

EXCURSIONS IN SCHOOL – PAST AND PRESENT FROM SWEDISH AND ANGLO-SAXON PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present the results from a review of literature on geography excursions and field studies and to discuss their development over time, focusing on purpose, content, method, and execution. The scope was limited to Swedish and Anglo-Saxon literature, produced after the year 1900. The results show that excursions and field studies have since long been important methods in school teaching, not only in the subject geography. One of the purposes of using excursions and field studies in teaching is to facilitate the learning process of pupils and students. Several authors arguing that learning improved when the objects are studied in the real world. We can see that a continuous process of change has altered contents as well as conduction of the excursions. The previous instrumental orientation has moved toward more pupil-participating work methods. Today preparation is a keyword in most texts on excursions, and the perspectives have been broadened.

Keywords: *excursions, field studies, review of literature, Swedish, Anglo-Saxon*

1. INTRODUCTION

The current curricula of elementary and secondary school stipulate that field studies and excursions shall be part of the geography teaching (National Board of Education, 2011). Field studies and excursions in the geography teaching are however not a new phenomenon, but have since the curriculum of 1693 had a given position in the Swedish school (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1971a). During the 18th century, scientists and explorers increasingly used field studies as a method for surveying, observing, documenting, and collecting various objects from nature, one of the most renowned scientists being Carl von Linné, who in

collaboration with his students carefully documented his field studies (Hodacs & Nyberg, 2007). In the beginning of the 19th century, Sweden was marked by increasing nationalistic tendencies in connection with the loss of Finland 1809, which was reinforced around 100 years later by the union Sweden-Norway being dissolved (Molin, 2006, p. 37). Particularly the intellectual Sweden was filled with strong patriotism, which strongly affected the school. Education became increasingly important to the motherland, and by passing a by-law of the elementary school in 1842, a compulsory school was inaugurated.

With time this leads to school teaching becoming available for more children. Teaching the combined subject geography/history became a means to strengthen children's motherland identity. The compulsory school at the time comprised, besides these subjects, also reading, calculations, and religion. During the early 20th century, Helge Nelson (1913) wrote about how the teaching in home geography should be organized, and emphasized the value of excursions. However, home geography was not inaugurated as a separate subject until the school curriculum of 1919, when geography and knowledge of nature were combined into one subject from the third grade in the elementary school (Molin, 2006, p. 89).

During the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, excursions grew into being an often-applied method in school. This has been substantiated by the Anglo-Saxon texts written by Marsden (1998) and Ploszajska (1998), who both carried out a comprehensive review of the British excursion history. Lewis (1910) presented his excursion experiences as text and pictures, showing which activities pupils carried out in the field at the time. Articles on the value of excursions have been produced in abundance by various pedagogues, one example being Nelson's work, published in *Geografiska Notiser* (transl. *Geographical Notices*, used from now on; *GN* 1944:2), where he claimed that well-planned excursions yield more real knowledge than traditional classroom teaching. During the inter-war period and the years directly after the Second World War, a number of instrumental excursion analyses described how excursions were structured (Larsson, 1950; Malmer, 1951; Marsden, 1998).

Sauer (1956) believed that excursions and personal observations improve pupils' motivation to learn, and thus can be deemed effective to apply on pupils studying geography. The preconditions for learning are developed by conducting field studies, as these provide the pupils with a genuine opportunity to use the knowledge they acquire in the classroom and in textbooks. Hence, Sauer (1956) emphasized field studies and excursions as good methods for geography teaching and referred to British literature in his account of the geography subject and its content. An abundance of material is available in Great Britain, particularly at the Royal Geographic Society. The society was founded in 1830 and has since been providing teachers with advice on how to carry out excursions. In 1933, the Royal Geographic Society formed a new organization for British geographers, with the purpose of arranging field studies (Marsden, 1998), and in the same year, the National Association for Geography Teachers initiated its operations in Sweden. Most pedagogic texts on school excursions were published in the journal of the National Association for the Geography Teachers during the period 1933-1952. During the 1940s, the National Association for Geography Teachers communicated with the Swedish National Board of Education, demanding clear instructions in terms of the scheduling of school excursions (Holm in *Geografilärarnas Riksmöte*, 1943, p. 2), but not until 1951 did the board publish directives for the execution of excursions.

