

DENMARK'S  
HISTORY

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**HISTORY  
CONVEYED  
THROUGH  
DILEMMA-BASED  
COMMUNICATION**

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TOOLBOX  
FOR MUSEUMS  
AND SCHOOLS

ARBEJDERMUSEET



Den Gamle By

MUSEUM  
SØNDER  
JYLLAND



STRU  
ERMU  
SEUM

NORDEA  
FONDEN

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# PREFACE

How can we use stories about Denmark's history to engage children, young people and families and help them reflect on the life and conditions that Danes have experienced throughout that history? The benchmarks could be involvement, reflection and opinion. A number of museums have had excellent experiences of allowing visitors to influence history via dilemmas. In this material, museums share their experience of dilemma-based activities

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## 1.1 PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the material is to provide museum facilitators, teachers and others with the tools to present Denmark's history using dilemma-based activities. The aim to inspire them to present Denmark's history in this engaging and vibrant way through knowledge-sharing, practical instruction and examples.

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## 1.2 WHO AND WHAT

The material was developed in collaboration with the Workers Museum in Copenhagen, the Danish Welfare Museum in Svendborg, Museum Vestfyn in Assens, Museum Sønderjylland, Struer Museum and Den Gamle By in Aarhus and reflects their collective experiences.

Den Gamle By was responsible for developing the process and serving as a sounding board for the other museums mentioned.

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## 1.3 PART OF NATIONAL STRATEGY

The material was prepared under the auspices of the national initiative 'Historier om Danmark' (Denmark's History) undertaken in 2017, in which DR (the Danish Broadcasting Corporation), the National Museum of Denmark and the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, together with recognised state museums, attempted to convey Denmark's history from local, regional and national perspectives. The aim of the initiative is to create a strong, varied awareness of history and to foster an interest in history in the people of Denmark so that,

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wherever we live in the country, we will have a better understanding of the historical choices and events that have led Denmark to where it is today.

This material has been developed and implemented with the support of the Nordea Foundation's: 'Pulje til Historier om Danmark' (Funding for Denmark's History).

Two pupils from Glamsbjerg School consider which items should be safeguarded for posterity.

Photo: Museum Vestfyn ▼





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# INTRODUCTION

This toolbox should be of use to both schools and museums when creating dilemma-based activities. The goal is to create three types of activities: those that require equipment and staff; those that can be conducted by a teacher with his/her pupils; or a completely staff-free experience that visitors to museums can follow on their own.

Dilemma-based presentation/interpretation is a working method, in which the emphasis is on empathy and reflection. The main purpose is to get participants to 'live' inside a specific scenario. Giving participants a crucial role in solutions encourages them to reflect on the possibilities and consequences of their decisions. It is important that the participants are those who will make decisive choices with direct consequences for the characters, who have been presented and with whom the participants have hopefully identified.

Throughout a dilemma, participants can learn not only about the facts, but also about the thoughts and motivations of those who actually lived through the experience being presented. Consequently, participants learn to think about, and reflect on the facts the presentation/interpretation reveals.

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## 2.1 THE BIGGER STORY

Each presentation must have a purpose, emphasising the fact that there is something to learn. To that end, there is both the 'minor story' and the 'main history'.

Behind any dilemma-based activity, there is a bigger story to be told. The story of a child tobacco worker is not only the story of a boy in 1896; it is also the story of child labour, of authorised corporal punishment and gender roles. It is the story of the society that surrounds the tobacco boy and shapes his life.

Facilitators use the boy's story to capture the attention of the participants and help them 'live' the history. That is the minor story. It is personal and hopefully recognisable.

The bigger story involves the society and the conditions, which we can convey through the boy's story. What issues can we focus on? What subjects can the participants consider? What social trends can we reveal? It is the bigger story we aim to convey to the participants. The minor story 'unlocks' the bigger story.

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## 2.2 INVOLVEMENT

The participants' involvement is vital to the success of any presentation.

Some visitors and pupils commit themselves from the very start. They come expecting to learn and take part in the experience. They can handle a greater degree of involvement and complexity right away.

Committed guests and pupils have already agreed to get involved. They reflect quickly on what they see, get a lot out of the activity and are ready to understand the bigger story.

Other visitors and pupils are not quite so engaged to begin with. The facilitator needs to capture their interest before they are willing to get involved.

One way of getting people involved is to allow them to influence the story. Allowing participants to be active connects them with the story in ways that help them to remember it.

