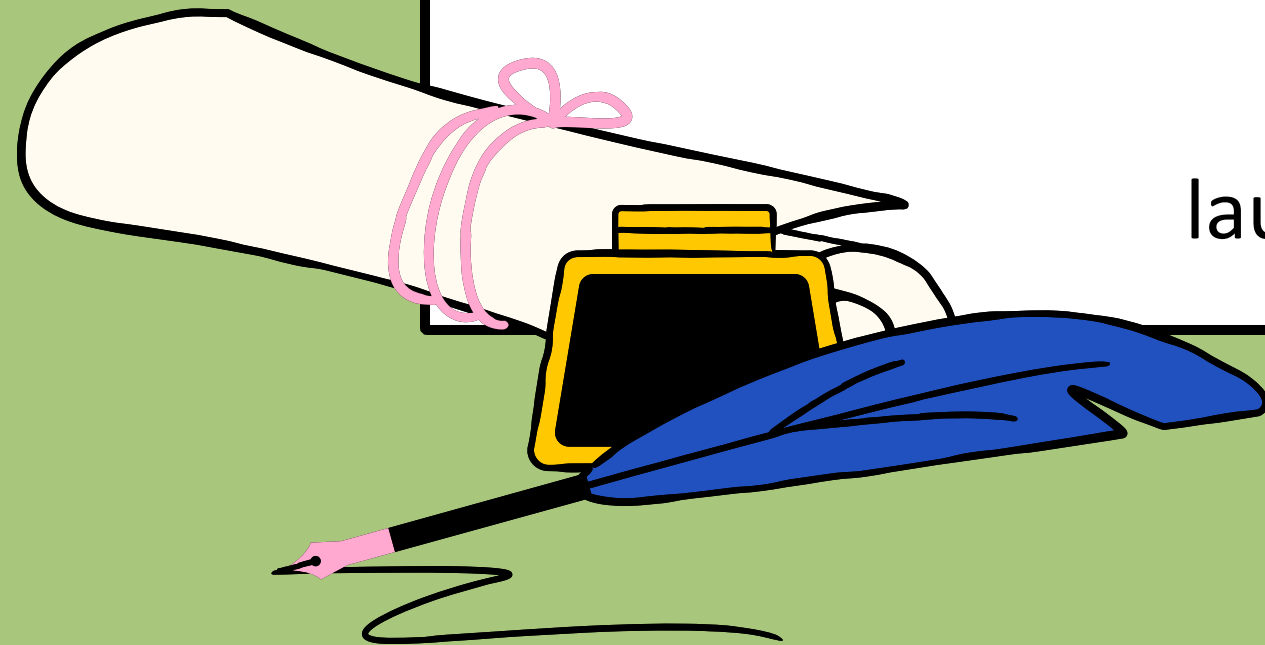


FINDING THE FUN IN LEARNING:

