

Assignment 3: HPAR7007 Archaeological Specialist Practice

INTRODUCTION

The focus of all DigVentures' projects is not just on conducting archaeological research, but also on providing an experience for numerous community participants that creates a lasting public impact. Prioritising, delegating and delivering the tasks required to achieve this on any given day of a community excavation requires effective team leadership and communication in my role as project fieldwork director. Communicating these effectively to the team is essential in order to achieve the standard of delivering the project's archaeological and public impact aims as set out in the project design.

A summary of the tasks involved in each phase of the day, along with their approximate durations and the team members they are delegated to is made in Table 1 at the end of this report, which should be referred to in conjunction with the following descriptions of the day's tasks, broadly separated into three phases of the day.

1. START OF THE DAY

Preparation tasks at the start of the day are key to ensuring the activities carried out meet the standard of the project's archaeological and public impact aims (see sections 5-6 of Swain and Duensing (2022) and Appendix 1, for example). Preparing ahead is one of the main approaches to effective communication and delivery of the tasks required (Emerson, 2021). Communication with both the team and the project's volunteers is at the heart of this preparation phase, which consists primarily of briefings, introductions, site orientations, safety discussions and set up tasks. Responsibility for delivering some of these tasks is delegated to other staff and some are delivered concurrently to maximise the time available.

Task 1.1 – Team Briefing (30 Mins, 08:30-09:00)

A team briefing before volunteers arrive is a key moment to communicate roles, delegate responsibilities and highlight priority tasks throughout the day aimed at delivering the

project's aims. For example, I would usually delegate specific supervisory and volunteer training responsibilities to the fieldwork team at this point along with an outline of archaeological tasks to complete based on achieving the standard of the project aims and the field school curriculum (Appendix 1). This space is also an opportunity to allow other team members to outline their role-specific tasks for the day and feedback where they might need additional help. At that point I can outline a plan that frees up the relevant staff and resources, delivering this task whilst providing cover to ensure the rest of the day's necessary tasks are still achieved within the time available.

Task 1.2 – Meet, Greet and Check In (20 Mins, 09:00-09:20)

Facilitating volunteer arrival, meet, greet and check in will be delegated to the communications community archaeologist with the assistance of at least one other community archaeologist, depending on numbers, ensuring everyone feels welcome and the necessary important check in details are obtained. This will usually occur concurrently with task 1.3, which if completed early allows more staff to be freed up to help; maximising time and resources whilst prioritising both tasks.

Task 1.3 – Site Set Up (20 Mins, 09:00-09:20)

Whilst task 1.2 is underway, the remaining team members will undertake the initial set up tasks delegated during the morning briefing to prepare for the day ahead. I will make sure the trenches are safe, a fieldwork community archaeologist will collect and set up relevant tools and equipment and the finds room will be set up by the finds processing lead. As soon as this is finished, staff members will also assist with task 1.2 until it is also complete. These concurrent tasks make the most efficient use of the available staff and time, ensuring multiple tasks and audiences are catered for.

Task 1.4 – Orientation and Introductions (15 Mins, 09:20-09:35)

After tasks 1.2 and 1.3 have been completed, the volunteer site orientation process can begin. This involves everyone on site and is usually led by the communications community

archaeologist, starting with a round of introductions before the fieldwork director gives a brief background of the site, why we are digging at the site and what can be expected throughout the day.

Task 1.5 – Health and Safety (10 Mins, 09:35-09:45)

I will then prioritise giving a health and safety briefing to everyone on site, explaining the key points identified in the risk assessment along with the appropriate mitigations in place. The risk assessment itself is passed around to be signed by everyone at this point. In addition, an outline of DigVentures' dignity on site and social media policy alongside the social media waiver will be summarised, usually delegated to the community archaeologist on site acting in the communications role.