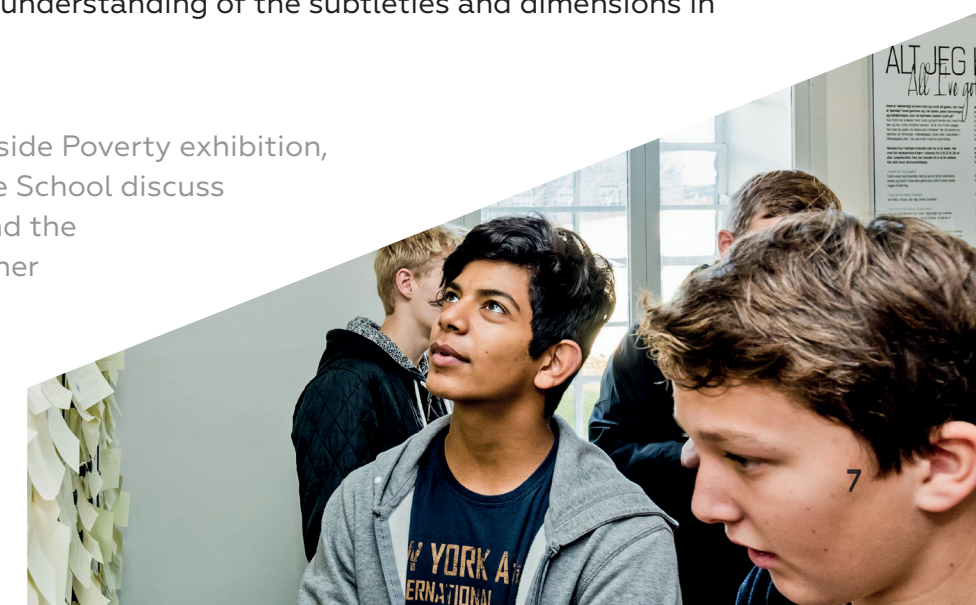
Involvement can also result from physical activities: for example, 'polishing work boots' or 'using old-fashioned tools to build a pirate ship'.

Another way of capturing the attention of participants is to convince them that the story is personal and recognisable in terms of their own lives. A recognisable story can help participants see the connection between themselves and the bigger story. They suddenly see the relevance of some of the things they encounter at school and at the museum. It is, however, not enough for the story to be personal. The story being presented must also have depth and relevance. That can ensure the participants' commitment to the story we are trying to tell.

Once that commitment is established, the telling of the bigger story can begin. Participants will then be willing to reflect on the situations and circumstances involved in the dilemma, leading them to deeper consideration of the story we are trying to tell. The dilemma can then pave the way, not only to the bigger story, but also to a greater understanding of the subtleties and dimensions in the narrative.

At the museum's debate Inside Poverty exhibition, pupils from Rantzausminde School discuss poverty in both the past and the present and consider whether or not it is self-inflicted.

Photo: Fagfotografen ►





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### 2.3 EDUCATION

Dilemma-based activities are based on the theories of aesthetic learning processes. In other words, the process gives participants a practical aesthetic experience.

'Aesthetic' simply means that something is being experienced through the senses. Theories of aesthetic learning processes believe that an aesthetic experience is a sensory experience that affects the feelings, thoughts and memories of a person, both conscious and unconscious, and that the more senses affected, the greater the impact.

The assumption is that when a person has an aesthetic experience, either intentionally or unintentionally, s/he will always analyse and reflect on the experience to some degree. When it comes to aesthetic learning processes and intentional aesthetic experiences, it is of course also important to create space for analysis and reflection during the presentation. Intentional aesthetic experiences are those that a facilitator/teacher has organised with the aim of achieving a particular response. As such, it is important to clarify the purpose of the activity, the learning process itself and the practical aesthetic experiences and activities that are involved.

A dilemma-based experience with the right elements of involvement and a related issue that affects a participant's emotions and ethics can be a fruitful breeding ground for substantial and important discussions. The topics affect the participants to a greater extent and capture their attention, hopefully gaining their commitment. It helps them make up their minds and to think about the topics the presentation is focusing on: topics that might otherwise be elusive and difficult to discuss.

Dilemma-based presentations/interpretations enable participants to learn history in a hands-on and unique way.

When it comes to History as a subject, primary-school pupils should acquire contextual understanding in conjunction with a chronological overview of the subject and then be able to use this understanding in their everyday and social life.