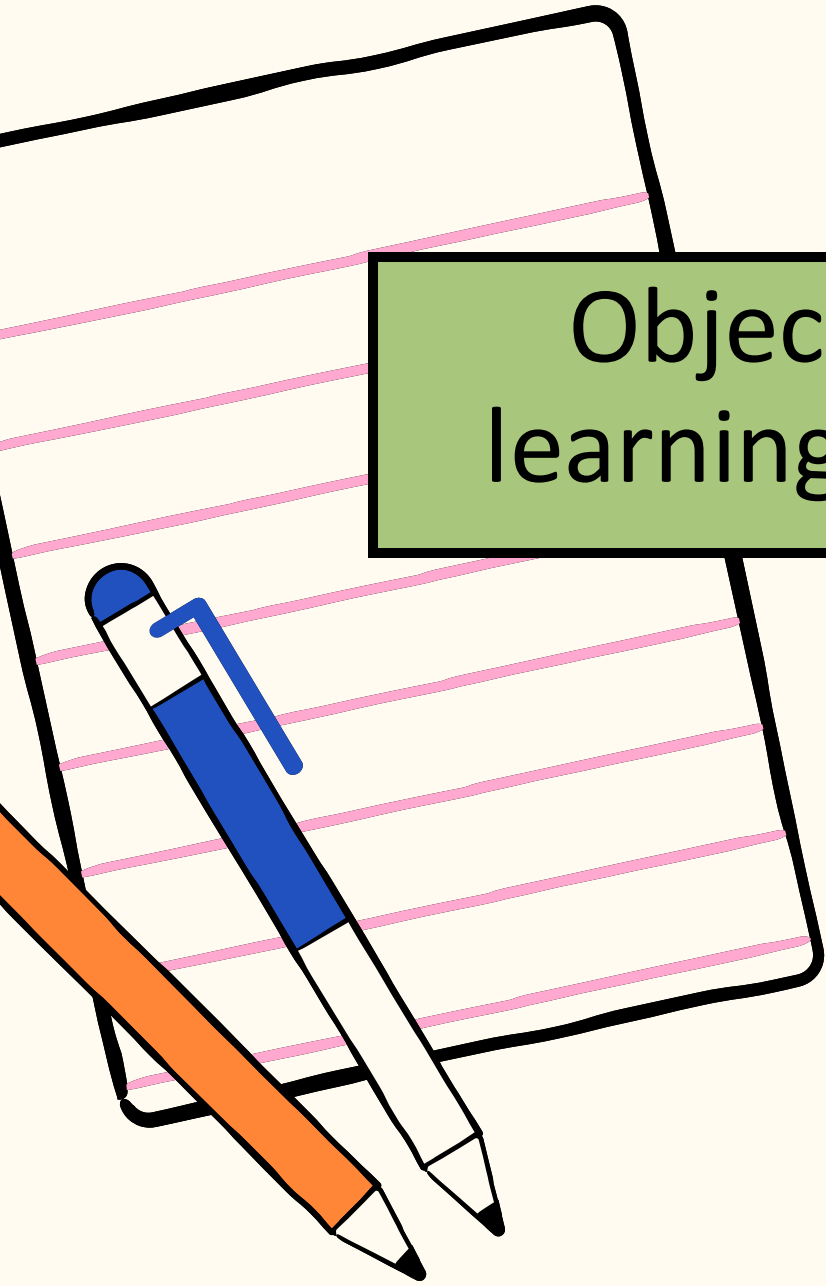
USING OBJECT-BASED LEARNING TO BUILD
AN ENGAGING AND ACCESSIBLE
CLASSROOM

Laura Thompson
PhD Archaeology

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PLAN



Object-based
learning and play

Some
examples...

Unboxing the
Collection

Time to
Workshop!



'Good Practices'



Personal: laura.thompson@manchester.ac.uk

Experimental Archaeology Group: uom.experimental.arch@gmail.com
or insta [@uomexperimentalarch](https://www.instagram.com/uomexperimentalarch)

Education

- 1 BA Ancient History and Archaeology
- 2 MA Museum and Art Gallery Studies
- 3 PhD Archaeology

BA

Perverts Paradise or Misunderstood Materials:
The impact of display and prejudice treatment on Roman erotic art

Interests

- Experimental Archaeology - Experimental Archaeology Group
- Learning through Making
- Object-based Learning
- Creative Research Workshops
- Personal archives and stories

