7 Steps

towards in-depth teaching in historic environments

Time Traveling as an educational method

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This inspirational booklet is a short summary of *Manual of Historic Environment Education and Time Travels*.

The manual is in Swedish and consists also of three examples:
*The Later Stone Age 5000 years ago, grades 1-6*
*The Middle Ages, grades 4-5, secondary school*
*The Turn of the Century 1900, grade 8.*

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*Time Traveling as an educational method*

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In-depth teaching in historic environments
Time traveling as an educational method

If you look closely at your own immediate surroundings you’ll be sure to find traces from people who lived there during the 20th century, maybe from the Middle Ages or even as far back as the Stone Age. The aim of this booklet is to inspire you to make use of the local historic environment and heritage in your teaching.

Using the local environment is very rewarding in all subjects: science subjects, social studies, maths, art, music, drama and practical subjects. Furthermore, all subjects, according to the curriculum in many countries, must have a historic perspective.

The question is how to teach students about their heritage, visible in the local historic environment. This brochure contains 7 steps, which can be used to reach this goal.

Don’t take on too much. Choose an historic setting near the school and study it. Contact your local museum for facts, research material and for in-service days.

Encourage the students to investigate local sources from their own points of view and interest.

“This was probably the best and most knowledgeable way of teaching I’ve ever had at school. And I’ve never had so much fun working before. That’s probably why I remember so much”.
(Student 15 years old in Mariehamn, Åland, at a Time Travel to 1905.)
Use all five senses for an advanced learning experience. Why not set out on a time travel in the historic environment where, together with your students, you role play the people who once lived there.

Kalmar County Museum in Sweden has been supporting schools in Time Travels and Historic Environment Education since the 1980s. The museum does research about historical sites close to the schools and train the teachers. The education in school is focused on the chosen historical site and time period. The students explore the archives and other sources. Then the students, led by museum staff and teachers, make a time travel to a chosen year at the historic site they have studied in school. They dress up in historical costumes and for one day become the people who once lived at the site.

Time travels give a deep knowledge and understanding of the past in a comparison with society of today. It’s also a way of looking at the past from the bottom to the top, from servants, workers and farmhands to nobles and masters at the top.

This booklet is a summary of the knowledge Kalmar County Museum has from twenty years of working with Time Travels and Historic Environment Education. There is further information about Time Travels in other booklets and on websites (p 13).

In 2004 Bridging Ages, an International Organisation in Historic Environment Education and Time Travels was formed, with the head office at Kalmar County Museum. People from schools, museums, universities, municipalities in fourteen different countries in Europe, America, Africa and Asia are part of the organisation. (i.e. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, USA, South Africa, Turkey, Sweden and others).

We hope you find this way of learning interesting. It can make a difference for those people, young and old, who take part.

Make teaching easy, use the historic environment which are close at hand. But make use of the 21st century’s pedagogy and all of the five senses, to reach a higher level of learning.

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Historic environments, a teaching resource

The historic environment is a great teaching resource, that all too often is not used enough. We are completely surrounded by historic environments from days gone by. These link our modern society with yesterday’s society. The environments in close proximity to schools help to create meaning in students’ everyday lives.

A group of teachers is shown around a block of apartment buildings from the 1950s.

A town is part of most people’s historic environment.

Cultivated fields can reveal a lot about how the landscape was utilized during different periods. Traces of people can be found from as far back as the Stone Age and right up to the present day.
A Time Travel using all five senses
By making a time travel in an historic environment, both children and adults, can experience days of the past with all five senses. Dressing up in costumes from various periods and living for a day as the people who used to live and work there, will result in a deeper insight and understanding as well as lasting knowledge.

An Iron Age settlement near the school comes alive. Students experience commitment and gain new knowledge, insight and a deeper understanding by taking on rolls of people from a specific historical period and site. Time travel in Österbotten, Finland, 400 A.D.