The perspectives of current publications, discussing excursions and field studies, differ from those published in the middle of last century. The present literature on excursions put forth methods, the motivation of pupils, and how pupils perceive excursions. The modern IT-society and globalization have simplified communication, and have also made updated information about excursions more readily available. The older literature on excursions primarily treated the teacher's role, and the structure of excursions was conscientiously

discussed. Excursions and field studies are accentuated sections of the geography curriculum in elementary and secondary school in Sweden today.

The present article reviews the literature on geography excursions and field studies, focusing on purpose, content, method, and conduction. The scope was limited to Swedish and Anglo-Saxon literature, produced after the year 1900. The Swedish literature was narrowed down to *Geographical Notices*, and then further limited to the documentation produced by the school authorities. The concept *excursion* is in the Swedish literature used about a course moment where the pupils are active in the field. The word field study, although occasionally used about excursions, is not analogous to excursion. Caulfield (1955) defined school excursions as a journey or an activity outside the classroom, with a clearly expressed purpose to facilitate the pupils' learning. Field studies are a concept used within many different research areas, and the concept must therefore be combined with geographic expressions. In the English language, *field studies* are equivalent to excursions, and in certain articles the word *excursion* is thus used. Excursions must furthermore not be confused with the concept outing, which does not have learning as its main purpose. The beginning of the 20th century saw a number of different movements entering society, like the scout movement, school trips, holiday camps, and school camps. Pupils are defined as children in elementary or secondary school, while students constitute youngsters at university or a university college.

2. THEORY – THE LEARNING PROCESS IN EXCURSION CONTEXTS

Previous research on learning processes in connection with field studies stretches back more than a century. Dewey (1915, p. 90) pointed out that “If studying nature is turned into science, the real material of the subject must be at hand for the students; there must be a laboratory, with provision for experimentation and observation”. Acknowledging the importance of an active learning process has strongly influenced later teaching and research. Several scientists have concluded that observations in the field improved learning in comparison with teaching in a classroom (e.g. Nelson, 1944; Sauer, 1956; Marvell, 2008).

Sauer (1956) also stressed the importance of “walking alone through unknown land and life”, thereby becoming a participating observer, because geographical knowledge is primarily acquired through observations that later, by reflection and re-inspection, will lead to comparisons and syntheses. Reflection, however, requires time. Consequently, authors like Payne and Wattchow (2009) and Jonasson (2011) emphasized that excursions need to be carried out at a slow pace. Students given the time to reflect on matters are more likely to feel better motivated, and without motivation, learning will be significantly impaired. When students are introduced to new concepts within a topic, utilizing the area the students are most familiar with – like the neighborhood – facilitates reflecting right from the start. Nelson (1913), and later Sanderoth *et al.* (2009), emphasized the importance of the familiar neighborhood, because it provides opportunities for recognition, which in turn stimulates learning. Another advantage is that excursions close to home usually require less time, thus increasing the probability of all students being able to participate.

Excursions also provide an excellent setting for breaking the conventional teacher–student relation. By giving the students oral presentation tasks along the excursion routes, the teacher may take on the role as a fellow student, forcing the students to actively use their theoretical knowledge (see e.g. Jonasson, 2011). Most people can relate to such learning strategies. When you listen to something, you may remember and understand what was said; taking notes while listening increases the chance of remembering and understanding what was said; but being forced to lecture on the topic to other people, dramatically improves the ability to remember and understand.

Some conceptual models of the learning process may be applicable in excursion contexts. Of these, especially Bruner's (1960) and Kolb's (1984) may be useful, because they disclose how students' real-world experience, after studying the abstract concepts and ideas of textbooks, facilitate learning. Bruner's (1960, p. 52) *spiral curriculum* describes how learning develops in an upward spiral (Learning initiated – Learning through theory – Learning by doing – Feedback – Further learning). In essence, new knowledge is being added to previous knowledge in a continuous process. The students recall previous experiences, making new reflections, gaining new knowledge, and thus an incessant spiral is formed. Kolb's (1984) model comprises four stages. Applied on excursions, the first step constitutes previous experience, e.g. theoretical knowledge from textbooks, etc., which is utilized in the next step, when the students make reflective observations during excursions. In the third step, the students actively link the theory with their training in the field, thereby transforming their previous experience into a new dimension of understanding. Applying the knowledge acquired by active experimentation leads in a fourth step to an even higher level of knowledge.