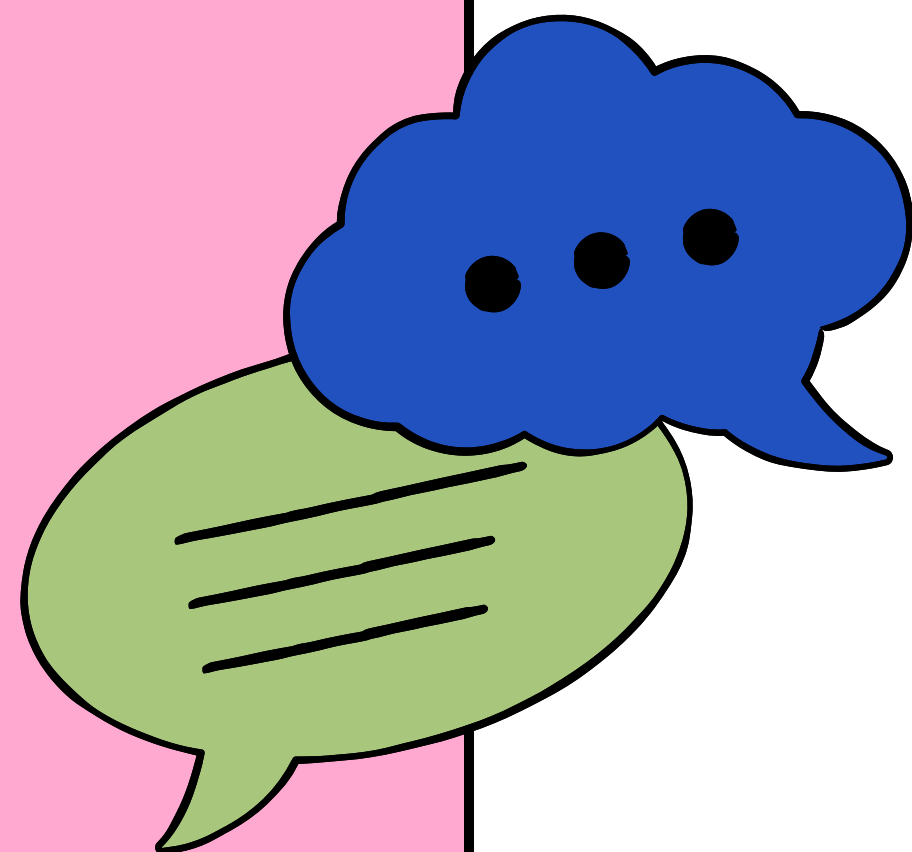
MA

Unboxing the Collection:
documenting the personal collection of William Brice

Current Work - PhD

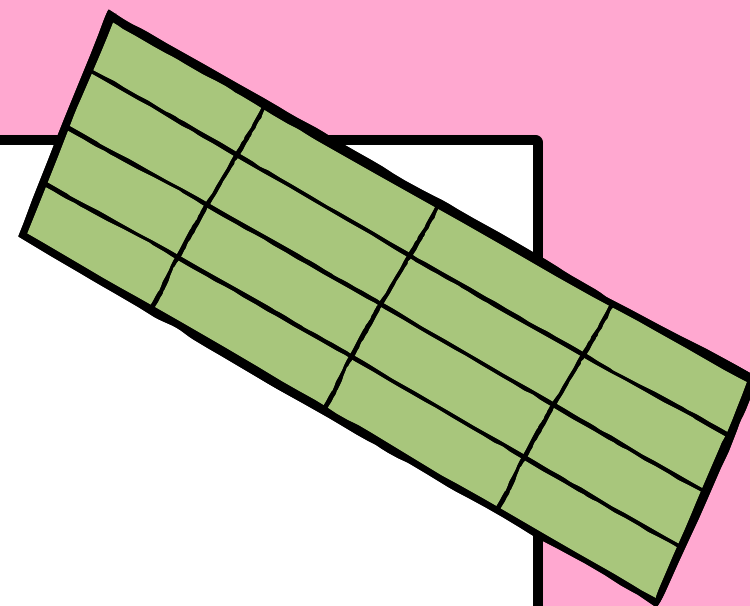
Waste Not, Want Not: The potential for personal archives as teaching and learning tools in Higher Education





“MAYBE WE JUST
NEED TO GET OUT
OF OUR HEADS A
LITTLE MORE, AND
LET OUR HANDS
TEACH US HOW TO
LEARN.”

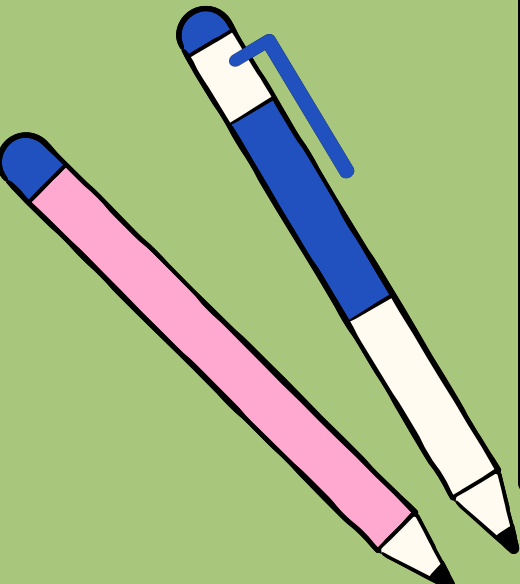
Cullum, P., 2019.

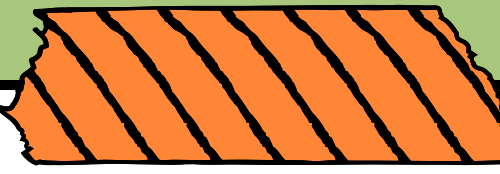
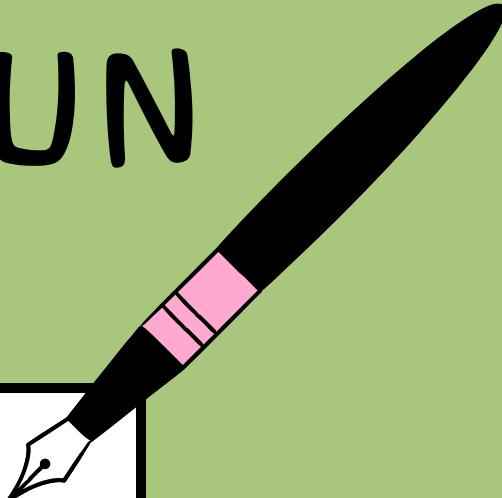


OBJECT-BASED LEARNING AND FUN



Object-based learning: a form of active learning that uses material culture, or digital representations of unique objects to inspire close observation and deep critical thinking,

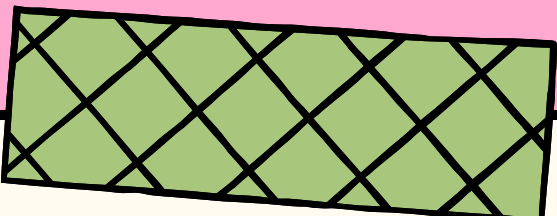
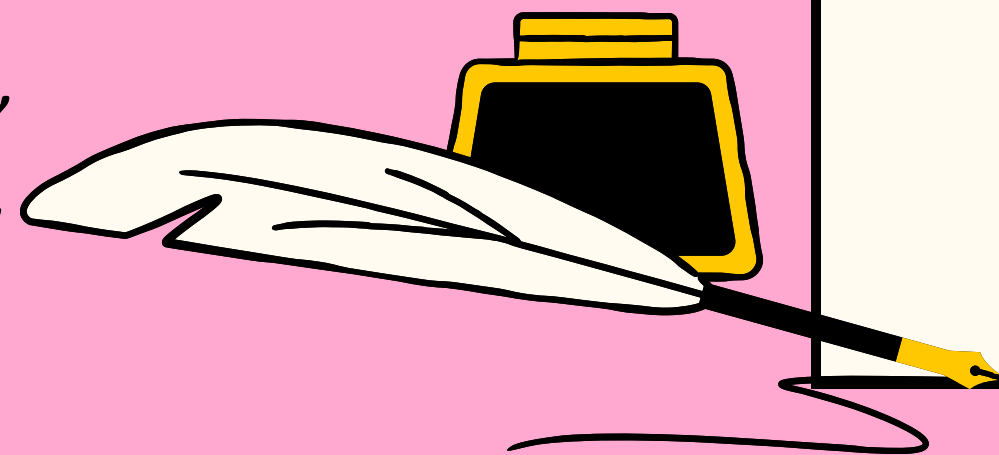
- A key approach of early university education
 - Objects can also be used to inspire discussion, group work and lateral thinking – all essential key, transferable, skills in higher education
- 

- 
- 
- Two types of fun: 'joy' or 'joke'
 - Excluding recent innovations of gamification and playbour (McGonigal 2012; Hjorth 2018), fun and play are often kept to a minimum in the workplace deemed as frivolous and counterproductive
 - Playing and finding fun are not always conjunctive eg Monopoly
- 

WHY PLAY AT ALL?

