them in chronological order. This is a difficult task to achieve, and while roughly half of the children were able to do it, in general they were not confident in doing so. After the activity all of the children were able to arrange the periods in correct order confidently, proving that, in the short term, the exercise aided knowledge of chronology. The view of constructivism used in this project values chronology as fact and as a framework. This physical method of viewing time depends on observation, a more active method of learning.

Victorian (Fig. 2)

In general, the artefacts in the Victorian layer seemed most easily identifiable, probably because they bore the most similarity to present-day material culture. Some of the more noteworthy items included a teacup, which caused much discussion. At the school, all of the children decided it was a bowl, but argued over whether it was for breakfast or ice cream. Only one child identified the item as a teacup, reasoning that it was "like a Japanese person would have". Some of the children had problems identifying the teapot spout, due to the fact that they did not have a teapot at home. These examples prove that children's previous experience shapes their interpretations.



Figure 2. The Victorian layer. Note the relative familiarity of the objects.

Tudor (Fig. 3)

The children proved less able to identify foodstuffs that have become less common, such as oysters, and the bones proved equally hard to identify. Two of the children (aged 10) interpreted the assemblage as a burial, but both then decided that the bone probably was not human. They decided that the assemblage represented a domestic setting, a house or kitchen. In general the children identified many of the objects as drinking vessels, which influenced their subsequent interpretations. These included “a pub”, “burial ground or house” and “village/town”. In one interpretation of this assemblage, a child used prior knowledge of the Tudors and the presence of drinking vessels to conclude that the assemblage came from “Henry VIII’s palace, because he liked drinking”.



Figure 3. The Tudor layer. Note the food remains.

Saxon (Fig. 4)

The children thought that the bone horn core in this layer was a “horn/dog’s bone”, an “ox tooth” or a “goat”. The assemblage was interpreted as showing “killing animals”, “cooking/a farm”, “pot shop” and “a grand house, where they go hunting, you need a lot of money to go hunting, you need a gun”. This last interpretation shows a modern mindset trying to make sense of a past one, and using the familiar to justify the conclusion. A replica silver coin was present, but the children were more interested in looking at the genuine artefacts. One child identified the function of the replica antler dice but asked, “Why are they plastic?” which suggests there is a need for labelled samples of various materials for comparison to aid identification. Two children from different groups thought that the assemblage indicated “cooking and playing games”. Another child decided it was a “Saxon village or house because of the household objects”, showing the ability to justify a conclusion. A child at Butser who thought the assemblage represented a “villa” possibly used previous learning about the past in general or was influenced by the villa structure at the site.



Figure 4. The Saxon layer. Note the replica coin and dice.

Roman (Fig. 5)

The children seemed to be quite familiar with the Roman period. Two children (aged 7 and 10) used the term ‘Samian ware’ and one termed it “red imported pottery”, showing the ability to recognise and describe it. Two children thought that the tesserae were the edging for a road, which affected their overall interpretation of the assemblage, for example, an “old Roman camp next to a road”. The tesserae were also thought to be “dice, for gambling, in some kind of way” and “unit cubes” for counting. A floor tile featuring a dog’s paw-print enabled the children to see a moment captured in time, prompting the comment, “They probably did the floor and then the dog walked in”.

Some of the children used lateral thinking to work out what objects were. A piece of mortarium (bowl for grinding foodstuffs), for example, was interpreted as “a grinder”

by one child and “a rough plate so food sticks to it” by another. Both of these ideas try to work out how the raised grit affects the function. When describing a replica grooming set, two children used a modern equivalent, “a pocket knife” or “Swiss Army knife”. Again, these interpretations were influenced by modern mindsets, but were made by drawing equivalents. Overall interpretations of this assemblage mentioned places such as Rome or Fishbourne, showing the children’s previous geographical awareness of the Roman Empire.



Figure 5. The Roman layer. Note the tile in the bottom-right corner.

Conclusions

Individuals will create interpretations according to their perception of the world. This means that at first they will not interpret objects to be something they are not familiar or acquainted with. Dewey noted that new ideas are the “discovery of the connection of things” (Dewey 1916). New ideas are the result of already observable components assembled in a different way. Thus, children may sometimes make a leap of imagination in their interpretations, but the elements that make up their interpretation will tend to be familiar. Children often view people in the past as primitive, partly due to the way that they are taught history with a bias toward modern periods. In addition they do not know when familiar objects were invented, so they are unaware if they were available in the past; for example, did the Victorians have ice cream to put in their bowls? It can also be hard to access past mindsets: schools tend to try to achieve this by empathising with past peoples, and it is questionable whether this is effective.

