



## 'Discovering and deconstructing identities through place-based education'

A workshop facilitated by Hamish Ross, University of Edinburgh and Alan Britton, University of Glasgow  
Five Nations Network Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland, December 2013

*Participants visited the Royal Mile in order to find nearby evidence of cultural and political identity. Workshop participant Scott Sinclair provided the following feedback, which is accompanied by the photo gallery.*

Places, it was suggested, have an important role in identity and citizenship at a variety of scales from the local community, or a social grouping, through nation states, to the bigger regions such as Europe or Africa. The notion that global citizenship is also about our collective identity as humans was also mentioned. It was proposed that more should be made of this.

Following a brief introduction the workshop involved an observational walk on the Royal Mile [in small groups] and then a discussion about what we had experienced and the potential stimulus for learners, back at the conference. We were also asked to consider how the different things we saw made us feel.

1. There was consensus that the idea applied to a local street had much potential as a stimulus for learners ... but that perhaps the Royal Mile would be over stimulating for school students. There was so much going on and many things to think about in terms of identity.
2. Some feelings about the 'tackiness' of it led to a useful discussion about the extent to which the Scottish identity it projected was political or just seeking to exploit tourism. The idea that a symbol, flag or tartan could be both an important representation and a bit of tourism opens up the need to explore the ways in which symbols of identity have different value to different people. This would be true in class groups too.
3. Most of the group reported on the Adam Smith statue [see photo] and wondered what he would have made of what he is 'seeing' ... and why the city had seen fit to put his statue. Lots of research potential ... exploration of views, and classroom debate.
4. Braveheart [see photo] ... a result of American film culture or a sense of Scottish history? A bit tacky but not as much as the pig in a kilt playing the guitar! Note his 'identity card' authorising him [I assume] to perform in the street.
5. Clans of Scotland [2 photos] and The Whisky Trail. Both shops could be a case study in their own right crammed images relating to Scottish identity and to particular places where the clan or whisky came from. A potential 'field trip questionnaire'!

The personalised Rolls Royce [on the yellow lines outside the Whisky shop] could start a wide-ranging discussion about identity, politics and power.

6. Finally 3 photos on other potential themes
  - ~ Signs ... see roundabout road sign, Kurdish restaurant etc.
  - ~ RBS bank ... the global market. What are the young women discussing?
  - ~ The international papers. Why here/ what saying? Papers and identity?

There was much more that could be followed up. A useful stimulus to our own thinking.