“Games and other forms of play are core human activities, as vitally constitutive of cultural and social practices in the past as they are today”

Politopoulos, A., Mol, A.A. and Lammes, S., 2023

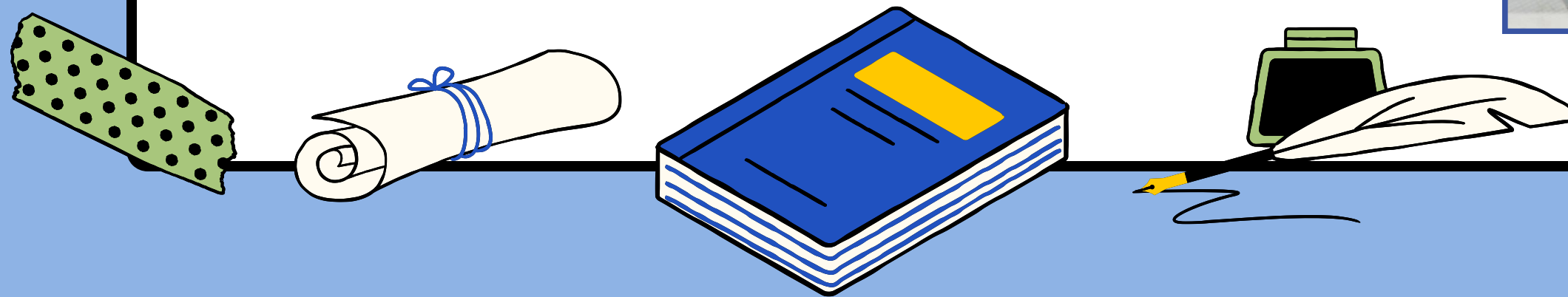
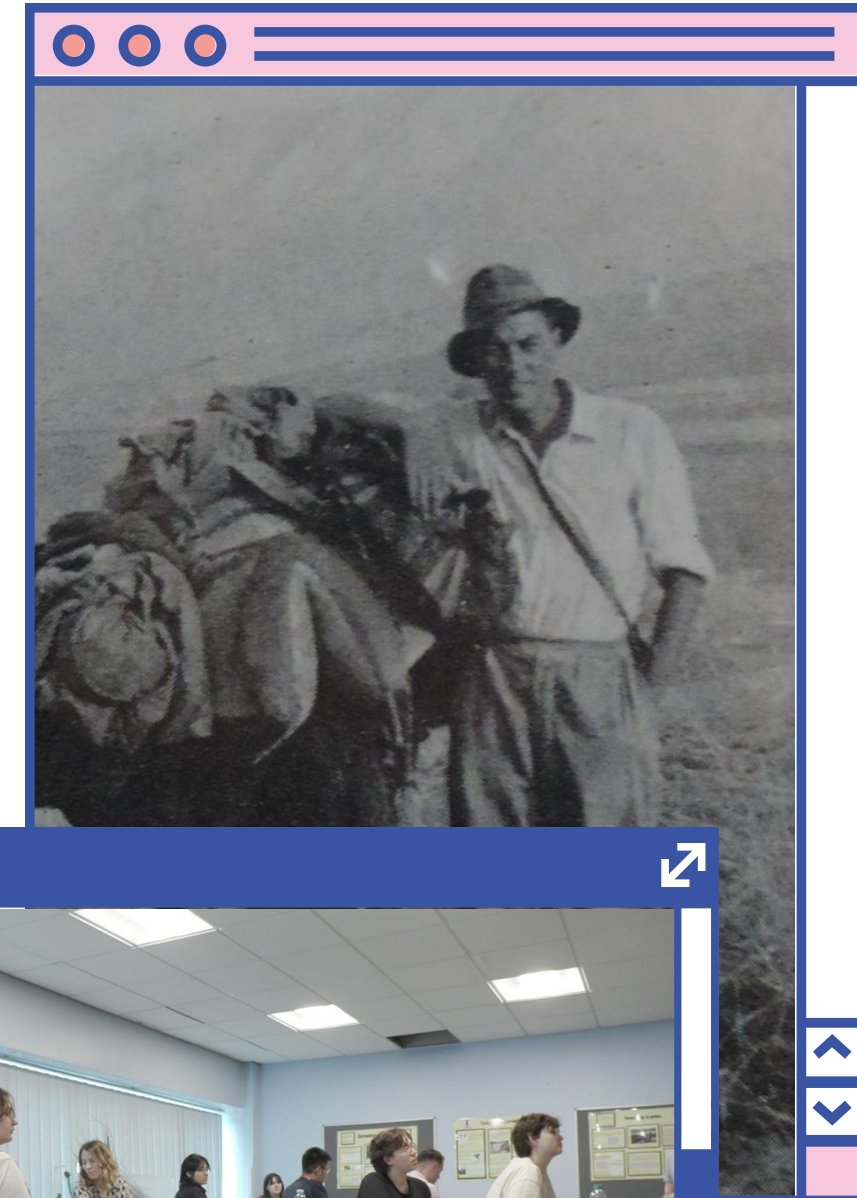


What does
introducing
play into
education look
like?