2. FIELDWORK

Delivering the field school curriculum (Appendix 1) for up to 25 volunteers forms the main part of the day. As communicated in the morning briefing, staff will be responsible for a group of volunteers each at a different stage of the curriculum as the trenches and their experience progress. Delegating by preparing each team member in advance helps the team feel confident and able to complete the task, avoiding the 'delegation problem' of overworking individuals and underachieving the end product (Cooper, 2015). My part-oversight role is based on flexibility and communication as staff, volunteers, tasks and resources require frequent adjustment as the day progresses. The ability to adapt, re-prioritise and delegate existing and new tasks is essential to ensure they are delivered within the time available and to the standard as defined by the project design's archaeological and public impact aims.

Task 2.1 – Trench-side Tour and Starting Work (15 Mins, 09:45-10:00)

A tour of the trenches for the volunteers places the day's tasks in the context of the wider project aims. This will usually be introduced by myself and then delegated to staff responsible for supervising their trench or area. Volunteers are split into groups and allocated to each supervisor's area of the trenches, or to the finds room. These groups will be categorised and

prioritised based on areas of the field school curriculum that volunteers are yet to experience, have expressed an interest in, the archaeological aims of the excavation and the remaining timescale.

Task 2.2 – Field School (5 hours, 10:00-16:00 with 1 hour lunch)

Central to this main element of the day is the volunteer learning experience. All staff members are involved in delivering the field school curriculum (Appendix 1) which has been created to maximise the lasting impact of the experience to all community participants involved. Communication is key throughout the whole day; from the initial distribution of volunteers and staff, when adjustments to the strategy are required and feedback is received regarding the volunteer experience.

As an example, fieldwork supervisor 1 may take a fresh team of new volunteers to begin 'Trowelling 101' in a new area of the trench, whilst fieldwork supervisor 2 takes returning volunteers to carry out recording of previously excavated features and another group carry out finds processing in the finds room. As the day progresses and feature recording is gradually completed by team 2 and new features are revealed by team 1, I would then discuss with both staff and volunteers re-allocating and prioritising new areas of work. The criteria for this would be in line with the archaeological aims of the project, the training requirements of the field school curriculum, the remaining timescale and any specific volunteer requests.

Concurrently, the videographer will be making content for future media releases and the communications community archaeologist will be circulating and talking amongst the volunteers throughout the day with the important communications role of feeding back ways that could develop their experience further. My role allows me to link between different areas of the excavation, communicating with staff and volunteers, delegating and re-prioritising archaeological tasks based on progress and feedback that maximise the benefit to the project aims and the volunteer experience.

Task 2.3 – Live Streamed Virtual Tour (1 hour, 13:30-14:30)

As part of wider public engagement with the project, most DigVentures excavations will have numerous associated activities or events targeting a wider audience to maximise public impact, such as a live streamed virtual tour of the site, planned in advance. As part of task 1.1 at the start of the day, it will have been identified as one of the day's priorities and a plan put in place to designate staff, resources and the necessary time to deliver it. This will be a decision made by the fieldwork director in consultation with the videographer and communications community archaeologist.

3. END OF THE DAY

The tasks completed at the end of the day contribute significantly towards the project's public impact aims by evaluating and improving the volunteer field school learning experience through survey. Firstly, the volunteer learning experience continues with an end of day round up. Then there are opportunities for both volunteers and staff to communicate their feedback regarding what went well and what could be improved. To make the most of this, certain tasks such as collecting volunteer feedback must be prioritised and delegated between staff members to ensure they are completed within the time available.

Task 3.1 Volunteer Round-Up of the Day (15 mins, 16:00-16:15)

An end of day round-up is a chance for the volunteers to see progress in other parts of the trenches and place the tasks they have individually been working on in the context of the wider site's progress. This involves a walk around and a discussion with the chance for questions, usually led by myself as the site director but also delegated in part to the fieldwork community archaeologists responsible for specific areas or trenches. This visual interaction with discussion is an important learning and communication moment for the volunteers, aiding their understanding of and ability to interpret the overall site, contributing towards the field school curriculum standard.