Marvell's (2008) example of excursion procedure also relates to Kolb's model. Before the excursion, the students prepare themselves for the forthcoming oral presentation by studying the theory. On site, they carry out their observations/experiments, and report their findings for the fellow students. The students are instructed to take notes during excursions, and are on their return expected to reflect on their own performance in a written excursion report. In doing so, the students become aware of what they have, or have not, understood, as well as what they did well, and what could have been improved, in terms of fulfilling the *abstract conceptualization* in Kolb's model. Their next oral presentation completes Kolb's cycle (Marvell, 2008).

Besides Marvell's scheme (which focused on a specific excursion), student performance is often assessed by using Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, designed in the revised version by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) as a two-dimensional graph. The vertical axis displays the knowledge dimension, comprising four different knowledge levels (*factual knowledge* followed by *conceptual* and *procedural knowledge*, and ending with *metacognitive knowledge*), while the horizontal axis shows the cognitive process dimension (*remember* followed by *understand*, *apply*, *analyze*, *evaluate*, and ending with *create*). Each learning outcome is expressed in terms of a noun denominating the knowledge dimension, while a verb specifies the cognitive dimension. In excursion contexts, such a system might be carried out as e.g.: "After the course, the student will be able to explain the difference between metamorphic and sedimentary rocks." A successful explanation carried out by the student, shows that the student has acquired an "understanding" of that particular "factual knowledge". Taking background and study level into account, such a system will facilitate the evaluation of different aspects of students' knowledge levels as well as their cognitive abilities.

3. METHOD

The present article was founded on studying Swedish and international literature, acquired in various data bases, primarily Diva, ERIC, the Geography Square, Google Scholar, and Libris. The search primarily focused on excursions with pupils. The key words were: *field studies*, *geography*, *outdoors*, *methods*, *school*, *excursions*, and *school excursions*, used in different combinations during the search. Libris was the primary source of information in the Swedish context. The National Association for Geography Teachers published their membership journal in *Geografiska Meddelanden* (transl. Geographical Messages, used from now on)

from 1933 up to and including 1942. Articles published in *Geographical Notices* from 1943 and to date are available online at the National Association for Geography Teachers' website, and those published after 2007 can be downloaded. During the years 1939-2006, 26 articles on excursions in various forms were published in *Geographical Notices*, discussing the conduction of excursions, or problems arising during school excursions, and these were included in the present study. Most excursions reported on in *Geographical Notices* aimed at teachers.

The literature search revealed a spread over the different continents and countries, i.e. Australia, China, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. The greatest part of the literature originated in Anglo-Saxon countries. Selecting articles proved to be problematic, since the number of articles in some cases was of considerable size. A search, using the key word combination: *excursions, outdoor, school* yielded 64 400 hits in Google Scholar. Hence, the present study limited the selection to Swedish and Anglo-Saxon excursions, and focused in particular on historical excursion literature, where similarities and differences were identified. A considerable part of the Swedish literature survey also comprised curricula, syllabuses, and school regulations.

Comprehensive international articles published before 1920 were hard to acquire. Articles on early excursions primarily comprised second-hand information. Lewis (1910), one of the most influential excursion pedagogues during the first three decades of the 20th century, is the only author whose texts might hold up to a closer examination.

4. RESULTS

Excursions have a long history, and are, according to Matheson (2001), a tradition as old as the story about the Odyssey. Caulfield (1955), going even further back in time, argued that the oldest form of excursion goes way back to the time when humans were strolling freely around in nature. During the 18th century, Rousseau and Pestalozzi put forth thoughts about learning being facilitated and established through real experiences in nature. Excursions consequently became, already before the 19th century, a commonly utilized method in various educations, not least biology, where Carl von Linné was the most prominent scientist. Linné's excursions were purely biological field studies and field activities in terms of collecting various objects. The students collected everything they might come across on their way through nature during the summer season: plants, insects, and minerals (Hodacs & Nyberg, 2007). Mathewson writes that Humboldt's journeys and fieldwork around the year 1800 probably can be regarded as the initiation of geographic excursions in Europe.

In Sweden, teacher-led excursions were in reality not introduced until the time of Linné, but no material from school excursions exists from the first two centuries (counting from 1693). The National Board of Education (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1971a) has shown that excursions were carried out in a number of different schools around the year 1800, and were later inserted into the school organization of 1820 and also into the by-laws of the grammar school of 1878. They claimed that the reasons for arranging excursions should be viewed in the light of Sweden being a country at war. During the years 1812-1820, land measurement brigades, responsible for depicting the landscape with utter precision, constructed the Swedish reconnaissance map. They measured heights with the aid of triangulation, and completed the map by making drawings of the landscape (Lewan, 2004). Geography and biology excursions were important during the first years of the compulsory school. The Royal Grammar School Board issued directives for geography and biology excursions in 1906 (Kungliga Läroverkstyrelsen, 1906). The National Board of Education (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1971a) put forward the thought that a good contact between teacher and pupil is easier

established outdoors than in the classroom and stated that excursions were to be considered as an interdisciplinary method.