OBJECT-BASED FUN & PLAY

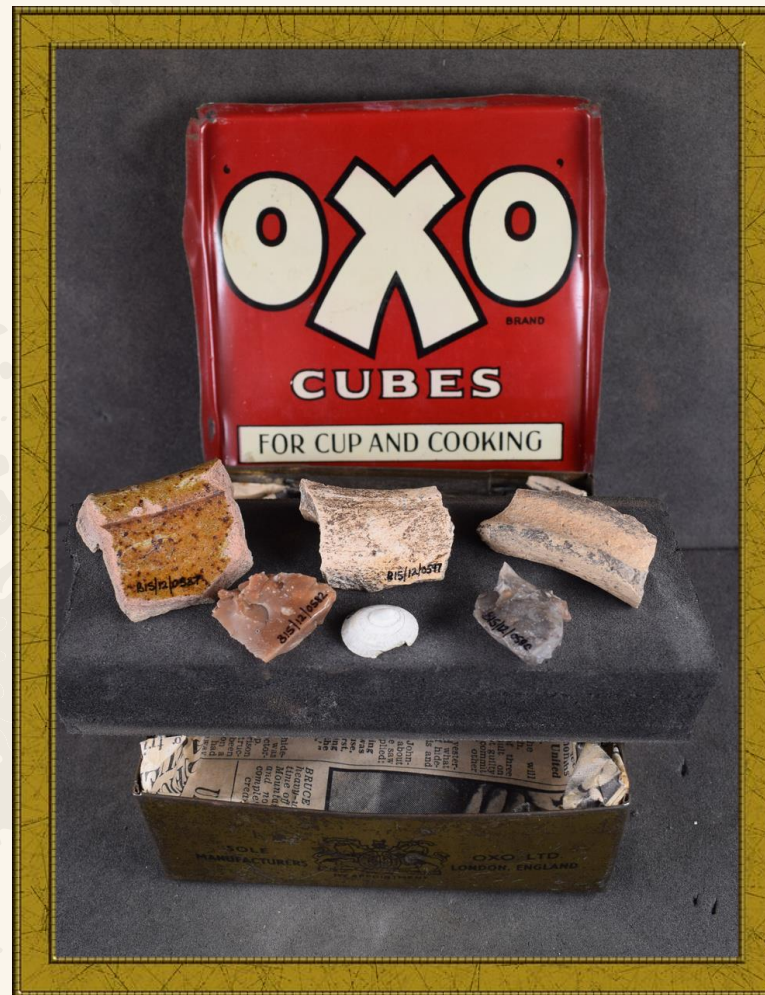
Experimental Archaeology Club - a 'safe space' grounded in material culture and fun skills with a physical goal

William Brice Archive - a 'playful space' with a 'playful material culture' and imaginative stories (conveniently pre-packaged just in need of curating)