The subject of History comprises three areas of competence: chronology and coherence; work with sources; and the use of history.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: UVM.dk



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### INTRODUCTION

▲ Svendborg Museum  
– The Danish Wel-fare Museum

The welfare section as seen from the work area. Note the walls topped with barbed wire between the yards, separating men from women.  
Photo: Jon Bjarni Hjartarson.

Dilemma-based presentations are excellent in terms of catering for these requirements and competencies and are also highly suited to interdisciplinary contexts.

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### 2.4 ETHICS

There are ethical issues when dealing with topics that impact the personal life of the participants. Especially when it comes to sensitive subjects like alcoholism or kidnapping. Should we present something so sensitive? Should we venture into topics that might trigger emotional responses in our participants?

It is always risky to venture into delicate areas, but they are also the topics that will often have the highest degree of relevance. They are part of history and of the world that we should not disregard. That is why we must treat them with respect and with as much subtlety as possible.

This requires facilitators to keep a close eye on the reactions of participants, so they can quickly take action and assist a participant who seems personally affected. Be aware of the reactions of the participants. A participant that is personally affected may not reveal it in public. Some will simply withdraw and refuse to participate in the dilemma. They may also become overtly negative vis-à-vis the dilemma or the facilitator.

When dealing with sensitive topics, it is advisable to agree on a way, in which participants can ask for a break or withdraw from the presentation. This could be as simple as letting them know they can inform the facilitator that they can ask for a break if they are feeling uncomfortable. Participants should always have the opportunity to take a break if the situation becomes too personal or in any way uncomfortable.

Our experience is that treating relevant and sensitive problems can be a positive experience for those who have been affected by them. We have many

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### INTRODUCTION

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examples of participants who have opened up about personal issues to their colleagues as a result of focusing on the problem.

We have no way of knowing whether a participant will be personally affected. All we can do is make sure that participants are aware that they have the option of withdrawing. We are neither psychologists nor relatives, so we cannot solve personal problems for our participants. We can only offer them an opportunity to open up about an issue that may be difficult to talk about.

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## 2.5 AUTHENTICITY

Museums are expected to display a high degree of honesty and authenticity, so there must be a proven foundation for the information being presented. Schools do not have the same requirements for authenticity, so objects that symbolise or approximate reality may be used.

An authentic object, person or place can lend a sense of connection to the story being told. An imitation or copy will not provide the same experience, but can still help create the right atmosphere. Participants touching or experiencing the 'real thing' may experience something special. A copy loses some of that authenticity, but can still summon up some of the same feelings.

When we work to create narratives that reflect authentic history, we are faced with the limitations of reality. It can be useful to add fictional people or events to a true story. This may help participants understand details that might not be revealed if only pure history is used. However, it is always important to let participants know what is authentic and what has been added to create a fascinating narrative.

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## 2.6 THE DILEMMA

There are a number of things to consider when selecting a dilemma: not only in terms of the central dilemma, but also in terms of the purpose, possibilities and limitations. Dilemmas can be created using different points of departure. Some are based on a period of time or a place. The important thing is for the dilemma to convey your message and create the reflection you desire.

When creating a dilemma, it is important to know both the possibilities and limitations. Can staff be allocated to run a role-play session, or will the participants have to deal with it themselves? Is the activity site-specific? How many participants is there space for? Are there any items or replicas that can be used?

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It may be very important to a museum for the dilemma to be adapted for a particular historical site, to which the museum has access, or be adapted to suit the story of a particular object, person or incident.

For a school, it may be important for the dilemma to be conducted by a single teacher and without any props other than a piece of paper.

It is important to make clear which objects and locations are available and how many participants can be dealt with at a time.

The purpose of the dilemma should also be made clear. Is there a specific time period to be explored, a particular place or a particular theme?

Last but not least, who is the target group? A dilemma about abortion will not make the same impact on elementary school pupils on college pupils or pupils from high schools.

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## 2.7 STRUCTURE

The three different structures addressed in this material are: dilemma role play; mediated dilemmas; and dilemma-based experiences. Each form has its own target groups and its own pros and cons. Not every element in each of the different forms will be relevant to every facilitator or every type of dilemma. It is important to make clear choices about what the dilemma is expected to accomplish. If you become too attached to one particular form from the beginning, you may overlook the others, even though they might offer positive inspiration.