The summer of 1933 The National Association for Geography Teachers was initiated, Helge Nelson being its first chairman up to 1945. The first article on excursions in *Geographical Messages* was published by Ilien (1939), reporting on excursions carried out by grammar school pupils in Kristianstad. Significant guidelines for conducting experiments and excursions in teaching were, according to Ilien, those given by the Royal National Board of Education in 1933. In his article, Ilien cataloged all excursions he carried out with his early secondary school pupils during the years 1933-38, and the places visited during the excursions were e.g. industries and sites of geological and geomorphological interest. The map and the compass are important tools in geography studies, but Ilien argued that also the sports teacher had a duty to teach how a compass functions. Arranging excursions during the war (1939-1945) was for obvious reasons problematic. Pupils had enrolled for military duty, and certain means of transportation were used by the defense force (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1971a). Nelson (1944) claimed in *Geographical Notices* that well executed excursions yield better factual knowledge than several hours in the classroom. In the same issue, another message clearly emphasized the value of excursions, informing the reader that biology excursions are well structured, and that the geography teachers are requesting a similar excursion structure for their subject from the Swedish National Board of Education. The National Association for Geography Teachers (Geografilärarnas Riksförening, 1943) wrote to the National Board of Education, calling for firmer guidelines, particularly concerning how school excursions were to be planned into the operations of the grammar school on the background of the new school decree, effective from 1940. Their reply did not contain any directives, but suggestions as to how and when excursions should be introduced, i.e. during lessons or during field days. The National Board of Education also provided a clear sequence-structure for the scheduling role of teachers and the principal's decision-making rights.

Four years after the end of the Second World War, the National Board of Education (1949) sent a circular to principals and grammar schools stating that excursion activities again should be promoted. Field days were primarily the occasions available for excursions in biology, and were to be used for excursions in the geography subject as well (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1971a). In several issues of *Geographical Notices* this directive was clearly noticeable by geography teachers. Excursions, one teacher claimed, are the breathing air of geography, and should be incorporated into the geography teaching as a mandatory element (Malmer, 1951). *Excursion technique* and *Excursion methods* were two of the headlines in *GN* at the time (Larsson, 1950; Malmer, 1951). The two articles discussed excursion methods, but differed in that the article dated 1951 promoted the option of teachers organizing a simple excursion program in dialogue with the pupils.

The Royal Railroad Board contacted the National Association for Geography Teachers concerning excursions. An insert in *Geographical Notices* (1954:2, p. 15) by the editorial staff of the journal requested information from geography teachers on different excursion guides, in order to facilitate the Railroad Board's scheduling of bus routes and its adaptations of the railroad to reach "more peculiar nature areas". Later issues of *GN* displayed several examples of excursions, i.e. one-hour-excursions, a whole day, or two-day-excursions, in cultural as well as physical geography. These past excursions in physical geography show resemblance to current methods and excursion guides that school pupils are conducting today in their studies of glacial landscapes.

Between 1954 and 1976, pedagogic issues and methods related to excursions were no longer under discussion. The articles rather concerned journeys and excursions conducted by teachers at the end of school semesters, where geography teachers, coming from

universities and other institutes, reported on observations during their journeys or excursions at various places in Sweden or in Europe. Nils Lewan and Lennart Améen, two cultural geographers at Lund University, published a number of reports on excursions during the 1960s and 1970s. Améen wrote three articles on city excursions in Malmö and its surroundings, and he discussed the learning process as well. Tommy Book, cultural geographer in Lund, presented examples of city excursions in Berlin and Copenhagen, conducted by himself and his students. Anders Rapp, professor in physical geography, wrote in collaboration with other researchers in Lund articles covering objects of physical geography and geomorphology (Lidmar-Bergström, 1983). These reports contain pertinent facts on locations suitable for current excursion studies.