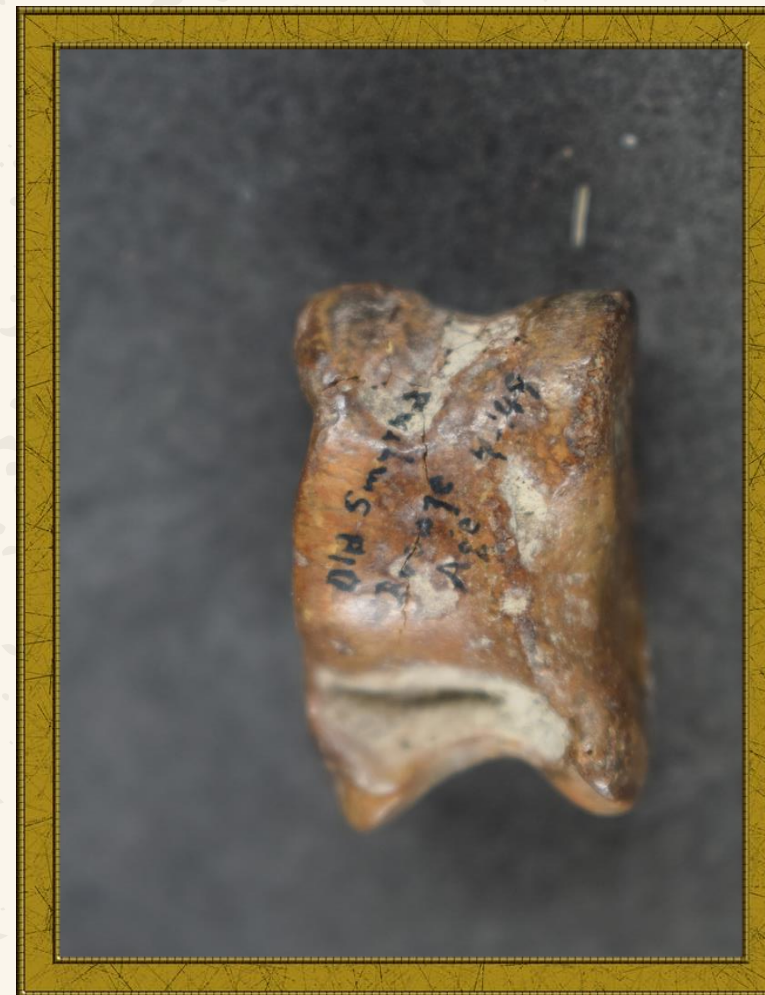
PRIMARY DATA WORKSHOPS



Whodunnit:
The
Australian
Case



Whodunnit:
The Turkish
Case

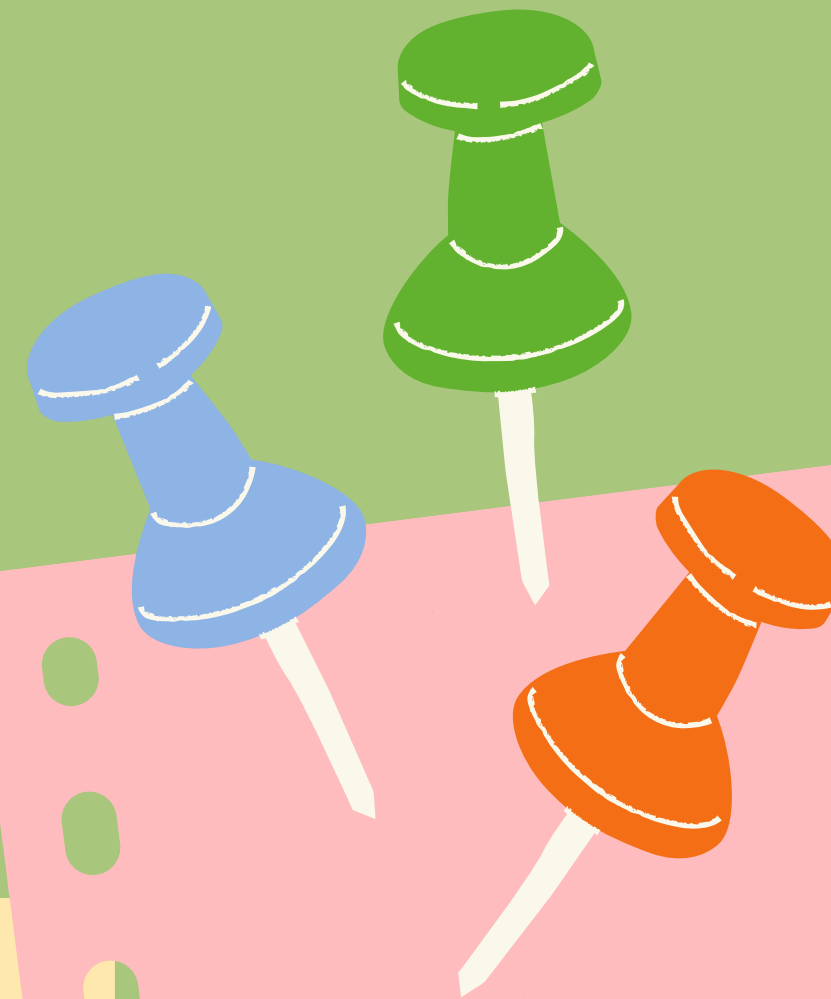


Building
a
Biography



Unboxing
the
Collection

PRIMARY DATA WORKSHOPS



Building a Bio

- . Self-directed learning
- . Independent creativity
- . Creative interpretation skills
- . Narrative skills - when is it the end?
- . Creative Writing
- . Fitting within a wider narrative...

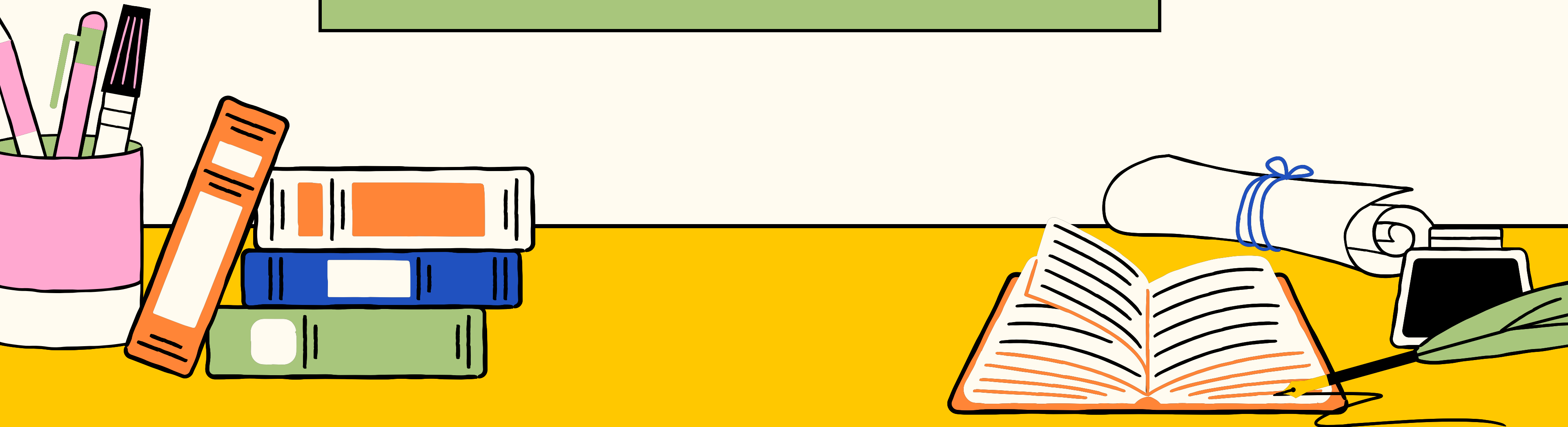
Unboxing

- . Community engagement
- . Independent creativity in a communal setting
- . Narrative skills
- . Creative Writing
- . Multi-view point interpretations
- . Presentation skills