Children are likely to be familiar with a narrower range of items and ideas than adults are and so will come to different conclusions. In each of the trays, the items interpreted together would normally indicate a domestic setting. It was not the intention that the children should all come to this conclusion. To some children, the presence of bones meant human remains and therefore a burial. Some quite complex archaeological processes can be conveyed. Children at the school, for example, recognised that the assemblages mainly contained pottery as it preserves well.

Children’s interpretations can be very generalised, for example, the pipes in the Victorian layer indicated to most children that the Victorians liked smoking. One child

thought this meant that there were a lot of old people, as he associated pipe smoking with old age. It is interesting to note that certain objects were interpreted in the same way by several children in different groups, suggesting that a limited number of interpretations may be reached. For example, a Tudor clay roof tile was interpreted as a board for chopping food or forming clay by three different groups of children. Children at KS2 (ages 7-11) have more experience of using such items than of using building materials. The physical resemblance of these items makes this easy to understand. Similarly, some of the school children interpreted Roman tesserae as unit cubes, used for maths in schools, possibly due to the school setting that we were in.

Suggestions for Good Practice

The experience gained both from this project and from working as an Explainer has helped to form the suggestions presented below.

Advice for Explainers

Archaeologists spend at least three years at university learning how to interpret objects and assemblages. Many children and adults have not learnt questioning processes, and therefore they will often jump into interpretations rather than constructing them. In addition, no one is naturally confident of his or her interpretations. This means that the person running an activity will often be seen as an expert, regardless of whether this is true or not! Professionals should be prepared to admit that they do not know all the answers. Reinforce the fact that interpretations are only theories expressing the most likely explanation for the available evidence.

The project served to emphasise that children should be given time to think. It is advisable not to give the answer too easily because the satisfaction of working through the process should help and reward the learner.

Suggest Further Exploration

If time allows, we should help people to think about possible misjudgements in logic. There are ways to do this without undermining them, for example by pointing out the properties of items. A pot made of wood would not be much use for cooking, but a piece of clay pot that shows signs of burning may indicate such a use. This may be obvious to most archaeologists, but the process of interpretation can be confusing.

Provide 'Scaffolding' for the Thought Process

Vygotsky's theories would suggest that we should not ask questions that only elicit 'yes' or 'no' answers, as they do not encourage dialogue. Open questions encourage discussion and stimulate thought processes: for example, it is better to ask what something is made of rather than give a choice between two materials. One may gain the support of parents or guardians. When adult volunteers answer, children tend to trust the adult and copy the answer, without question. It is therefore important to encourage adults to ask open questions and support the children because this is more helpful.

Working with Artefacts

If artefacts are central to an activity, the activity can easily be adapted for any age, supporting calls for lifelong learning. However, one must be aware of the requirements

and levels of understanding of the participants, something one becomes able to analyse and gauge with experience. Genuine artefacts are more exciting and interesting than replicas. This is suggested by the fact that the children tended to ignore replicas or give them less attention whilst working with the interactive. It is important to understand the concept of continuity, and one can encourage comparisons between past objects and present equivalents.

Of course, there is no guarantee that these methods will engage all children. Activities should be flexible enough to adapt to the needs of different users. We must not expect to reach everyone and this is not failure. However, at the moment we are failing to reach many of the people who have the potential to be interested.

Agency and ownership do not necessarily mean looking at archaeology and saying ‘this is mine’. What is more important is that it is engaging, and the learner can say ‘this interests me’ or ‘I worked this out, I understand this’, particularly if this is achieved unaided or with minimal intervention. In addition, the more repetitive the activity is, the more likely it is that the learning behind it will be developed and cemented by successive attempts.

The Future of Public Archaeology

As part of public archaeology courses, students should have the opportunity to work with the public, in order to find out what their many needs are and to gain experience of trying to meet them. Practical experience has taught me that it is only by getting to know your audience that you can satisfy their needs.

For jobs in the archaeology/education sector, original ideas and experience should be valued equally to academic qualifications. Children’s experiences in museums should be different from those in classrooms. Activities should be things that cannot be achieved easily at school and qualified teachers are not the only people able to offer this.

Activities for other age groups should be developed: there is huge potential to work with KS1 (ages 5-7) and KS3 (ages 11-14). Older age groups would also benefit, but practical constraints like exam work and timetabling would need to be considered.

I would also like to see the creation of a “Launch Pad” for archaeology. By selecting a range of neat and communicable concepts, many educational and casual interests in archaeology could be catered for. The necessity of scaffolding experiences could then be explored. Using real archaeological sites as a basis for activities means that they would be more academically authentic. In addition, it could be an aid to research to observe non-archaeologists’ interpretations. It is interesting that most archaeologists do not necessarily have practical experience of the things that they interpret. Constructivism would require more observable proofs, like those provided by experimental archaeology, and those used by the children.

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