Excursions were incorporated into the elementary school curriculum of 1969 and in the secondary school curriculum of 1970, and were included in supplements and comments, and in the teacher guidance provided by the National Board of Education. When the curricular reform 1970 was accomplished, geography was not a subject in its own right in secondary school. Substantial parts of the physical geographic segment of the geography subject were however inserted into the curriculum of the science subject. Excursions were described in the methodology part of the curriculum (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1971b). The curricular reform 1994, for the secondary school, entailed the return of geography as a character subject within the social sciences program. Like in previous curricula, excursions and field studies were emphasized as important components for the development of pupils' proficiency and for capability practicing. Gösta Wennberg (1983) involved pedagogics, phenomena, and experiences in the field. Wennberg mentioned in the article three pedagogues, all of them involved in the phenomenology discussion: Säljö, Marton, and Svensson. By this, the phenomenology temporarily entered the journal *Geographical Notices*. Excursions recurred as a subject in a few more articles. The National Association for Geography Teachers made in *GN* (1996:3) a request for information from schools about conducting excursions with no costs involved, which Sundberg (1996) later answered.

The National Board of Education (2011) wrote in their latest subject curriculum for the secondary school: "geographic knowledge has its origin in discovering and understanding the outside world". Field studies and excursions are to be incorporated into the geography subject, and this was emphasized in the subject curriculum of 2011. The preconditions of pupils may be improved by field studies, and field studies may also grant pupils a genuine opportunity to apply the knowledge they have acquired in the classroom and in textbooks. "Field studies, excursions, experiments, and practicing shall be part of the teaching, allowing pupils to observe, identify, categorize, and analyze events" (National Board of Education, 2011, p. 1). Though sustainable development and environment are included in the program goals of social sciences, nothing is written about field studies. Field studies are however included in the program goals of natural sciences (National Board of Education, 2011).

4.1. Excursions viewed from an international perspective

4.1.1. The first excursion period and the masculine explorers

In the early excursion material from Europe, three names are prevalently occurring in articles on excursions and field studies, and these are Salman, Gielke, and Lewis (Marsden, 1998). Salman was active during the end of the 18th century and in the beginning of the 19th century in Germany, and he conducted excursions primarily in biology. In Germany,

von Humboldt and Ritter both carried out geographic expeditions to foreign countries in order to document different geographical phenomenon. Most likely only men went on these expeditions, and they were probably of masculine nature (Bracken & Mawdsley, 2004). Marsden (1998) stated that excursions in modern time primarily started in Germany, where the organization Wandervogel was introduced in 1907. Originally aiming at boys, it has been described as military. Marsden (1998) also reported on how excursions expanded in England, based on notes about the number of excursions and where in the country they had been conducted. During the years 1898-1902 only two excursions were recorded, but during the following two years up to the First World War, approximately 200 excursions were carried out at various locations in England. One of the leading authors during this period was G.G. Lewis who described the activities undertaken during the excursions with titles like *The School Journey: The River, On teaching in open air* and *Nature Study in Town Schools*, which were published between 1905 and 1926. In an omnibus with the title *Typical School Journeys*, containing texts authored by Lewis (1910), photos disclose what the excursion participants looked like, and text as well as pictures provide examples of what a river bank looked like, or by which methods the streamflow velocity was measured. Lewis' photos show boys who threw colored corks into the river in order to measure the streamflow velocity.

4.1.2. The girls are also allowed to participate in excursions

In the beginning of the 20th century, when the allotted time for leisure increased for an increasing number of people, opportunities arose to spend time outdoors. The scout movement, with its activities in the field, allowed girls into their organization from the year 1912. Ploszajska (1998) also emphasized the importance of youth spending time outdoors. The purpose of arranging excursions was in many cases not primarily focusing on learning as such, but rather nurtured an ambition that children should spend time outdoors, first and foremost with a health perspective in mind, as emphasized by Marsden (1998).

A clear distinction has been made between Royal Geographic Society and British School Journey Association (SJA) (see <http://www.sjatours.org/>). The SJA was founded in 1911, and organized school journeys with the purpose of pupils getting out in nature and further out into the world. The pupils were accompanied by teachers, and these were often enthusiastic pedagogues, teaching geography, geology, and anthropology (Marsden, 1998), but there was a barrier between the Royal Geographic Society and SJA, and with time, the latter developed into a more explicit travel company, arranging school journeys that included anything that might be needed in connection with these.

In his article on the development of school excursions in the USA, Barton (2009) referred to the subject home geography, the subject that during the years 1890-1920 dominated school. Observations close to home or school were important, and the aspects to be observed expanded with increasing school grade of pupils. This nearby geography was a study form introduced by Rousseau and Pestalozzi, according to Barton (2009) and Dewey (1915). The Great Depression in the 1930s affected the feasibility of arranging excursions, and as the Second World War arrived, arranging excursions was not realizable, neither in England nor in large parts of the rest of Europe (Marsden, 1998).