Whodunnits

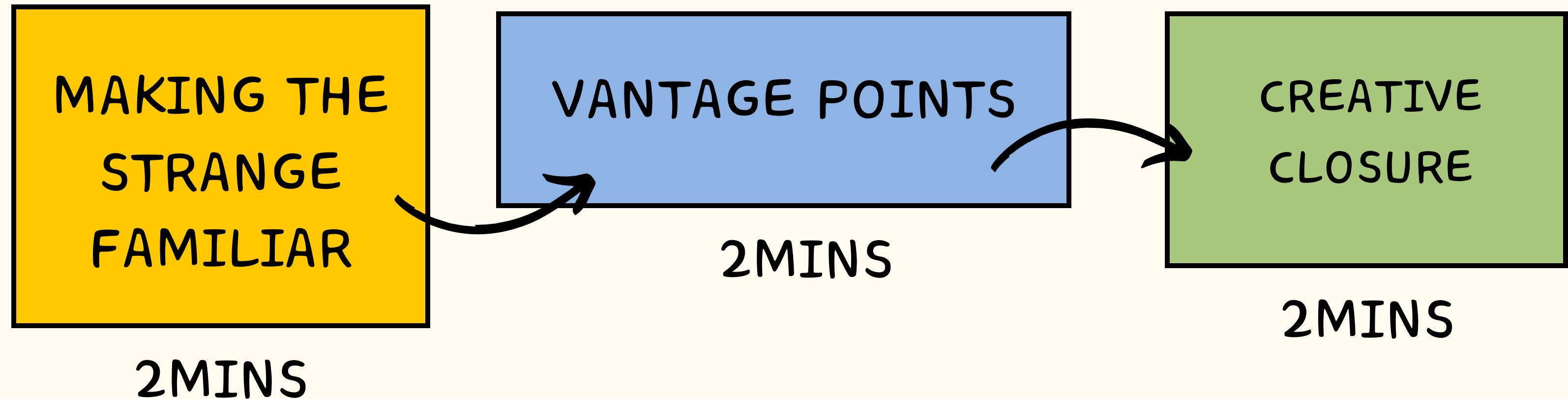
- . Medium tech and low tech
- . Community learning
- . Inquiry-based learning
- . Playful learning
- . Narrative play and storytelling - outside of the expected format with no 'end'
- . Presentation skills

Lets have a quick go!



UNBOXING THE COLLECTION

A snapshot workshop...



GRAB A PEN
OR PENCIL
AND PAPER



Making the Strange Familiar

5 SENSES ARCHAEOLOGY

Take turns identifying unique features of the object that haven't been mentioned yet, deepening their understanding of the object's characteristics.

Think about:

- Sight
- Touch
- Smell
- Sound
- Taste

Write down what you find!

Vantage Points

SEEN FROM OTHER WORLDS

This is the time to roleplay - adopt a character of some sort - this could be human or otherwise and revisit step 1 again. For example, what might the table think of this object, what might a child think of this object.

Be creative with your character!

Spirit

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

...That which we call a rose. By any other name would smell as sweet!

Time to name your artefact and write a 1-line personality or backstory.

Think speed dating introduction...



Creative Closure

YOUR TIME TO SHINE

1. Time to engage in a creative expression by bringing a creative and emotional closure to the exercise, reinforcing the connections participants have formed with the object.

Options:

1. A poetic or sound-based re-narration of the object's life
 2. A fictional diary entry from the collector
 3. A mock museum label from the year 2125
 4. A storyboard for a short film or exhibition concept
- 