Task 3.2 Collecting Volunteer Feedback (15 mins, 16:15-16:30)

Collecting feedback from volunteers about their experience before they leave at the end of the day is a crucial part of the public impact evaluation process, allowing DigVentures to produce its evaluation and impact reports (for example, section 9 of Casswell *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, this key moment of communication between staff and volunteers contributes towards achieving the standard of meeting the project's public impact aims. Consequently, this task is a priority and involves all staff on site collecting feedback by asking two simple questions regarding what each participant enjoyed most about their experience and what they thought could be improved. Each member of staff will be delegated a list of volunteers to obtain feedback from who are not returning the next day to make the most of the time available and ensure no one is missed.

Task 3.3 Pack Up (15 mins, 16:30-16:45)

At this point in the day, volunteers leave site and the pack up process can begin. The fieldwork archaeologists will collect in all tools and equipment, storing them away safely and securely whilst I make the site safe for the night. The finds processing lead will be responsible for packing away the finds and the communications community archaeologist will ensure all volunteer details and feedback is collated in the correct places.

Task 3.4 Team Debrief (15 mins, 16:45-17:00)

The last task of the day is a brief team meeting similar in nature to task 1.1, led by myself but including all staff. This is a moment to summarise the day and reflect on key moments as well as on the progress being made towards achieving the standard of the project's aims. It is also a chance for the team to communicate with each other through feedback and discussion regarding what went well, what could be improved and to highlight any issues. This is also a good moment for staff to pass on volunteer feedback obtained in task 3.2 to the group regarding their experience that could lead to improvements for the next day. Additionally, it is a time to raise any important details about the next day, such as any changes to the time schedule or personnel, before the next morning's team briefing.

CONCLUSION

My working routine for a day as the fieldwork director on a community archaeological excavation is focussed on three different phases. Each of these present their own challenges to successfully meeting the standard defined by the project's aims identified in the project design. Managing the tasks within each of these phases by effectively communicating priorities and delegating to team members is key to delivering the desired outcome in the time available.

Communicating with staff and volunteers forms the heart of the start of the day, with each of the first five tasks involving preparation for the day ahead through discussion and sharing important information. The main part of the day requires flexibility and the ability to strategize on the go. Re-prioritising and delegating new and existing tasks as and when the progression of the archaeology, the volunteer's field school experience and any feedback dictates is key to achieving the project's aims. Finally, the end of the day is an important opportunity to collect feedback from staff and volunteers. This moment of communication with volunteers is vital to evaluating the public impact that the project is making, as well as understanding what is working well and what could be improved for the next day.

Bibliography

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Tables

			TEAM MEMBERS					
TASK No.	APPROX TIME	APPROX DURATION	Community Archaeologist - Fieldwork Director	Community Archaeologist - Fieldwork 1	Community Archaeologist - Fieldwork 2	Community Archaeologist - Communications	Programme Officer - Finds Processing	Programme Officer - Videographer
1.1	08:30 - 09:00	30 mins	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.2	09:00 - 09:20	20 mins			X	X		
1.3	09:00 - 09:20	20 mins	X	X			X	X
1.4	09:20 - 09:35	15 mins	X	X	X	X	X	X
1.5	09:35 - 09:45	10 mins	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.1	09:45 - 10:00	15 mins	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.2	10:00 - 12:30	2.5 hours	X	X	X	X	X	X
LUNCH	12:30 - 13:30	1 hour						
2.2	13:30 - 16:00	2.5 hours	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.3	13:30 - 14:30	1 hour	X			X		X
3.1	16:00 - 16:15	15 mins	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.2	16:15 - 16:30	15 mins	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.3	16:30 - 16:45	15 mins	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.4	16:45 - 17:00	15 mins	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 1: Tasks, Durations and Delegated Team Roles (X represents task lead, X represents delegated responsibility, X represents task delivery).