

IATL Pedagogic Intervention Grant

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Exploring Didactic Approaches: The Role of Context and Display in Recording Cultural Heritage.

Trip to Chedworth Villa & the Corinium Museum: March 16th 2016.

The IATL Pedagogic Intervention Grant allowed the Classics department to co-ordinate a day visit to two- key sites in Roman Britain: Chedworth Roman Villa and the award winning Corinium museum in Roman Cirencester. The field trip integrated into the curriculum of two courses in the Classics department: Roman Culture and Society (a first year core module including the entire first year cohort (ca. 80 students)) and 2nd/3rd year students enrolled (ca. 12 students) in module entitled “Domestic Space in the Ancient world” along with 4 specialist lectures from the department (Dr. Abigail Graham (RC&S module convenor), Dr. Ersin Hussein, Dr. Zahrah Newby (Domestic space module conveynor, and Prof Stan Ireland (emeritus). The purpose of the trip was to juxtapose two very different sites: a Roman Villa, (still under excavation) and an established museum with excellent interactive exhibits, including an award winning App. Having studied these sites in class and as part of a seminar, the students then had the option of choosing a site and a topic to “experience” in the morning through a series of sessions, which were led by students and lecturers from the Domestic Space module @ Chedworth and Dr. Abigail Graham (Inscriptions) and museum specialists (Coins & Pottery) @ the Corinium. These sessions allowed students to focus on a specific aspect of an ancient site/museum, considering how a topic/object is presented, displayed, and used for teaching. Students from each session then produced an evaluation of their experience on site and their own powerpoint on an element of display or teaching with these objects. These powerpoints were presented in “Festivus Britannicus” Seminar during the Summer Term (May 3rd 2016), and were posted on the module website for exam revision:

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/classics/students/modules/rcs/pptsandhandouts/>

For first years in core module, the opportunity to explore lecture topics in a more detailed context through a “hands on” experience was crucial in understanding the ways our discipline operates outside the classroom: in fieldwork & teaching on site, in creating resources and interactive experiences as well as preserving, curating and displaying objects to a broader audience. Using and evaluating these resources, considering how we employ these in teaching and creating a dialogue, is level of experience that is difficult to reflect in the classroom. Creating their own presentations and ideas also reinforced their sense of importance and confidence as scholars, whose feedback and ideas are valued by a broader community. The museums have also been given access to these materials and have greatly appreciated the feedback we provided on our experience on the day.

For 2nd/3rd years in the Domestic Space module, the trip was a valuable experience both in visiting an ancient site and preparing a presentation for their classmates. Some students from this course are working with TEI technology to encode inscriptions from the Corinium into interactive texts for the museum’s website as well as a brochure. Images and translation of these inscriptions will also be sent to EAGLE project, where they can be accessed by a new App, which employs facial recognition technology to identify and inform the broader public about inscriptions. Collaboration with museums and research projects has allowed us to introduce students to a broader and dynamic world of scholarship, didactic initiatives, and concepts of cultural heritage.

Field Trip Itinerary: March 16th 2016 (Presentations May 3rd 2016)

Buses leave Warwick at 9am

10.15. Bus 1 (Arrive@ Chedworth) /Bus 2 (Arrives @ Corinium); 10.30 Activities Begin.

12.00 Activities Finish. You have 45/50 min hour to go about the site/museum

Bus 1: leave Chedworth @ 1.20 pm (after Corinium bus arrives!) *lunch 12.45-1.15

Bus 2: leave Corinium @ 1pm (leave Museum @ 12.45) *lunch 1.15-1.45

1.45- 3.30: PM visit: *consider how it compares to the 1st site.*

3.45 Buses on both sites depart at 3.45.

BUS 1. Experiencing a site: Chedworth Villa (ca. 45 students + Prof S. Ireland).