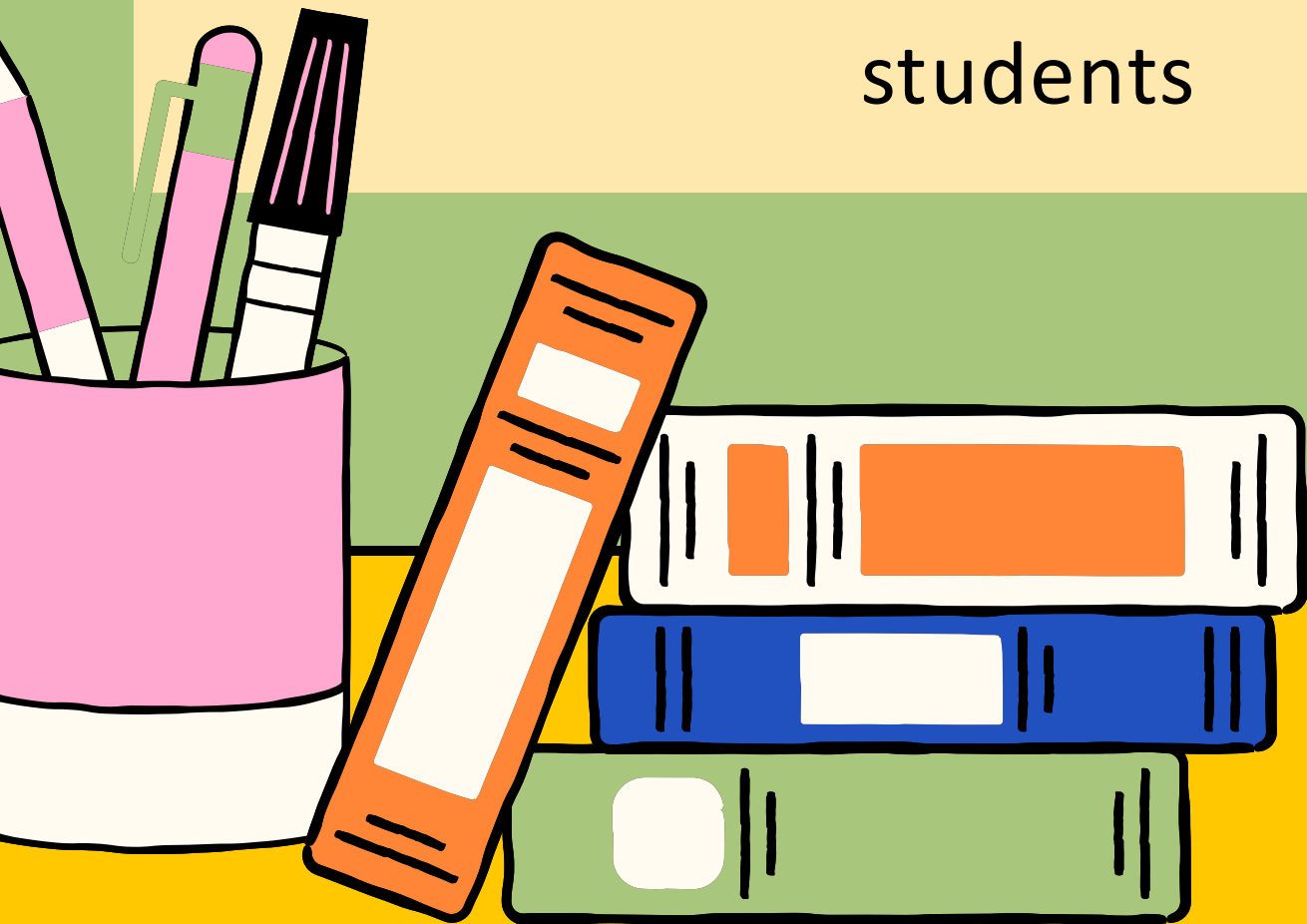


WHAT
DO YOU
THINK?

CONCLUSIONS?

- OBL provides a unique experience with more opportunity to engage people
- - Popular with the public, schools and university students
-
-

- Material culture provides a foundation unimaginable realities and enable sympathetic interpreting.
- - First hand experience is a valueable educational tool we don't often get!
-
-



NOW ITS YOUR TURN

Time to work in your groups to come up with an activity using the object in front of you!

As a group, develop an initial pitch for a seminar or workshop that provides first year undergraduate students with an interpretation experience or introduces a research skill eg

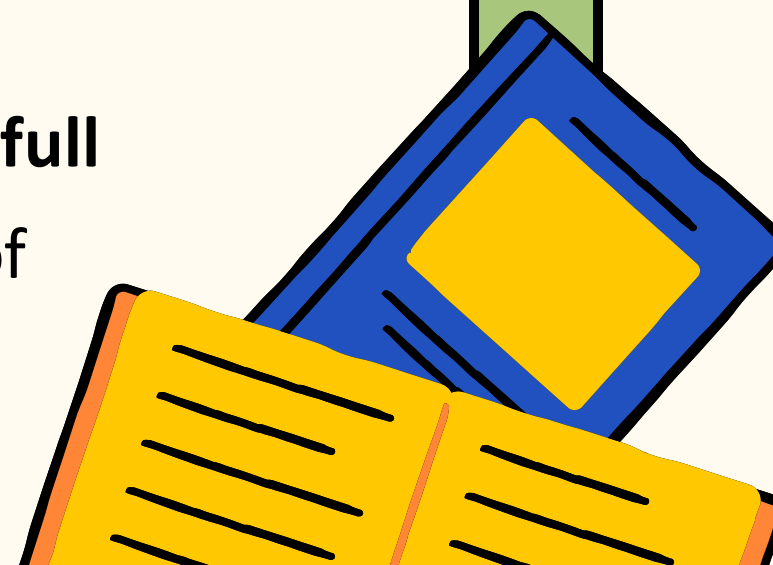
- how to make initial observations
- note taking
- group work
- creative thinking

This does not need to be a full

brief!
Think about developing a set of
'good practices' we can bring
together

Ask yourself:

- How can I make this experience appealing to students to encourage engagement?
- How can I cater this experience for students of different abilities eg different levels of difficulty, some tasks more physical or mental, some spoken or written
- How can I make this a student-led and student-focused activity?
- How can we bring fun into the classroom?



THE 2026 UOM T&L
CONFERENCE
'GOOD PRACTICES'
FOR OBJECT-BASED
LEARNING