4.1.3. Excursions everywhere, for everyone?

Among the most cited authors focusing on school excursions are Nairn, Dymont, and Stoddart. These authors proffer a broad spectrum of excursions in modern time, describing

methods, problems, and opportunities in relation to these. Stoddart (1986) stated, as did Nelson (1944), that pupils perceive and learn phenomena of nature better outdoors than in the classroom. Dymont (2005) carried out several analyses of how excursion operations of the schools might be executed, and which problems that exist in terms of time, competence, pupils' attitudes, and methods. Nairn (1999) on the other hand described excursions from a gender perspective. She argued that students might feel uncomfortable in nature for various reasons, such as physical activities, fear of heights, or inadequate equipment. Nairn (1999) showed how the students explain various matters by means of drawing and writing about their experiences. One of the students unveiled in a drawing what it entails to be dressed as a geographer, and the reader understands that it is not economically feasible to acquire all of the excursion equipment.

The British Royal Geographic Society contributes digital excursion methods for teachers not familiar with how to execute excursions. Fuller *et al.* (2011) emphasized that learning outside the four walls of the classroom yields experience-based learning. Such opinions were however formulated already by Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Dewey, theorists often mentioned in texts about experience-based learning. The excursions mentioned by Wandervogel, the early German excursion movement highlighted by Marsden (1998), were directed toward boys or young men, who had to endure tough hikes with the purpose of fortifying the spirit, or – to observe and take notes of their observations of nature and its beauty.

4.2. Which excursion methods are being discussed?

The curriculum of the early secondary school in Sweden (1906) offered a schematic structure for excursions (Kungliga Läroverkstyrelsen, 1906). According to the curriculum, teaching about the compass was the sports teacher's responsibility, while the geography teacher was responsible for the conduction of the geographic assignments, involving the forms and phenomena of nature. This arrangement was based on pupils first studying the maps of the landscape. Learning about Nature (currently Science) is another subject where excursions were to be carried out and the curriculum described how the pupils should work during the excursion: by observing and noticing, taking samples, and studying plants in nature.

During the first two decades of *Geographical Notices'* existence, discussions revolved around excursion methods. Although Nelson (1944) argued that pupils learn better in the field than in the classroom, he provided no information on methodology. Nelson was the manager of a college in Västergötland, and wrote in this function an article in the yearbook of the Swedish colleges (Nelson, 1913).

He emphasized the need to escalate the frequency of executing excursions, and particularly highlighted the subjects of history and geography. He put forth the appropriateness of exploring the general forces behind landscape formation, i.e. water, frost, and ice, but also declared that the school's location is decisive in terms of what is feasible to carry out during the physical and cultural geographic excursions. The landscape should be examined with the purpose of clarifying to the pupils the cloudy concepts offered by the map, but also allowing them to acquire firsthand information about the various geomorphological formations of the region.

Nelson, furthermore, declared that if the first excursion has a physical geographic orientation, the following one should preferably be directed toward cultural geography, focusing on industrial economy. He maintained (1913, p. 25) that home geography teaching constitutes "authenticity and depiction", and proffered as an example when the

schoolchildren, together with their teacher, are creating a model of the landscape they had been wandering through. Conducting excursions in the vicinity was strongly suggested by Sanderoth *et al.* (2009), with the motivation that the area is more familiar to the pupils, thereby yielding a better perception of it and an increased ability to concentrate on the work at hand. The nearby area also holds a great potential, as does pleasurable learning, built on the theories of Bruner. Sanderoth *et al.* (2009, p. 73) in their discussion about pleasurable learning, insisted that learning needs to be perceived as meaningful and the teacher must concentrate on what stimulates learning, and thus the nearby environment, the everyday location, is potentially promising.

Various methodological examples were at the time published in *Geographical Notices* by a number of less well-known authors. Ilien (1939) described the excursion from an instrumental perspective, how the assignments had been divided between the sports teacher and the geography teacher, and also how transportation was arranged. During the 1940s and up to 1954, the articles mostly comprised descriptions of excursion methods and excursion techniques used by the authors.

Several authors recounted that the pupils are responsible for presentations or guidance at the excursion sites. This method has been mentioned in the literature from 1945, and is often applied today. The railroad authorities showed a societal interest, e.g. extra trains could be inserted, or letters were written to the National Association for Geography Teachers in order to acquire information about excursion targets, which would facilitate insertion of extra trains and time adaptations.