If you feel confident, you can combine elements from one form of presentation/interpretation with another, or create your own.

Once you have set up the dilemma, you can add details to inject more life into it. You can use objects that fit into a museum's history, or refer to topics that a class has previously studied. Along the way, you can also add simple tasks that call for resolution.

To relax participants you can adopt a less structured approach to your presentation: little things that help the participants break out of the scenario for a moment and have a laugh. They could be little jokes or funny details: finding an old cheese sandwich in a bag or a priest having to hide a stain on his hat. Small details that make the experience feel more alive.



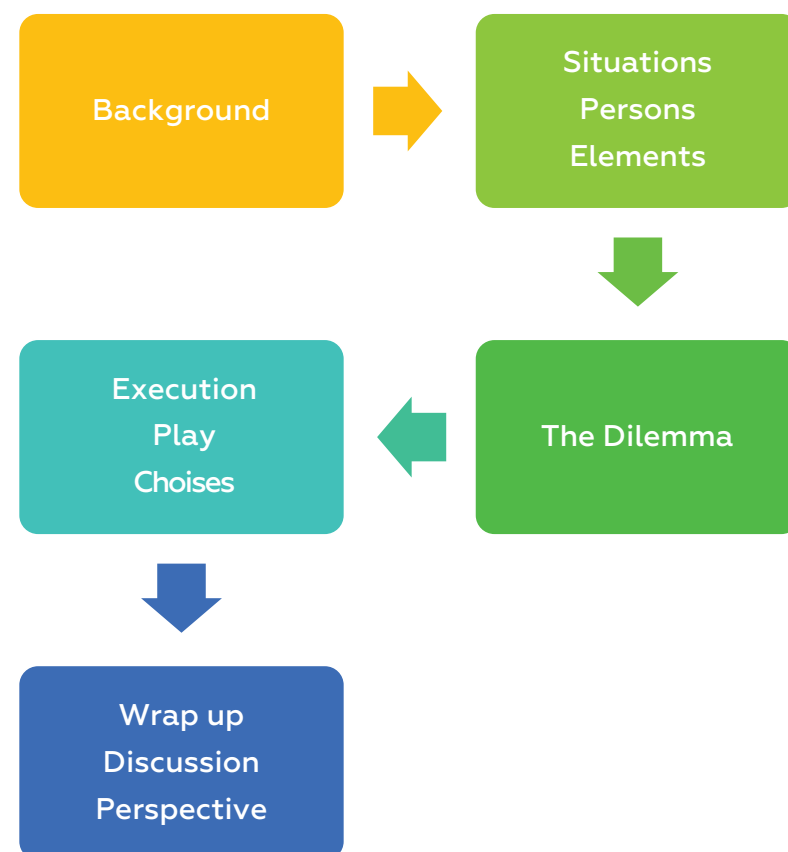
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# DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

## 3.1 OVERVIEW

Dilemma role play requires at least one facilitator with skills in either drama or role-playing. It is the most complex of the forms, and the one that requires the most involvement on the part of participants.

### 3.1.1 PLAN



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## 3.1.2 CHAPTER STRUCTURE

### CREATING THE DILEMMA

**Situations** - Which part of society/the world are you presenting/interpreting?

- What would be a good situation to start with?
- What situation can be used to illustrate society at large?

**Characters** – What characters are central to the dilemma?

- Are there already characters that could present/interpret our story?
- How will participants recognise the differences between the characters chosen?
- What should the characters represent?

**Props** - What elements could be used to create the dilemma?

- Do we have any items we could use?
- Do we have any specific locations that could help us create the proper atmosphere?
- Should we use costumes?
- Could we illustrate the roles in a certain way?

**Dilemma** - What should the central dilemma be?

- Which dilemma could represent our characters, places and items?
- How complex should our dilemma be?
- How does our dilemma illustrate the bigger story?

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CONDUCTING THE DILEMMA

**Introduction** - What information is it necessary to give before the dilemma?

- Is it necessary to introduce the form of the presentation/interpretation?
- Will anything be expected of the participants along the way?
- Are there any special goals that participants need to be aware of?

**Structure** - What techniques should be used?

- What is the facilitator's role?
- What is the goal of this role play experience?
- How can the facilitator best hand the game off to the participants?

**Discussion** - Which actions and events from the process should be addressed afterwards?

- Why did we make particular choices?
- What issues and events do participants need to talk through?
- What parts of the dilemma did the participants see and what parts did they overlook?

**Perspective** - How do you ensure that the presentation puts the bigger story into perspective?

- How much time is there for putting everything into perspective?
- What current events can be used to put the dilemma into perspective?
- Should the participants attempt to put things into perspective?

*Dangerous Youth*, a programme offered at the Workers Museum, confronts pupils with challenges faced by young people in the 1950s. Pupils are introduced to Mie, a 17-year-old coffee shop employee who has just discovered she is pregnant. Pupils use the knowledge they have gained about the era to discuss Mie's options. Photo: The Workers Museum ►

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3.2 ABOUT DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

Any session of dilemma role play is about characters and the choices they make. To make any session of role play relevant it is crucial for the participants to identify with the characters you use. It is especially important for your participants to get immersed in the central dilemma, so they need to identify with the character in the dilemma. Take, for example, the theme of abortion/miscarriage, a high-school class will not identify as closely with a 40-year-old drug addict, who risks giving birth to a damaged baby, as they will with a 17-year-old schoolgirl dealing with an accidental pregnancy.

At the same time, the characters selected must suit the dilemma you are presenting/interpreting. It is the characters that fuel the dilemma and make it interesting. Accordingly, it is important for every character appearing in the dilemma to have a connection to it and a reason for why they act and in such or such a way.

3.2.1 CREATING THE DILEMMA

3.2.1.1 SITUATION

The society around us always has an important influence on a dilemma. Often we set up a dilemma spotlight a particular trend or situation in society. Having worked on the minor story, it is important to make sure it illuminates the bigger story. This could be a social development, an economic issue or a change in morality. The minor story should help illustrate the bigger story.





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### DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

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An everyday situation provides an excellent basis for a dilemma, especially when making use of role play, because it allows participants to see themselves in both the roles and in their daily lives. It enhances their understanding of the people and the dilemma, making them better equipped to work on the dilemma. When participants get an idea of what the characters' everyday life is like and how they think, this will open their eyes to subtleties in the dilemma, which they may not have originally noticed.

A situation can also have an extraordinary element. While everyday life is often a good starting point, it can also be dull. It often takes something extraordinary to grab participants' attention and turn the dilemma into something special. You can also use something special about the situation to reveal circumstances and rules in the society. Talking to a young girl knitting socks for her boyfriend creates a casual situation that feels comfortable and familiar to the participants. Even though the participants themselves may not knit, the situation is recognisable. The added knowledge that the boyfriend is about to leave for America makes it even more exciting and extraordinary. Now there is more at stake.

#### 3.2.1.2 CHARACTERS

When creating characters, it is often tempting, especially for museums, to use authentic historical characters. This has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that an authentic character can make the experience more recognisable, simply because it is true. The disadvantage is that with historical characters there is the risk of creating counterfactual storytelling or being very strictly limited to a narrative, which participants cannot influence. Finally, we also have to take into consideration the characters' living relatives and family members who might object to the use of a family member.

One solution is to use characters composed of different historical individuals. This provides authenticity based on the true story, but without dealing with the actual historic person. It gives both the facilitator and the participants a greater degree of freedom.

Another solution is to create your own characters from scratch, based on knowledge of what would be realistic and possible in the situations and era being represented. This allows for greater freedom, but you have to make it totally clear that the characters are not genuine. It also eradicates personal information from the characters being used. The character can only provide we have imbued him or her with. It is impossible to research made-up characters and search for more information afterwards.

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If you choose to give the participants roles, they should be simple roles with only a small amount of significant information. Participants must be able to get into their roles quickly and not have to check a script or notes to keep track of their character. The rest of their information should emerge from the actual role-playing experience.

The facilitator can often play a significantly more advanced role because they have had more opportunity to rehearse, but this is not always necessary. A simpler role for a facilitator can be an advantage, because it gives him or her more time to control the activity and pass on the correct information.

Upper class or noble historical characters, also referred to as 'high status' characters, are difficult to include in role play because they have too much power. A participant playing a high-status character can quickly control the others or order a solution. A high-status facilitator is expected to be omniscient and participants may regard him or her as an easy solution to their dilemma. At the same time, it can be difficult for participants to identify with these characters and their way of life. There is often quite a large amount of historical information about high-status characters, which, as already mentioned, can be both an advantage and a disadvantage.