Topic 1: Mosaics, decoration & entertaining (focus: Decorative Art & Function)

Questions: *What can we learn about mosaics from a site visit? How is this material presented? Do we get a sense of the individuals who lived here? Do different images or ideology prevail in different spaces?*

Topic 2: The Villa in Late Antiquity (Focus: Romanisation)

Questions: *Does the experience and display of objects at the Villa convey a cohesive image of its productivity and economic role? What objects would you use to illustrate “British” or “Roman” aspects of this villa? How would you present them?*

Topic 3: Life & Family in a Roman Villa (Focus: Men, Women & Gods in "Private" Space)

Questions: *What can we learn from material evidence about the people who lived in this Villa? What do personal objects reveal about the inhabitants? What object would you use to illustrate the identity of these individuals?*

Topic 4. Archaeology & the Villa (Focus: Archaeology & information on the site)

Questions: *Do displays convey a clear sense of the site’s history? Is conservation, preservation and labeling consistent? What does the blog add to our understanding of archaeology? Was it easy to find and use? How would you use these resources to teach archaeology and excavation?*

Bus 2. Experiencing Roman Cirencester: The Corinium (ca. 42 students + A.Graham & E. Hussein). We will break into 3 groups based on topics & techniques, for object handling sessions (Coins, Pottery & the Inscription project).

Topic 1: Reading Inscriptions... Teaching Roman Culture?

Preparation: Look @the Corinium’s inscriptions on *Roman Inscriptions of Britain* Website: <http://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/institutions/corinium-museum>

Questions: *What info can the current web materials provide (e.g. do images reinforce texts & translations? How did you find parallel texts?) How can a physical interaction with an inscription improve our understanding? How would you use your inscriptions to teach?*

Topic 2: All the glitters: Coins & Metal Objects in 3D

Preparation: For Coins: consolidate Lecture materials. Google “Tetbury coin hoard”. For 3-D Scanning: See initiatives: <http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/3d-scanning-meets-ancient-art/>
Corinium’s animations: <http://coriniummuseum.org/2016/01/21/new-animations-2/>

Questions: *How can we use coins to better understand the ancient world? How does writing relate to pictures on coins? Is writing on objects evidence of wider literacy? How would you use coins to teach? Is a 3-D experience online comparable to object handling?*

Topic 3: Carved in Clay & Ether: Assessing Pottery and *the Romans* App*

Preparatory Reading: Check out the museum's online resources

<https://coriniummuseum.culturalspot.org/exhibit/roman-highlights/QgIy7NKrIwjqJw>

<http://coriniummuseum.org/romans-app/>

*Participants will handle different types of pottery (bowls, lanterns), then break into smaller groups to assess the *Romans App* (you'll need an iPhone or iPad).

Questions: Pottery: *How were these objects were used? How does imagery, writing & appearance relate to function? What do these objects reveal about Roman life?*

The App: *Is it equivalent or supplementary to a museum visit? Would this App make you more/less likely to visit the museum? How does virtual interaction differ from "on site" interaction? What techniques /exhibits were the most successful? Why?*

IATL Pedagogic Objectives Achieved

- Site visits promoted the concept of 'Student as Researcher', by offering direct interaction with the archaeological evidence. The site and museum visits helped participants develop intellectual and personal confidence as well as a greater understanding of the analytical process.
- Students as researchers and teachers: Students had the opportunity to choose a specific topic and collaborate with their classmates in a smaller group dynamic (ca. 7-12 individuals) to create and design a didactic tool for their classmates. They continued their research after their visit in the powerpoint presentations, and had the experience of presenting their reports (and getting feedback) before their peers in a conference style environment.
- Students had the unique experience of working directly with archaeologists from the field (at Chedworth), experts in museum display & curation (at the Corinium) as well as experienced professionals in the field of cultural heritage (at both sites). Developing key skills in communication, collaboration and teaching with experts in a wide range of fields.
- Students experienced and interacted with numerous resources, research techniques, and individuals at British museums as well as academic institutions (the National Heritage Trust @ the Chedworth, forging connections for the future.
- Students learned to interact with objects not only as artifacts but as tools for teaching, explaining and presenting history to a broader audience. They learned to think not only of what an object can tell us, but how we might use this object to illustrate, inspire, and initiate discussion in a group.