
A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

Eva Henriksson-Garatea teaches religion and history at St Petri upper secondary school in Malmö, Sweden. She has used various workshops from *Mission: Democracy* in her regular teaching and she believes that the material from the Living History Forum has been of great help.

“Depending on the prior knowledge of the students, I can pick and choose from various workshops to make them fit my purpose. I am really grateful for not having to invent the wheel each time I need a new exercise, it is much easier to use the material already out there”, she says.

Henriksson-Garatea likes the fact that the exercises are hands-on and interactive, however she also stresses the importance of the theoretical part of the learning process.

“The workshop exercises are based on dilemmas, that is their strength. The students must understand the situation and are encouraged to reflect, to take part in discussions and to take a stand. They cannot hide behind a mask.”

The workshops can easily be linked to the knowledge requirements for history outlined in the Swedish curriculum. And they are good starting points for discussions in the classroom.

“We have talked about various rights, and what rights come first. For example, we have discussed where to draw the line for freedom of speech. I don't mark the value-based exercises because it is important that the students have the courage to say whatever they think, without fear of being penalised in the markings. They must not answer what they think I would like to hear, instead they must form their own opinions. The most important part of lecturing democracy is to encourage the students to think critically.”

MISSION:
DEMO
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INTRODUCTION: FOR TEACHERS

As a history teacher Henriksson-Garatea is well aware of the fact that each one of us interprets history in our own way. History could be a very sensitive matter and what happened close by and in a smaller context, might not be comparable with the greater picture.

“History might be closer than we know. If I am talking about the genocide in the former Yugoslavia, I might well have students in the class that have experienced it in real life. To me it is important to start with things that are close by and familiar to the students, something that they can relate to. That makes it much easier to discuss how the students would then act if ever they end up in a similar situation.”