Sauer (1956) maintained that objects to be observed not necessarily need to be predetermined, but the pupils may well find objects on their own that interest them. Anderson (2004) as well as Jonasson (2011) emphasized the method where the pupils are allowed to walk around, talking to each other, rendering a *slow* excursion. During *slow* excursions, the pupils are able to acquire a different feeling for the location (Anderson, 2004). Gösta Wennberg (1983) brought phenomenology to attention in an article in *GN*, but this philosophical method has left no footprint in later articles. The *slower* excursion methods, brought forward by Anderson (2004), Jonasson (2011), and Sauer (1956), in which pupils make their own observations, constitute a sharp contrast to the early excursions, dominated by brisk walks or biological field studies.

The excursion methods used today have changed considerably since excursions were described in *Geographical Notices* during the first period and up to the 1950s. Various reports (Andersson, 1997; Higgins & Humbleston, 1999) describe the activities carried out by the pupils. The activities can be designed in a number of ways, like pupils guiding or leading presentations at the excursion sites, but to succeed with these assignments, the pupils need to be prepared. This can also be accomplished in various ways, such as writing a PM or a review, or by having lessons.

4.3. When should excursions be arranged during the school year, and for how long?

A recurring question (when the subject geography is discussed) is which time of the school year excursions should be conducted. Nelson (1944) argued that in the subject geography, excursions were superior to classroom teaching in terms of the pupils' learning process; this argumentation was however put forward in relation to the time spent. Time is important to discuss, not only in terms of the point in time for the activity, but also in terms of the extent of time needed for the excursion, as well as the time allotted to the pupils' assignments, the latter relatively often causing difficulties. Several authors discussed the

competition for time, and also which point in time to carry out excursions during a school year (GN 1944; GN 1950; GN 1952; Marvell, 2008).

The period having the best weather conditions and most flourishing vegetation often coincides with spring holidays, tests, and field days (Anderson, 2004; Bergquist, GN 1949; GN 1950; Marsden 1998). Only a few months of the year are adequately appropriate for excursions in nature, and consequently many subjects and activities compete for the most suitable time. During the Second World War, excursions competed for time with home guard practicing as well, since secondary school pupils and students were recruited during the years of war (Skolöverstyrelsen, 1971a). The dilemma concerning excursion time allocation and when to conduct excursions during the school year has been a recurrent issue in the correspondence between the National Association for Geography Teachers and the National Board of Education. In 1944, the National Association for Geography Teachers requested that the time for excursions should be put in writing in a regulatory system, in order to simplify documentation in a calendar. The National Board of Education responded that these structures would not be instituted, but the schools must themselves make a timetable for appropriate excursion days, in the process taking the field days into consideration. The National Board of Education emphasized that it was the schools' own responsibility to plan appropriate days for excursions, and that this scheduling preferably should be performed in association with the start of the semester.

The extent of time allocated for excursions has changed; Caulfield (1955) recounted that the excursions initially comprised only a few hours, but later expanded to whole days. In England, excursions lasting for four whole days became allowed for pupils that had turned 11. Dalton (2001) reported students participating in excursions lasting 1-11 days, and that excursions lasting several days were the norm. The problems arising when pupils are not allowed to go on activities, should they entail an over night stay, are mentioned in several reports (Dalton, 2001; Nairn, 1999).

Dyment (2005) deliberated over the predicament of time shortage in terms of arranging as well as conducting geography excursions. Sauer (1956) maintained that excursions must be allowed to take time, since the pupils learn by observing and taking notice of nature by walking around in a slow pace. Anderson (2004) also mentioned the value of pupils having enough time to walk around unhurriedly, or as he writes, *bimbling around*. Ranging is rarely an option during one-day-excursions traveling by bus, or when many excursion locations are to be visited. Malmer (1951) pondered over this problem arguing that pupils moving in and out of buses might result in excursions losing their purpose, turning them into field days instead. Barton (2005) reported that pupils might fail to arrive for activities outside school, since they believe that the Internet and TV provide more information than reality.

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present article was to review the literature on excursions and field studies in geography, and to discuss their development over time, focusing on purpose, content, method, and execution. The literature disclosed a large number of articles on excursions and field studies, often covering method and location. Articles having a starting point in phenomenology when discussing excursions and field studies are however at want. The present review shows that excursions and field studies have since long been important methods in school teaching, not only in the subject geography. Biology and science have also incorporated excursions and field studies to a considerable extent.

