



Fig. 1 Pupils, sailing a dugout canoe with their teacher in the educational environment "Fire valley". All pictures made at and copyright of Lejre Experimental Centre. ■

Educational Introduction to the Historical Workshops in Denmark

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● **The article traces the development and summarises current conceptions of Danish 'historical workshops'.**

I am going to talk a little about educational work with students in the historical workshops in Denmark, about the background for teaching, and about the educational ideas. When we talk about students, we mean children in primary school.

My personal background is as a teacher in the Danish public school system. I am currently employed by a public institution called Skoletjenesten

(School Service), which has cooperative agreements with a number of cultural institutions, particularly in Copenhagen and its surroundings. According to the agreement between Skoletjenesten and the Lejre-centre, I work at Lejre with the purpose of developing and organizing the teaching of school groups. I have done this since 1996, but teaching in fact has existed here since 1967, when experiments with school-camps began.

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Fig. 2 Children, learning about food and trade at “Raven Hill”, the Viking market educational area. ■

Fig. 3 Impression of pupils cooking and sharing food. ■

Fig. 4 Pulling rocks at the burial mounds site – teamwork is something ancient with relevance to the present. ■



Only 4 years before that, in 1963, an anthology was published containing 10 contributions about schools and museums. It focused a lot on observation and narration as educational methods, but two of the authors dared to suggest that "under skilled instruction" the students should have some of the original artefacts in their hands. The following year saw the beginning of the Historical-Archeological Research Centre in Lejre, and it became an eye-opener, not least among teachers who were looking for new ways in education.

The first school-camps were considered experiments. They were carefully prepared in cooperation between the teachers and the employees at the Lejre-centre, and afterwards they were thoroughly evaluated and published in educational periodicals. There were two views from the beginning. One was heavily influenced by the so-called science-centered curriculum. Subjects in the schools ought to mirror scientific subjects. In history you read the sources and in Lejre the students should make archeological experiments. The benefits did not meet the intentions, and it never became a permanent part of the education at the Centre. But what still remains is the need to discuss how it would be possible to integrate experimentation in education.

The other view was far more vigorous. Basically it is still the view we build on in our work. We interpret cultural-historical knowledge by letting the students do things like they are supposed to have been done in the past. By letting it happen in our reconstructed environments we offer a setting which encourages identification with the past. Identification and absorption have always been two key-conceptions for which we have aimed.

A number of the teachers who participated in a school-camp in Lejre went home and made their own historical workshops. I will mention the first ones because some of you may recognise their names and localities. Vester Vedsted near Ribe in Jutland from 1967 – now closed. Gladsaxe outside Copenhagen, 1969. Guldager near Esbjerg in Jutland from 1971. Næsby in Odense on Funen 1973, and Vingsted in Jutland from 1976. (The last 3 mentioned, plus Lejre, have always been "The 4 big old" workshops, still the nucleus of the Danish network.) These and many later ones were solely made for educational reasons and are maintained by the local school-authorities. In addition, a number of museums all over the country have made use of historical workshop-teaching, and that is the reason why our network "The historical workshops in Denmark" is a mixture of reconstructed environments and museums, and now includes about 50 places.

(A new thing during the last 10 years or so, is the commercial experience-centres focused on families and tourists looking for a significant experience for their holidays. These range from serious institutions such as the museums which are bound by legislation to those for pure commercial entertainment which are not bound by professional demands. This is a problem for serious non-museums such as Lejre-centre. Our ministry of education has therefore defined a group of institutions as "Knowledge-educational Activity-centres". They are bound to take into account certain demands.)

In the beginning, historical workshop teaching was emphasized because it encouraged motivation and involvement, and because it provided a good



Fig. 5 Stone Age flint knapping gives pupils 3D insight – mental skills combined with manual skills. ■

possibility to meet the students called "academic weak". Today we think in a very different way connected with the development in the thinking about the conception of learning. The students no more are viewed as empty bottles ready to be filled up with a certain amount of knowledge, but rather as active and responsible participants in their own process of learning. Learning and what in Danish is called "Dannelse" (in German language, "Bildung") is happening in the meeting between students and teachers during an interaction of mutual influence. Learning is viewed as part of the great "Bildungsprojekt" with the goal that the students get as qualified as possible in all areas of life. Learning has been characterized by interdisciplinarity, working with projects, the formulation of problems and the involvement of creativity and ecology in education. The students have very different precondi-

tions and they are differently equipped. We talk about the many intelligences which are all to be considered and developed in the educational system. In a certain sense you can say that the task of education is to offer the students a number of different tools useful for their existence.

In the beginning historical workshop teaching was a progressive educational method which without doubt contributed to the development of the official thinking about education. This is connected with tool-thinking. The traditional school offered a very limited selection of tools, mostly characterized by academic and verbal skills. Historical workshops were different in that they offered some tools which the school had yet to consider. This has changed very much, and in that way, we are no longer a progressive educational element. Whether we can be in other new

ways, I will for the time being leave open for discussion.

