

FRILUFTSLIV, NATURE AND TEACHING METHODS – A MODEL FOR GENDER EDUCATION

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Friluftsliv (outdoor life activities) is in the Norwegian syllabus and education system not only content within physical education; it is also a methodical approach, especially in the frame of interdisciplinary teaching.

In the combination of motoric, social and cognitive learning education in friluftsliv gives a good possibility to support the individual development of every pupil, independent of sex, physical prerequisites and other differences. In the article it will be first described the subject friluftsliv in Norwegian school. After a discussion of different approaches and didactic implications, it will be shown a didactic model for development of identity in the frame of gender education

Keywords: Friluftsliv (outdoor activities); Lifestyle; Didactic relation model; Gender education

1. Introduction

Friluftsliv is a popular Scandinavian leisure activity in the nature, which in Norway often is pictured as a special lifestyle. Indeed, friluftsliv can register a boom in the last two, three decades, especially among the younger generation. But not only in leisure time, also as a subject in school education friluftsliv has had got more impact and prominence. E.g. the latest syllabus in physical education (KD 2006) shows that friluftsliv takes minimum one third of all activities, and in addition it is written, that friluftsliv can influence nearly all other subjects in interdisciplinary teaching. In spite of these good formal prerequisites there is a lack of didactic approaches or conceptions, which are going beyond motoric learning and outdoor education. Even if it is often named that friluftsliv is one of the outstanding possibilities for personal development (Bischoff 1996, Fisker 2005, Mogensen 2007), it seems to be mainly an implicit aim, because concrete teaching models or didactic conceptions are not developed.

In this articles should be discussed the possibilities of friluftsliv as a didactic category, especially the possibility for a methodic approach in gender education. First it will be given a nearer description of friluftsliv, which leads to a discussion of the different approaches of friluftsliv in the Norwegian school system, the second part has the focus on friluftsliv and classroom management as a didactic model, and the third part will reflect about the possibility of friluftsliv – as a pedagogical way and interdisciplinary method – for gender education.

2. Friluftsliv – an intermediary activity out in the nature

First and foremost has friluftsliv to do with bringing someone into the nature and giving experiences for to stimulate knowledge and mindscape about the nature and life at all. Operated by this activities and reflections about it is possible to make experiences about themselves, too. In this meaning friluftsliv can be looked upon as a beneficial possibility for personal development and self-education.

2.1 Friluftsliv as a lifestyle

According to Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930), the peace Nobel winner and polar researcher, and one of the first well known friluftsliv man, who already hundred years ago was very engaged in initiating and stimulating to outdoor activities and nature experience is friluftsliv the “nature life”, which we miss, but we all long for: “Friluftsliv is the free, simple life, in fresh air, which gives the privilege again to

that what human beings were originally meant to be” (Nansen 1916/1940; author’s translation). It subsumes a lot different activities in and approaches to the nature, and it is mostly the intention or the meaning *how* to do, which is crucial, not the activity by itself. So what can be put under the term friluftsliv for to understand it in the right way? With reference to Haslestad (2012) it can be given a short explanation with help of negative distinctions:

Friluftsliv is

- *not sport*, in the meaning of physical activity and achievement in a selfish and competitive way, rather using physical activity for wellness and developing a positive self-image.
- *not tourism*, in the meaning of business and event, realized in a passive entertainment participation, rather to be on tour for to enjoy the original nature and to contemplate in relation to the overall nature.
- *not (scientific) excursion*, with the focus on biological or physical processes in the nature, or collecting of certain specimens from the nature, rather to exercise a mindscape of nature at all.
- *not outdoor activity*, in the sense of to transfer the modern business lifestyle against the nature, but rather the opposite. It should not be a therapy for the modern everyday life, but a helping possibility to change the way of life to a more natural and healthy everyday life.
- *not using the nature*, in the meaning of misuse and destruction in an anthropocentric way, but rather to find a way to live in the nature in a biocentric relation.

During the last 150 years friluftsliv has been experienced and developed as a certain kind of a lifestyle for the Norwegian people. This lifestyle, however, has been susceptible to other influences and changings, too. And therefore – even if friluftsliv is strong grounded as a part of the national identity – also this traditional lifestyle has been threatened by modern and postmodern lifestyles, especially the last two, three decades. The socio-cultural importance of friluftsliv in leisure time is diminishing, and one reaction of the society was to increase friluftsliv in education and the school system. The last twenty-five years and in the last three Norwegian syllabuses friluftsliv has got a continuously increasing quantity of hours and importance as a didactic category. In this way the school system has got the task to resurrect the values of this lifestyle, to pass down the tradition, but at the same time also to extend and to make more attractive new friluftsliv activities.

