

Dr. Stephan Klein

Research questions:

- *What are the theoretical assumptions of heritage education and to what extent are they different from history teaching?*
- *What are the advantages and disadvantages of using heritage in the teaching of history?*
- *What practices can be considered exemplary for the possibilities of using heritage for learning?*

Several authors emphasize the potential of heritage education to contribute to established subjects such as history, geography and civics. They point to landscapes (Hartman 2002), objects in museums (Leinhardt and Crowley 2002) or city centers (Aplin 2007). In the case of history education, heritage helps individuals to build a sense of self and community by sharing what they have in common. Copeland (2002) argues that it is through the construction of personal and collective identities that heritage education and citizenship are linked. Also heritage may provide powerful authentic tools for students to construct historical knowledge and become more motivated (Holthuis 2004). Historic buildings, relics and memorabilia offer them a vivid, quasi-tangible contact with the past (Zerubavel 2003). Furthermore, children can quickly become acquainted with differences between living in the past and living in the present through the use of artifacts and visits to historic sites.

Other authors emphasize the tensions between the goals and focus of heritage education and those of history education. Phillips has explained that history teachers become uneasy when heritage, overtly or otherwise, becomes 'national heritage' and is linked to the promotion of a national identity (Phillips 1997). VanSledright (2008) argues that history education in the United States often celebrates the nation's achievements and seems more like prescribed collective memory than as it is practiced in the discipline. It nurtures unintended results such as the disengagement of students. Particularly African American students claim that the books and lectures of teachers marginalize the contributions of blacks.

History teaching in the Netherlands (and in England) has a more discipline-centered approach which seems difficult to align with at least two features of heritage education. First, whereas heritage education is mostly focused on local or national history, providing knowledge of a particular place, person, event or object, the Dutch history curriculum also comprises topics from European and world history, aiming at 'overview knowledge' that can be used as a frame of reference to orientate in time. Second, whereas heritage institutions may present meanings uncritically and emphasize moral opinions as such, in history classrooms students are stimulated to develop meaning for themselves and to appropriate the disciplinary concepts and heuristics that help them to do so. Yet, there are also dynamic conceptualizations of heritage that may fit better with a more open and disciplinary based history education curriculum. In this view heritage encompasses participation in a continuous process of meaning making (Legêne 2004, 2008). Such a dynamic concept of heritage avoids the mere handing down of a monolithic version of the past and creates opportunities for a plurality of perspectives.

We need to know how these theoretical debates are interrelated with the concepts and ideas of those in the field that are in intermediary positions. It is unclear how history teachers and designers of heritage education programs actually think about the relationship between heritage education and history learning. Research has shown that subject matter and professional development play an important role in teacher preparation and how teachers effectively communicate their views and knowledge to students (Medina et al 2004; Klein 2005).

Since the perceptions of teachers and heritage educators strongly affect an effective implementation of heritage education in the school curricula and the classroom, we will investigate their theoretical assumptions and their knowledge of current practices, focused on the selected topics. How do they describe and analyze valuable and successful, but also unsuccessful, examples of learning about these topics through the use of heritage? To what extent do they use in their heterogeneous classes sensitive heritage that is related to Christian religion (Frijhoff 2005), the liberation of slaves (Van Stipriaan 2007; Oostindie 2008) or the Shoa (Blanken et al 2003; Van den Oord 2004)? Which material and immaterial

remnants of the past do they consider to be part of heritage? What about modern representations of the past through "living history" and "re-enactment"? What does this practical knowledge tell us about the successes and constraints of the collaboration between heritage education and history teaching?

Sources are academic and professional literature; in-depth semi-structured interviews (individual and in focus groups) with ten experienced history teachers and ten designers of heritage education programs in the Netherlands. Teachers will be selected from schools that have multicultural student populations because this is a rich context for research concerned with plurality of perspectives. We will seek an equal representation of first and second grade teachers, as well as a diversity of school-identities. We also seek an equal representation of heritage educators (of museums, archives, memory centers and archeological organizations) with regard to the three selected topics.