To conclude, I want to tell you what in my opinion is the basic thing we are doing here. We offer the students three kind of tools which are all important elements in the great Bildungsprojekt. The first tool involves manual skills, which from the beginning are an important element in historical workshop teaching. These procedures include making food over an open fire, handicrafts, ploughing with an ard, making a string from lime-bast or a thread from wool, etc. All the things that were so good for the academically weak students. Today, they are just one amongst many qualifications.

The second tool that we offer, I call mental skills. The previously discussed procedures were not difficult to set up because our sources are rather rich. Archeologists already had interpreted the use of the artifacts found in the archeological record, and the results of experimental archeology offered a number of complementary interpretations which were used in the workshop teaching. It is much more problematic, if not impossible, to reconstruct the mental life of the past. It is much more difficult to interpret the sources. The tracks exist, but the interpretations have to be much more general and not specific. Nevertheless we have invited the students to try to understand the mental processes of past humans. We have a slogan for our work: *"You're allowed to invent, as long as you don't invent against the sources"*. (Just like good historical novels, while novels which do not follow this rule are irritating.) The specific tool that we use and offer the students is drama. We put ourselves in the place of past persons, and try to inquire how they would react

in different situations where a choice has to be taken. For example, two families have agreed a marriage between two young people. Would that have happened? If yes, how would it take place? The groom suffers an accident which disables him. How will the different actors react? If you have an idea, you can play it, if necessary more times, because we put ourselves in others places in different ways. The drama-tool can be used at many levels. It is something we are developing and learning to use in a professional way, i.e. just as a tool to inquire about mental conditions.

The third tool which we offer is what in the official curricula is called historical consciousness, defined as the interaction between the interpretation of the past, understanding of the present, and expectation to the future. This is not just historical knowledge, but rather historical knowledge made operational. Consequently, it is a tool you can use in the Bildungsarbeit (making-work) which among other things is about the making of identity: Who am I? How do I interact with others? Why did my parents and grandparents act in other ways? Why do my Turkish neighbours act in other ways than my parents? And so on. You can say that this cultural-historical knowledge collected in the historical workshops and the museums is the foundation-stone or the professional base of the "making-work" program in which we participate. For that reason, it is important what or how we teach. The professional base demands respect. The subjects, whether social anthropology, forging, experimental archeology, drama, or cooking, each have their basic rules which we have to respect and exploit as best as we can to make our education reliable.



Fig. 6 Small girl in Iron Age house: besides different skills also historical consciousness? ■

Summary

Pädagogische Einführung in die “Historischen Werkstätten” in Dänemark*

Die dänischen “Historischen Werkstätten” bieten den Schülerinnen und Schülern drei Arten von Methoden, die wichtige Elemente in der Projektarbeit zur Persönlichkeitsentwicklung darstellen.

Bei der ersten Methode handelt es sich um praktische Arbeitsfertigkeiten, die von Anfang an ein wichtiger Teil im Unterricht der “Historischen Werkstätten” waren und sind. Die zweite Methode bezieht sich auf mentale Fertigkeiten; durch den Einsatz von dramatischen Arbeitsweisen und Zuspitzungen laden wir die Schülerinnen und Schüler dazu ein, die gedanklichen Prozesse der Menschen der Vergangenheit zu verstehen zu versuchen. Wir haben dabei ein Motto für unsere Arbeit: “Du darfst Dir alles Mögliche (aus)denken, so lange Du Dir nicht etwas im Widerspruch zu den Quellen (aus)denkst”. Die dritte Methode wird in unseren offiziellen Statuten als historisches Bewusstsein bezeichnet, welches als Interaktion zwischen der Interpretation der Vergangenheit, dem Verstehen der Gegenwart und den Erwartungen für die Zukunft zu definieren ist. Im Prinzip bedeutet dies, das Verständnis für die Entwicklung des kulturellen Erbes und der Unterschiede zwischen verschiedenen Kulturen zu befördern.

Présentation des ateliers historiques de Danemark

Les ateliers historiques au Danemark proposent aux scolaires trois types d'activités qui sont des éléments importants de l'«autoformation».

D'abord, ce sont les activités manuelles, composant important des ateliers historiques dès le début. Les activités intellectuelles représentent le deuxième type. A l'aide du théâtre, les élèves s'efforcent de comprendre la mentalité des gens dans le passé. Leur moto déclare «On peut imaginer tant qu'on ne renie pas les données.» Dans les programmes pédagogiques officiels, le troisième type d'activités est désigné conscience historique. Celle-ci est définie comme l'interaction parmi l'interprétation du passé, la compréhension du présent et l'attente du futur. Bref, il s'agit de comprendre l'évolution culturelle et les distinctions parmi différentes cultures.