Today friluftsliv in school is not only a cultural and activity subject, it has got a wider didactic dimension, too. When we take an analytical view of the Norwegian syllabuses and the teaching practice today, we can find different meanings of and approaches to friluftsliv: it is manifested as an activity, as a theme, as a form of work, as a pedagogical way and as an interdisciplinary method (cf. Haslestad 2002).

2.2 Friluftsliv as a didactic category

Friluftsliv was explicit named in the Norwegian syllabus first in 1939 (*normalplan 1939*), but there only in general meaning that it would be good to let the children have a lot of activities outdoors. In this intention the intrinsic value was seen as the most important – similar the intrinsic value of playing. In the subsequent syllabuses a pedagogical intention of friluftsliv took more and more place (*forsøksplan 1959*). Friluftsliv should not only be an activity in leisure time, it should also be a contrast to everyday life, should be understood in a cultural context, and should give knowledge about the nature and a deeper relation to the nature (*mønsterplan 1987*). Friluftsliv was more and more considered as opinion-forming and at least identity-forming (*læreplanverket 1997*). This understanding of friluftsliv in school education is explicit named in the general premises of the syllabus 1997, what is still valid in the current syllabus:

“Human beings are a part of nature, and are constantly making decisions with repercussions not only for their own welfare, but also for other humans and for the natural environment as well. Our choices have consequences across geographic borders and across generations: lifestyle influences health; our nation’s consumption produces pollution in other countries; and our society’s waste becomes the plight of future generations. [...] Education must therefore provide a broad awareness of the interconnections in nature and about the interplay between humans and their habitat. [...] Education must also enkindle a sense of joy in physical activity and nature’s grandeur, of living in a beautiful country, in the lines of a landscape, and in the changing seasons. It should awaken a sense of awe towards the unexplainable, induce pleasures in outdoor life and nourish the urge to wander off the beaten track and into uncharted terrain; to use body and senses to discover new places and to explore the world. Outdoor life touches us in body, mind and soul. Education must corroborate the connection between understanding nature and experiencing nature: familiarity with the elements and the interconnections in our living environment must be accompanied by the recognition of our dependence on other species, our affinity with them, and our joy in wildlife” (Min. of Education, 1996: 35-38).

Furthermore in the latest syllabus (*kunnskapsløftet 2006*) are named experience in the nature and reflections about motoric, cognitive and social learning in and through the nature. A sustainably penetrating power got friluftsliv especially by the concept of “interdisciplinary teaching” (*tverrfaglig undervisning*) and the concept “outside school” (*uteskole*). Quantitatively friluftsliv constitutes minimum one third of all hours in physical education, and in addition the schools have the freedom to combine so much subjects as they want within friluftsliv activities. However, this means also that friluftsliv in school today is mostly seen and used as a pedagogical way and method. The main tasks and aims with this approach are:

- “to give pupils some of the natural life back – by experience in and of the nature and enjoying encounters with free nature
- to convey insight in and sympathy with the nature rather than knowledge about the nature - through its presence in nature
- allowing pupils to cultivating and developing their friluftsliv and survival skills by exercising friluftsliv in relatively small groups [...] and in safe forms” (Haslestad 2002: 132; author’s translation).

3. Friluftsliv as a pedagogical way and method

The tasks, aims and intentions of friluftsliv seems sometimes formulated huge, varied and idealistic, like friluftsliv is “a way of recreating understanding for nature, of rediscovering the true home of mankind, A Way Home” (Faarlund, Dahle & Jensen 2005). In this meaning it evokes a strong expectation of contributing greatly to develop national identity as well as individual identity. The phrase “Friluftsliv as a way home” expresses both, the content, that means the knowledge and skills, which are lying in friluftsliv for to be able to come home, and the method, that means the way how to win home.

From a pedagogic-didactical point of view it is mostly interested and important to emphasize the methodological possibilities and implications of friluftsliv. In both, an implicit and explicit way, the methodological qualities of friluftsliv can, with reference to Haslestad (2005), be described as

- Friluftsliv field is an intermediary activity in the open free nature; most of the activities give a feeling of being deeply related to nature, of being a part of the nature. This merging with nature can lead e.g. to a higher state of nature consciousness.

- Experiences in the nature are at the same time experiences about oneself. In the relation of the activities in nature one get a feeling and a consciousness about the own body, but also as a part of the nature.
- In a further way friluftsliv has also to do with cautious practice. That means such basic things as acting carefully in the nature, dressing oneself with respect to the actual weather situation, or benefitting from teamwork.

The planning and didactic approach to the friluftsliv aims can be reached by e.g. using didactic reflections and tools. Such a tool is the “Didactic Relation Model”, a didactic model of classroom management, which is most common in Scandinavia. It was first introduced by Bjørndal and Lieberg in 1978 and has got during the last two decades some reworking and modification.

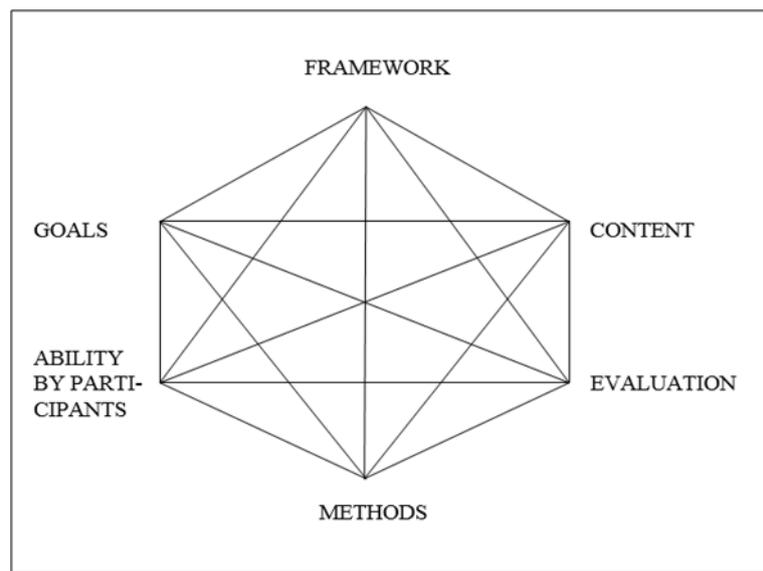


Fig. 1: The Didactic Relation Model (Bjørndal & Lieberg 1978)

The original model is based on that the authors tried to find out and to describe the most essential components of didactic situations. With the description of every component as well as the relation of the components to each other they give a fruitful tool to the teacher for a reflective process of planning of the teaching and learning process. It is a target-oriented model of planning and organization of teaching, which is mostly shown as crystal-like hexagonal (fig. 1). Of course, it is very generally and can therefore be used for all subjects in school.

Haslestad (2005) has worked on this model and has adapted it to friluftsliv, with a special perspective: performance of leadership. He presented a model with the following components:

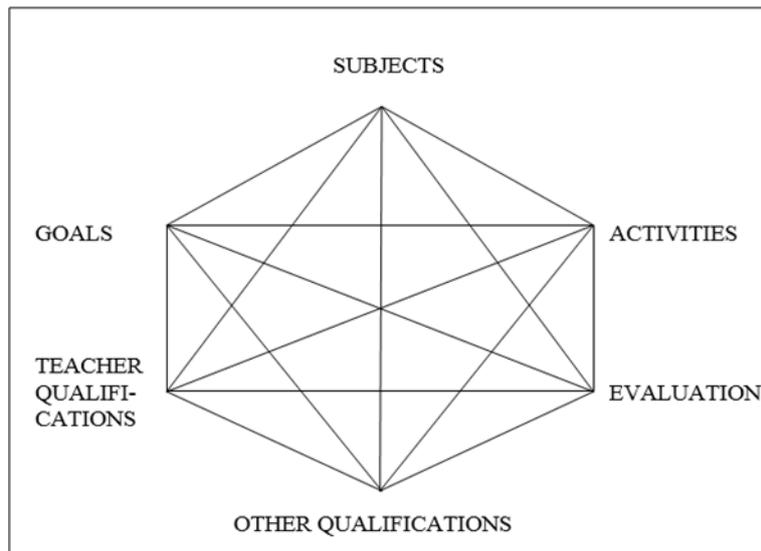


Fig. 2: The Didactic Relation Model (reworking Haslestad 2012)

It is to notice that he put explicit the following friluftsliv-related features and qualities into the model:

- “Free nature near at home
- Use of tools and equipment characterized by their simplicity
- Important teacher qualifications, such as: Perceiving skills, knowledge, conveying skills
- What the actual group has been taught or has experienced related to “friluftsliv” before
- Being out in the nature in a way that correspond to each participant’s abilities/skills
- Having a security margin
- Taking participants (pupils) out in nature in a cautious way, acting and dressing with respect to the actual weather, using tools and equipment, finding one’s way, managing over-nights, and benefitting from teamwork
- Other qualifications” (Haslestad 2012: 178).

4. Friluftsliv and Gender Education

With basic on Bjørndal and Lieberg (1978) and in respect to Haslestad (2005, 2012), it will be shown later another reworked model, with the perspective of gender education. First, however, it has to be reflected and discussed some pedagogical implications of friluftsliv, gender and self-education.

4.1 Friluftsliv and Self-Education

Even 1999, Pedersen could show and describe that traditionally a lot of friluftsliv activities were male dominated, and that certain activities were connected to male or to female gender roles. E.g. were extreme activities more attributed to men, and children orientated friluftsliv activities were rated as a typical female domain. However, the changings of approaches and intentions, and the diversification of friluftsliv activities have also led to a new or better said: nuanced picture of the friluftsliv scenario. Today, the equality and the similarities in the activities, which men and women are doing in friluftsliv, are more noticeable than the differences (Emmelin, Fredman & Sandell 2005, Bentsen, Andkjær & Ejbye-Ernst 2009). And that means both the choice of the activities and the way to do it. Today, very often men and women are on the same tour, meet the same challenges, and are familiar with helping and trusting each other.

In the last ten-fifteen years it could be noticed four tendencies why young people of either sex are interest in nature:

- Outdoor activities: to be fast in the nature and back home, with the focus on skills and experience;
- Search for identity: individual experiences and personal development;
- Challenges and risk: transgression of limits, exertions, excitement and stimulants, team-building
- Outdoor sport: Competition in nature areal, fighting against the nature, multisport (Bischoff & Odden 2000, Mogensen 2007, Odden 2008)

And it can be underlined that the main important perspective has become “search for identity”. It is possible to say, that the other three tendencies can be subsumed under this perspective, that they are a part of the main aim “development of identity”. This probably is the biggest difference in the main motive to friluftsliv (cf. Bischoff 2000, Fisker 2005): for the young generation today friluftsliv has become first and foremost a personal project, where the nature is used for to experience excitement and achievement, and through this to experience themselves. Friluftsliv today is characterized by:

- an increasing diversity; this includes new activities, but also a differentiation and specialization in traditional activities;
- a changing of motives and intentions; traditions are superseded of an increasing reflexivity;
- an increasing of individualization; this can be based or also lead to a more global view of activities, form of expression and performance.

Friluftsliv seems to be a distinguished example as exercise-, marking- and self-identification-field in the personal development, especially because friluftsliv activities have the big advantage that there are in principle no sex-linked limits or borders.

Fisker speaks about friluftsliv as a personal, social and cultural reflexive identity project (Fisker 2005: 98). He has created a model (fig. 3), which describes different levels and approaches of young people’s use of friluftsliv in their personal identity project.

	Friluftsliv	Landscape	Everyday life
personal level	nature experience	sense of locality	style
social level	utilization of nature	relation to locality	lifestyle
cultural level	understanding of nature	affinity to locality	way of life

Fig. 3: Model for description of youth’s friluftsliv (Fisker 2005: 99; author’s translation)

This approach to self-education happens based on or according to the premises and the expectations of the individual; therefore the individual themselves has to search for identity- and personality-formative experiences (Hammershøj 2003, Mogensen 2007). Hammershøj (2003) is talking about a radical individualization, which includes an utterly aspiration of personal self-determination and a potential aspiration of freedom to self-unfolding. In this intention individuation means to be oneself, and that includes the responsibility, to make with his/her own personality something special. “The unfolding in the nature becomes an arena, where one demonstrates the personal plan, value orientations and identities, not to orientate on established pattern of the community. The nature is an arena, where each

and every is drawing attention to themselves, checking out lifestyle and attitudes to life, and in particular communicate affinity and singularity for themselves and others” (Tordsson 2005: 29; author’s translation).

Friluftsliv gives individual a possibility to gain experience by opening themselves, or still more: by exceeding oneself. In friluftsliv everybody let himself or herself in for a challenge without knowing how and how far one will manage this activity. At the same time are all member of a group, a community, where everybody can give proof of his/her abilities, his/her qualities and his/her way to cope with a task. It is not sure that one can fulfill the own expectations, which activities one can manage and which not. These experiences with good and bad success give anyway new experiences, and especially the negative experience contributes a lot to the self-education. This understanding is conforming to the description of experiences according to Gadamer (2004). “Experience requires necessarily many frustrated expectations, because only then one gains experiences” (Gadamer 2004: 338; author’s translation).

Another perspective is named by Hammershøj (2003), when he explains that self-education is also social education by transcending themselves in the social community. E.g. it is possible to have the same taste and the same interest in an activity, but to do it in a different intention and goal. To copy others, but to do it in another way, in an own original style and self-staging have become increasingly important (Andkjær 2005, Tordsson 2005, Mogensen 2007). All these new trends and tendencies can be taken as a springboard for new aims in teaching friluftsliv. Maybe in the direction as Tordsson has in his vision: “And maybe friluftsliv can inspire not only to choose an individual lifestyle, but also to draft a common vision of a meaningful future” (Tordsson 2005: 31; author’s translation).

4.2 Didactic Relation Model “Friluftsliv and Gender”

In the approach of self-education and with the purpose to be conducive to development of identity and in this way also to gender identity, a didactic model could be this one:

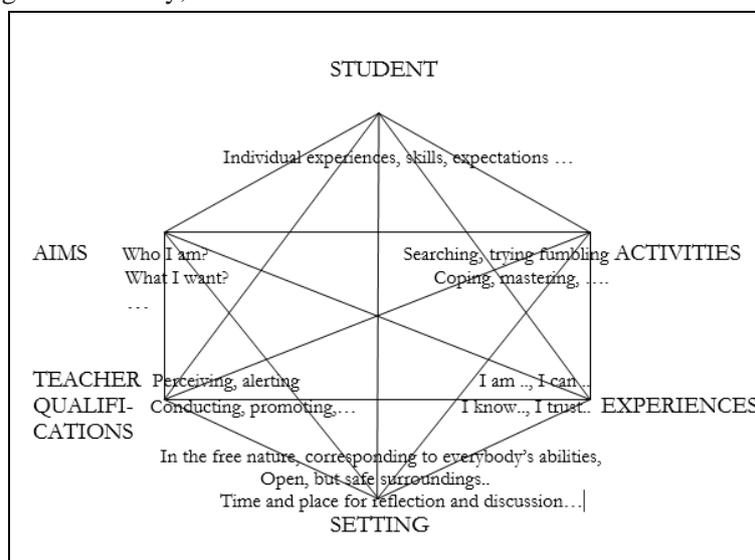


Fig. 4: The Didactic Relation Model (reworking after Bjørndal & Lieberg and Haslestad)

The explanation of the several components puts emphasis on following:

The category *student* takes care to the different prerequisites of the participants. These can be different knowledge, abilities, experience, expectations or socio-cultural background as well as gender experience. The students haven’t had the same experience in the nature and the expectations to friluftsliv activities can be very various. That means that the common activities must also have individual approaches, which are not gender-related.

Even if there are mostly open activities and individual approaches it is necessary that that activity has an *aim*. It is possible to distinguish between short-time aims and long-time aims. In relation to friluftsliv, seen as lifestyle, it is more useful to formulate long-time aims or process aims, which describe the expected development, of course, regardless of gender.

The category *activities* is the other, the practical side of the aim. An aim should be reached by an activity; the activity has to be chosen and offered in such way that it is possible to reach, or at least to approach the aim. In friluftsliv the activity is also methodic or working way, e.g. to work together or to trust to each other. There are no more gender-related activities.

Setting means the description of the framework for the activities. The nature is a very wide and open description of the framework for friluftsliv, which includes a lot of predictable and still more unpredictable aspects. Exactly this, however, is the big advantage of the nature for to give individual approaches to everybody. Nevertheless it must be the knack of a good teacher or leader to find and to lead into the right surroundings for special aims, dependent on the group or certain individuals, and not to let the situation quite open, in the sense of “the nature speaks for itself”.

The category *experiences* is chosen here rather than “results” or “evaluation”. The meaning is that process aims cannot be evaluated immediately. Learning in nature, which should be more than skill learning, is difficult to plan, because the experiences in one and the same situation can be very different for different students, because experiences are characterized individual and have varying degrees of effectiveness. “To have a good feeling...” can be a very good result. This approach can be referred to “experience pedagogy” according to Dewey (1976) or “experiential pedagogy” according to Schouborg, Nørhøj and Munksgaard (1982).

The quality of the teacher to prepare or to get out ready for such open, but nevertheless fruitful situations in friluftsliv, is the meaning of the category *teachers qualifications*. With starting point in own experiences in the friluftsliv the teacher has to find the balance between an explicit and an implicit access into the nature and in friluftsliv activities. And this ability is especially important, when the aims are going beyond friluftsliv as e.g. gender education.

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