One of the purposes of using excursions and field studies in teaching is to facilitate the learning process of pupils and students. Several authors (Nelson, 1944; Stoddart, 1986; Dymont, 2005) have over time been arguing that learning is improved when the objects are studied in the real world (on site). The justification of the early field studies was that pupils and students carried out assignments for the good of society, and observing, categorizing, and collecting material were common tasks given to the participants.

Excursions and field studies in the early days had a military purpose as well, where the participants were to observe and write down their observations. The excursions were aimed at boys or young men, who had to endure tough walks in order to strengthening the spirit. Using excursions and field studies as a method evolved in parallel with geography being established as a subject at the universities in Europe, where Germany was the pioneering country. During the second half of the 19th century, new ideas unfolded about the purpose of excursions, i.e. the reason behind conducting excursions. The fascination of discovering and exploring new areas was a strong incentive that emerged concurrently with the colonialism. Many of the early field studies are in the literature described as sheer expeditions to foreign countries. Masculinity, discovery zest, and nationalistic perspectives characterized this period.

After the year 1900, school excursions were motivated from a pedagogic perspective, but were also arranged for the pupils' own benefit. Social and health-oriented reasons were also important, since many children grew up in urban environments, and needed to get out in nature. As their role gradually became fortified, girls were increasingly allowed to tag along. From the 1950s, when traveling was simplified, excursions began to stretch to distant countries. In many countries, excursions extended over a week or more, but might of course also be arranged over shorter time, at a micro-level, or as a one-day-trip in the region (Bracken & Mawdsley, 2004).

In step with industrialism and urbanization, moving people even further away from nature and the countryside, excursions and various activities in the field became increasingly important, and it was from this perspective that the first excursion pedagogues initiated their operations. In the beginning of the 20th century, the organizations *Wandervogel* in Germany and SJA in Great Britain were formed. The societal interest in excursions was great in Sweden and Finland, which was underlined in the two countries' curricula, and several Swedish curricular texts were influenced by the English writings. Home geography evolved as a subject during the latter part of the 19th century, and was directed toward younger children, with the purpose of children learning about the area close to home. School excursions are from the year 1906 clearly mentioned in the Swedish curricula. Nelson (1913) stressed the value of home geography to the pupils – the everyday environment must not be underestimated as an excursion site, which has been shown also by later research (Sanderoth *et al.*, 2009).

Content and method have changed considerably since the mid-19th century, when the excursion activities in school took off. Most contemporary authors as Barton (2009) and Marvell (2008) have discussed how to execute excursions, and they all agree about the importance of pupils being well prepared before the excursions, and that the work during the excursions must be well structured. Several of the early articles in *Geographical Notices* discussed the excursion methods, and the attitude of pupils during the excursions. Marsden (1998) highlighted pupils' needs of social training, and put forth a health perspective, which in the British school system was taken notice of already during the 1930s. Directly before the First World War, excursions became reality for both boys and girls.

In the middle of the last century, organizations also outside the school authorities engaged in the school's excursion activities, as British as well as Swedish literature shows.

The Swedish railroad authority adapted for instance the train timetables in order to facilitate the school's scheduling, something that enabled the arrangement of large-scale excursions with more than 200 pupils participating. During such a large-scale excursion, the pupils travelled with extra-inserted trains, and the media participated in the journey (GN, 1954:2). Today, bringing a school class on the bus might be problematic.

Time is an important variable in excursions as time is a matter that complicates the execution of excursions, since nature, or the local area, takes on the function as classroom. The duration of an excursion can vary from just hours to, at least for higher education, a week or more. The time problem persists when longer excursions are arranged. Wandering around on ones own, observing natural phenomena, is not feasible if the pupils must visit many sites. Shortage of time may not only exist during the excursions, also time is needed for successful planning.

A continuous process of change has altered contents as well as conduction of the excursions. The previous instrumental orientation has moved toward more pupil-participating work methods. Pupils who participate in excursions today must on their own prepare themselves to lead presentations, or improve their understanding of the excursion content. Preparation is a keyword in most texts on excursions, and the perspectives have been broadened. The content of excursions of today is expressed much more comprehensibly than previously, most likely due to purpose, content, method, and conduction having been discussed and evaluated in a large number of articles. Excursions of today are furthermore exposed to competition. Pupils might be under the impression that the Internet can replace outdoor activities, and that it is better to stay home and participate in an excursion or a field study by means of the computer.

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