

'Friluftsliv' and teaching methods - classroom management and relational thinking

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It is my intention, in this very short abstract from an article written as a part of my main thesis work in educational science at the University of Oslo (UiO, 2000), to refer to what I look upon as some of the most important features and/or qualities regarding 'friluftsliv' and teaching methods. Quite often 'friluftsliv' is suggested as one out of many other possible ecological activities and working methods in the field of outdoor education. I will therefore try to describe 'friluftsliv' in terms related to a model often talked about as a **class-room management and relational thinking model**.

First of all, what I look upon as the most important features or qualities talking about 'friluftsliv' and teaching methods are qualities represented by catchwords and catchword sentences like:

- **Bringing someone into the 'friluftsliv' field first of all has to do with an intermediary activity out in the nature, and in the same time deeply related to the nature**
- **Talking about 'friluftsliv' we should focus the fumbling and tumbling meetings with nature being a part of the nature, getting in order with the nature, getting both the adventure and the experience - towards a higher state of nature consciousness**
- **'Friluftsliv' has to do with how to mindscape (more than to know about) the nature - it has to do with the cautious unconcealed meetings with nature**
- **Taking out into the nature the 'friluftsliv' way also has to do with a cautious practise - acting and clothing in respect of the actual weather, using the tools and equipment only as means in finding the right way, managing the over-nights and benefit from the teamwork - all of it to get a certain amount of safety margin**

Some of these sentences, I feel too, needs some sort of deepening. Doing so I have, of course, also to lean upon other practical educationalists in the field of 'friluftsliv'. Such texts should of course not be presented in too many fragmented bits. To avoid that I will as well try to present texts and bits of texts that really are covering more than one sentence, but a few times also under just one of the sentences.

- **'Friluftsliv' first of all has to do with an intermediary activity out in the nature**

The number one principle regarding 'friluftsliv' and conwaying, Faarlund (1974) says must be that of doing it in and deeply related to the nature; and that the introduction to 'friluftsliv' should take place in the nature close to your home. That as well means that nature most characteristic for the actual local community should be preferred to other types of nature. The second principle, Faarlund points out very clearly, is that the demands from the actual outdoor area has to be adjusted to each group members own suppositions. The nature used has to be stimulating in a positive way; not frightening - and certainly not

giving rise to a bare escape or fighting/conquering attitude.

- **The value and necessity of tumbling and fumbling - 'friluftsliv' being cautious unconcealed meetings with nature**

Using the catchwords *activities* and *subjects*, Grosvold and Haugsjå (1973) points out perhaps the most essential presupposition looking upon 'friluftsliv' from an outdoor education angle: It should always start with an outdoor activity, tumbling and fumbling on a nature odyssey:

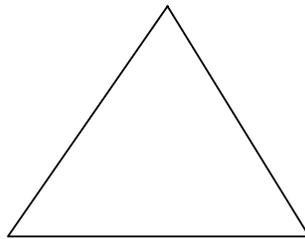
This tumbling and fumbling make the basis for practising primary conditions ...

...

Using the tumbling and fumbling nature odyssey as an introduction to 'friluftsliv', you'll (through preparation, accomplishment and complementary work) give them an excellent basis to choose from for the rest of their outdoor life.

The most essential thing, Haugsjå (1975) says, is to look upon both the possibilities in and the consequences for 'friluftsliv' in the nature close to home. Only after such a cautious introduction to outdoor life the time has come to look upon more special and even demanding types of activities. And - each time we go to a more special/demanding type of activity, it is extremely important then to present this activity as a further-on-activity based upon 'friluftsliv' in general. Also when using 'friluftsliv' as an ecopedagogic method, Haugsjå points out these three essentials in his pedagogic triangle:

OVERALL VIEW

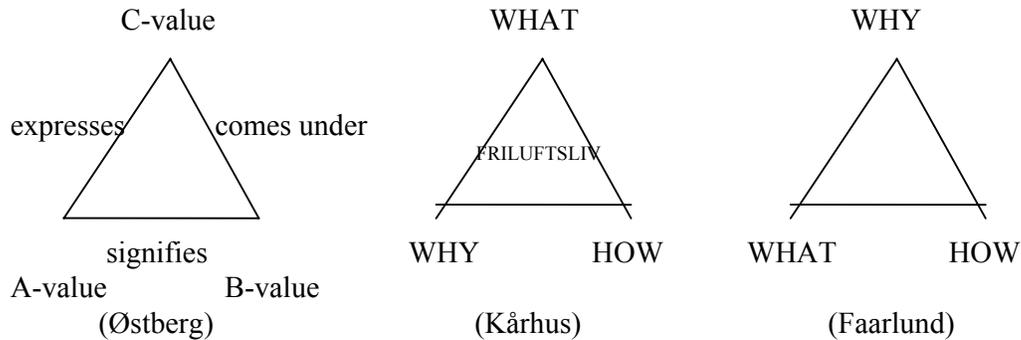


(PRACTICAL) SKILLS

(PRACTICAL) METHODS

Using the term «overall view» Haugsjå means an overall view related to a) man's biological relationship to nature; b) man's responsibility to nature; and c) man's total situation of life.

