

Teaching at the Trowel's Edge: Public outreach and engagement in archaeological field schools

Archaeological field schools are a nearly universal experience among professional archaeologists. Students learn the skills they will use throughout their careers through hands-on practice. This dissertation examines the diversity of public outreach and engagement programs within the United Kingdom and United States and explores the benefits of teaching students heritage interpretation and science communication. This study was conducted through the utilization of a digital survey sent to archaeological field schools in the UK and US, an analysis of field school course descriptions, the development and implementation of an outreach and engagement program at the University of York's field school in Skipsea, and an interview with a field school director. Through these methods, clear trends among field schools in the UK and US began to develop in the style and implementation of outreach and engagement programs. Programs in the United Kingdom emphasize the celebration of local heritage while the United States places importance on the teaching of skills. Additionally, it became clear that outreach and engagement programs require a diverse array of activities to suit the needs of a variety of students with different skill levels and backgrounds. Field schools have the opportunity, through the proper implementation of outreach and engagement programs, to transform the practice of archaeology and create a more collaborative and inclusive field.