Historic Environment Education - something that touches us all
Historic environment education is about people of the past and people of today. The starting point is the students’ own questions and issues, faced with men and women from the past.
Historic Environment Education is learning in the local historic environment.

**An alternative method in teaching**

Historic environment education is based on teaching following the schools’ curriculum and syllabus. It’s not an extra subject but a different method of implementing the curriculum.

By creating high quality teaching students can achieve the set goals of learning and understanding facts, new skills and deeper knowledge.

Historic environment education can give improved results within the school’s objectives.

Try it yourself.

"Now for the first time I believe my students realize that ancient history isn’t just a fairytale".

(Teacher at Trekanten school)

"I thought it would be boring, but……. Holy Cow - it was really fun to be in your time”.

(Spontaneous comments from students after a time travel)
**Something for all ages**

Studying the heritage in the local historic environment is important for students of all ages; preschool, primary school, secondary school and adult education. Whatever your age, 5, 17, 28 or 60, you all have the same need for a high quality learning experience with concreteness and context.

16 year-olds making bands to be used on soldiers’ uniforms at Eketorp ringfort in the early Middle Ages.

Three and four year-olds helping Garden Anna to bake some cookies. There are many helping hands. A time travel to 1898 at Stensberg, Kalmar.

This ten year-old has turned into a Stone Age boy. His face is pained in the tribe’s colours.

Adults and children are working together at the carpentry shop in Ruda, north of Kalmar, 1913.
Co-operation school, museum and local historical societies

It’s a definite advantage if heritage- and historic environment education can take place in close co-operation between school and museum. The museum can provide knowledge of suitable historic environments and it also has well-filled archives. Your local historical society has all the facts about the local history and this is a valuable resource.

Those of you teachers who wish to study the heritage and use historic environments and sites in teaching: Contact your nearest regional or local museum for co-operation and assistance.

A 1950’s event at Västra Funkaboskolan in Kalmar. This event was a co-operation between the school, the regional museum and the local societies.

Bötterums Inn in 1867. This historical event in the spring of 2001, was arranged in collaboration with the school, the regional museum and the local historical society.

Outside Kalmar County Museum. Buses loaded with historical costumes and props ready to be used by local schools in the time travels.
How to start?

The 7 steps

1. Choose a suitable historic site close to your school
   Teachers and museum staff choose a historic site suitable in a teaching context. This should be close to the school, easy to distinguish, preferably a little bit screened off, and the source material should be readily available. Of course it should be from an epoch, which coincides with the school’s curriculum.

2. The museum does the research in the archives
   Staff at the museum will research the sources and the archives relating to the historic site, keeping a regional and national perspective in mind. This can include written documents, maps, finds, literature, oral sources etc.

   An old map from the 17th century tells about the connection between the church and the village.

3. Interpret the landscape
   Try to interpret and decipher the landscape surrounding the chosen historic site. The landscape is the best source of knowledge about the past. Try to capture an image when the historic environment was full of life. Can you see what the landscape was like? The people of the past?

   The landscape offers numerous readable elements and historic dimensions. The photo is from Öland.
4. Training days
The staff of the museum together with representatives from local historic societies can provide the teachers with necessary competence skills. This will result in knowledge of history but is also of great importance for commitment, and interest at the school.

5. Teaching
Teaching at the school is thematic and embraces all subjects. Students search for answers to their questions in archives and other sources of information. The more subjects that are incorporated the better the overall view students will get of everyday life.

In-service days include both theoretical and practical parts. Theory presents facts and paint the background. The practical activities provide insight and understanding and the theoretical knowledge falls into place.

Students study archives, reports, maps, newspapers and other sources.

"It’s good to have an insight in how people lived in the past. Then you can understand why they thought the way they thought and did the things they did."
(Student, 15 years, at Skansenskolan i Mörbylånga)
6. Time travel / role play
A time travel experience at a historical site can play an important part in consolidating knowledge. Students and teachers role-play the historical persons they have studied in school. A certain point in time is frozen and you join in some of the activities that took place on that specific site. When done properly and with historic costumes a time travel is a powerful tool which gives students a profound experience and lasting knowledge.

Role play with a high school at the castle in Skanör. The year is 1432.

Time Travel to the Stone Age in Västraby, Lindås, a journey 5000 years back in time. The tale told beside the fire catches the spirit of the time and the students forget the present.

Students from Cambridge school in Minnesota, USA, travel back to the year 1872 with the help of a magical crystal ball, and meet the Swedish immigrant Christina Edblad.
7. Evaluation
It is important to evaluate the time travels and the thematic study in historic environment education. Here are some evaluations that students have written:

"I must say I learnt ten times more in one day about life of a family a hundred years ago, than I learnt from ten lessons of meaningless talk at school." (Student, 15 years, from Öland, Sweden)

"I was a gladiator and that was excellent because there was a man called Silvius Clavinius, then everybody had to go to Maxentus, a Quintilii brother, and give him all the things we’d made. I liked this Roman travel a lot. Thanks! (P. de la Croix)

A letter of thanks from Hilda (Shannon Nelson), nine years old, after a time travel in Cambridge, Minnesota to the year 1872.

A Time Travel to the year 180 A.D. at Villa dei Quintilii in the outskirts of Rome, Italy. The students welcomed their patron Maximus with gifts and a show.

"I’m not really interested in history, but when you are able to take part in the life a hundred years ago and dress up in historical costumes you get a much better understanding. It was more and more fun during the day and when it’s fun you want to learn more." (Student, 15 years)
What are the advantages of Time Travels and Historic Environment Education?

- High quality learning experience which gives students historical facts, understanding, skills and deep knowledge of the past.
- Creates meaning for students in their everyday lives and in the place where they live.
- Gives insight into fundamental principles such as democracy, environment, equality and diversity.
- Gives historic perspective, roots to the past and local identity.
- A way of implementing the curriculum and the school’s objectives.
- It’s fun. And it is socially rewarding.

The National Curriculum in Sweden

"A secure identity and awareness of one’s own cultural heritage strengthens the ability of the individual to understand the conditions and fundamental values of others."

Kalmar läns museum

Kalmar County Museum has been working with Historic Environment Education and Time Travels, together with schools on all levels, for twenty years. During three years, 2000-2002, the museum had a National Commission from the Swedish government to spread this educational method to the whole country. The museum is also the coordinator in Bridging Ages, the International Organisation in Historic Environment Education and Time Travels. Please call the museum for more information.
Where do we go from here?
Read "Time Travels - a method to make young people engaged in the study of their local history". A booklet by Ebbe Westergren, Tina Lindström and Helen Eklund and published by the Kalmar County Museum in Sweden.

Web sites:
www.kalmarlansmuseum.se Kulturmiljöpedagogik (Look for the English flag) Internationellt.
www.bridgingages.com

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In Swedish: "Manual. Kulturmiljöpedagogik och tidsresor".
"Jag trodde det skulle bli tråkigt, men…” Kulturmiljöpedagogik och tidsresor under 20 år. Årsboken Kalmar län 2004.

Testimonies from students:

You get a much better understanding for the people at the turn of the century 1900, when you are able to experience a day in their lives. You really learn a lot when you involve emotions and experiences in education. (student, 15 years)

"The role-play was so fun. When it was over, I didn’t want to go back to the present time. It was one of the most interesting experiences I’ve ever had.”
(student, 18 years)
"When the time-travel was about to end, I didn’t want to leave my alter ego (Anni Blom) behind, so I took a part of her and kept her in me. A little bit of Anni will always live inside me and I hope that I will keep on living inside someone else in the future."

(Student at Ålands high school in Mariehamn after a time travel to 1905)
Kalmar läns museum
Saturday at last! Dance at the factory "Södra bruket" in Degerhamn, Sweden 1903.

KALMAR LÄNS MUSEUM

www.kalmarlansmuseum.se

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