And then, by having Haugsjå's pedagogic triangle pinned up together with the semiologic triangle Østberg (1980) uses related to the term 'friluftsliv', the classroom management triangle Kårhus (1975) uses, and of course the triangle represented by Faarlund's three «essentials»: what, why and how - I hope to produce more interesting things/thoughts:



Østberg points out, when using her semiologic triangle, that the term 'friluftsliv' can be read; first as a general signification for activities related to the term; second as something that refers to the content of 'friluftsliv'; and third as something that refers to the meaning of 'friluftsliv'. She then says our term 'friluftsliv' has a C-value expressed by the A-value 'friluftsliv', and included the B-values such as fumbling and tumbling in the woods, bathing, climbing, canoeing/kayaking etc. (Doing it this way, we must not forget that Faarlund, and so much more than Haugsjø, warns us if we give way for placing his three essentials in each one's corner of a triangle.)

- **The adventure, the experience, getting in the state of consciousness**

In an article about guiding young people into 'friluftsliv' Jensen (1999) has a special section related to just these three catchwords. He points out that conwaying, as regards outdoor life, is deeply related to adventure, experience, a state of consciousness:

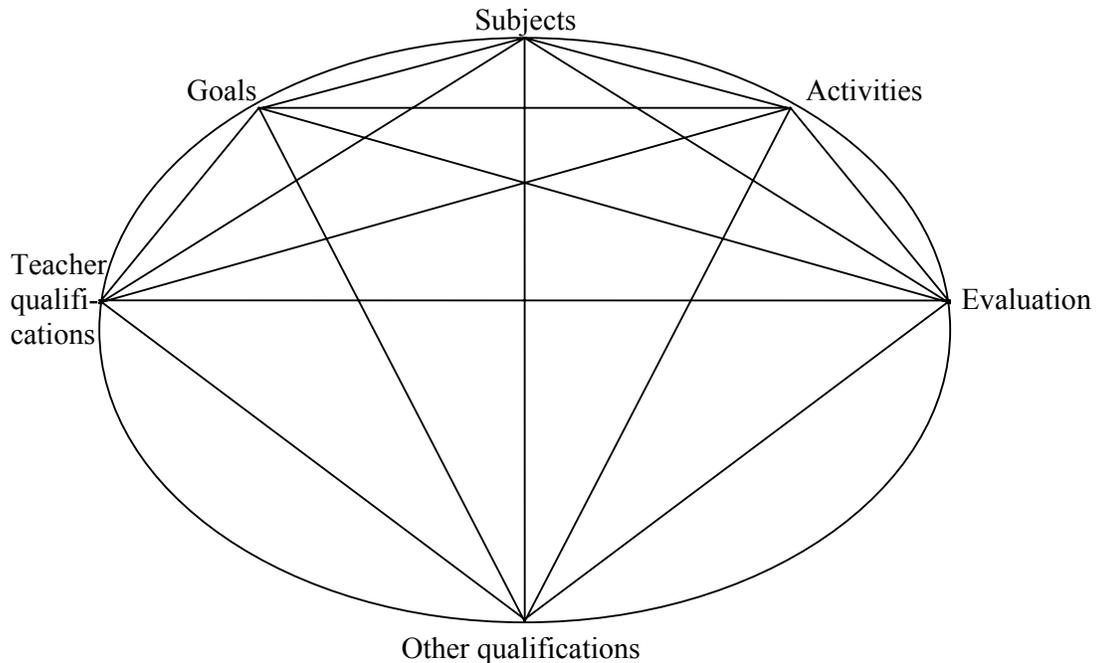
To describe adventure is difficult. One way is to signify adventure by bringing in all those spontaneous, unreflected streams of feelings, thoughts and complex perceptible impressions coming to us. When the adventure comes to some state of consciousness, we can call it an experience.

...

Through their play and play life, children more than adults meets nature as whole and complete individuals. Adults conwaying young people into outdoor life should then be very careful leading the way by introducing them to The Outdoor Plays. They will very often find their own way. Most essential for you as an adult conwayor is to be aware of young peoples curiosity, spontaneity, impulsiveness ...

- **Summary**

Trying now to take my catchword sentences into a classroom management and relational thinking model, we will first of all start with a model having this general shape:



As I see it then, **free nature near at home and the use of tools and equipment characterised by their simplicity** are the most important qualifications when we are teaching and guiding in the field of 'friluftsliv'.

Important teacher qualifications, or should we now say conwayor qualifications, are **perceiveness, knowledge and conductiveness** - not to forget that perceiveness is more important than knowledge.

All teaching/guiding/conwaying should start from **what the actual group have been taught or have experienced related to outdoor life, so far**. That means all the foregoing adventures, skills, experiences ...

By putting the catchword sentence **Being out in the nature in a way that corresponds to each person's abilities/skills - and getting security margin as well** right in the middle of the model, I'm pointing out how important it is to know each group's and each group member's qualifications.

The basic skills in 'friluftsliv' given by the sentence **taking out in nature in a cautious way, acting and clothing in respect of the actual weather, using tools and equipment, finding the right way, managing the over-nights and getting benefits out of the teamwork** I would prefer to take into the model, because of the importance to evaluation, just aside the evaluation line.

Catchwords such as **Knowledge, skills and conductiveness** you may as well put both aside the goals line and under the subjects. I myself prefer putting something like: **Adventures, experiences, getting in a state of nature consciousness** together with **The**

cautious and unconcealed meetings with nature aside the goal line - and **Nature perceivness** as one of many, if you like, examples of very important subjects.

Then so far a finished model could be this one:

