

*"I was there"*



**A park in East Berlin i the 80s**

*We can create narratives in the  
classroom that touches on all  
subjects in school – and all subjects  
in life*



Østerskov Efterskole in Denmark



## **Boris Spasskij versus Bobby Fischer in Reykjavik 1972**

You can hear the protester outside the room demonstrating against the cold war



Mads Lunau, 50

- Philosopher
- Educator
- Player of games

Principal and cofounder of *Østerskov Efterskole*

Father to Freja at 12

Living in beautiful Hobro in northern Denmark





## Students at Østerskov

... On a perfectly normal day ...

# Østerskov Efterskole

- Boarding school with about 90 students - 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders aged 14-17
- Some special needs students, but does normal Danish exams
- Most of the students play games in their spare time
- More boys than girls
- More than 90% continues into high school
- 10 teachers, 3 special needs teachers, 10 employees in administration, kitchen, house and cleaning



## At the Emperors' Hall

Discussing the situation of the Nation



*We give the student empowered  
roles  
in interesting settings  
with motivating narratives*

It is NOT a drama school!

Teachers prepare for one week with their team, then teach for one week, and then prepare one week and so on



**"I think it wise to destroy Carthag"**

# The Power of Rome

The students play the roles of important roman families just before the age of the emperors  
Their goal is to help the empire survive - while helping their family into power at the same time



**The newly (self)appointet emperor talks to the Senate**

## Subjects (for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum)

- First language: Practice your rhetoric in plays, politics or the court. Is the logic of the latin language embedded in your native tongue?
- Math: Architect the aqua ducts into Rome, working with angles and technical drawing. Equip your legions and work out the logistics of war.
- Second or third language: the slave traders talk a foreign language. If you want good slaves for your plantation, you have to train your vocabulary. Travel out to try your diplomatic skills against the barbarians in the fringe of the empire.
- Social science: How does an empire keep together? Who is an enemy and why? What are the principles of Roman law?
- Natural science: What can grow in plantation in the Mediterranean area?
- Physics: Mining, the techniques and the use of the mined goods.
- Geography: The Vesuv is erupting.
- History: goes without saying 😊
- Phys Ed: the fightings of the gladiator also keep young nobles fit
- Literature, home ed, arts, music – a lot of potential curriculum





## **Crew of the Spaceship Madsen isolated in the airlock**

They were infected with an alien lifeform

# Structure:

- Pretend universes: Settings are taken from History, Society or Literature
- Empowered Student Roles: A different role from 'normal' student roles, having influence on the setting
- Narrative structures:
  - Something happens to their pretend world they have to respond to or explore (Hannibal invades, stocks are dropping, new laws are introduced)
  - There is a (friendly) competition between groups (around the world in 80 days, power in Napoleonic Europe, US presidential election)
  - There is an engine that allows the students to build up something (colonies, armies, family tree, political system)
  - Build up a shared feeling (the iron curtain, from flower power to punk, Salem Witchtrials)



## **The Coldhearted people of the Snow Queen**

Hans Christian Andersen fairytale

# Motivation

- All the normal reasons for working in the classroom, AND
- The subjects presented are relevant to the students' roles
- Working with the subjects gives some kind of bonus in the play – resources, experience, influence



## The final battle

*Avra kadavra!*



# Harry Potter

The students are students at Hogwarts  
and members of one of their houses  
They strive to be good magicians and  
for their House to win competitions

- First language: Writing a diary with fantastic stories from their life at Hogwarts. Reading and analyzing Harry Potter in own language. Discussing the authorship of J.K. Rowling and the genre *Fantasy*.
- Math: Figuring out the system of rotating stairs. Mathematical formulas are especially powerful magic!
- Second/third language: Reading Harry Potter in English, learning about the English school system. Spells are in the magical language of third language 😊
- Social science: the term *mudblood* seen in a society.
- Natural science: The believed magical powers of plants and animals through history
- Physics and home ed: Working with potions
- Psys ed: Quidditch in a swimmingpool



## Step into the Time Machine

Porfessor Moriarty have evil plans with the world as we know it

# Tools

- The teacher has a new role and has new tools: a helper and facilitator instead of an evaluator. They can communicate with authority within the pretend universe instead of (and as a supplement to) being a 'normal' teacher.



## Discussions at an International Conference

The topic is – as always: oil



# Ethics

Empowering the students

Testing the mask instead of the identity

Participant versus spectator



## Dividing Africa

Berlin Conference 1885

# Out of Africa

More complicated: students take different roles in the history of the African continent  
They have different objectives for different roles



## **New Dawn?**

Modern Africa

- The students start in the roles of the first humanoids millions of years ago resembling our present day human race. They evolve and migrate.
- Then they play the roles of the European rulers at the Berlin conference 1885 where Africa was divided. After that they administer their colonies, build infrastructure and decide on education, healthcare and religion.
- After the world wars they play the Africans wishing liberty from their colonizers and build new nations.
- Lastly they play European NGOs and UN organizations trying to help the counties, they have just build.

There is a plentitude of subjects possible for this setup.





## Independence

The English Colonies in North America 1780s

# Theory

- Learning in context – simulated relevance
- Learning by doing – practical scaffolding – learning a head higher (Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky)
- New contract in the classroom (Ziehe)



## **Jack the Ripper**

And his four personalities



**Q&A**

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