Middle or lower class characters are better suited for interaction with participants. They are more likely to identify with middle and lower class persons. Their lack of influence or knowledge can create a good dilemma that requires effort from participants in order to reach a solution. Less knowledge of the character's history allows the facilitator to claim ignorance plausibly, without coming out of character, if there is information he or she does not have or does not wish to reveal at that moment.

Whatever the status or type of the characters, it is important for them to be credible. If participants are able to recognise the character's personality traits, opinions or feelings they will become more committed both to the character and to the dilemma. This applies both to characters of every status and to fictional and historical characters.

Creating a character's conduct requires both 'text' and 'subtext'. A character's text could be that he wants to sell tickets to America; while the subtext could be that he is trying to cheat the people, to whom he is selling. Characters do not reveal the subtext themselves; it is revealed through their actions. Even though the ticket seller proclaims his honesty, he will do so in such a way that a modern audience can easily hear that he is exaggerating the joys of America in order to fleece people. Subtext gives a character more depth and makes participants feel they can spend more time interpreting them and maybe wheedle more out of a character than what he or she is apparently telling them.

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### DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

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#### 3.2.1.3 ELEMENTS

There are a number of helpful elements for a session of role play. Costumes can help, but they are not necessary. Simple props can often illustrate a character: a hat, a stick, a book or something similar. If you are playing several roles, you may want to give each character a different posture or specific movements to help identify each one.

Special locations such as a basement or a forest can help enhance the experience. If you are restricted to a specific place such as a room or classroom, use your imagination to create and illustrate the setting required for your story.

It may also be useful to include secondary roles. Secondary roles are characters who are not present, but whose attitudes, thoughts or presence are indicated by something like a letter, a bag, a pair of boots or another item that can tell us something about the character and underline their influence.

#### 3.2.1.4 THE DILEMMA

The dilemma is part of the characters' lives – in other words, in the minor story. People make important choices that could change their lives or the future for themselves or those close to them. It must be a dilemma that makes us look at the bigger story. Can we illustrate a particular change in society? Communicate a problem that was common during the 17th century? Look at a societal structure that still exists?

The dilemma should be a challenge to solve: a complex issue that requires participants to really consider their choices and actions. For example, should I remain confined to a poor farm in Denmark or work in Germany, even if it means working for the enemy (a World War II dilemma from the Danish Welfare Museum)? Should we, in our role as social authorities, forcibly separate a boy from his mother? Should I have this abortion, although it could be interpreted as the murder of a foetus?

When working on the basis of an authentic story, you must choose how to create your narrative. In an example from Den Gamle By, an authentic story created the context for a narrative. The fellow-townsmen were asked to pass judgement on an arsonist. There was an actual verdict in the case, but the participants are also asked to pass their own judgment. This gives the participants the freedom to explore as many opportunities as possible. In this way, they get a multi-dimensional view of the dilemma: what should the judgement be?

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### DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

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*The Man and the Harbour* exhibition.  
Photo: Museum Vestfyn, from the old  
Customs House (Toldboden) ►

A single, made-up witness was introduced as a method of pointing out certain social structures. The other witnesses were authentic. The judgment of the participants had to be their own, so it was not authentic. Finally, the participants' verdict was revealed and the actual verdict announced. Using this methodology, you can use both made-up and authentic elements to create a dilemma that is both multi-dimensional and engaging. It is always important to make the participants aware of what is fictional and what is authentic before they finish the process.

#### 3.2.2 CONDUCTING THE DILEMMA

##### 3.2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

We always start a role-play session with an introduction for the participants. Depending on the session and the participants, the introduction can be short or long.

A simple introduction could be a single sentence. For example: "Should your village provide land for heavy industry?" You can provide the rest of the information as you go.

When participants are actually expected to take part, a more thorough introduction is required. For one thing, participants must be aware of their own roles and what they may, and may not do. You need to introduce them to the purpose of the game and what is expected of the participants. You should also introduce them to their facilitator and his or her role/s. With experienced participants, you can skip part of the introduction, but some explanation is often still required. Explanations are particularly important when working with children. For example, someone playing a stern and harsh role might frighten children if you do not explain in advance that the facilitator is merely acting.

Again, it is necessary for the facilitator to keep a close eye on the reactions of the participants. If there are any participants who seem uncertain about the situation, the facilitator must adapt his or her introduction to their needs.





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### 3.2.2.2 CONDUCTING THE DILEMMA

When the facilitator is present during the session, it is important to make clear who is running the session. This depends entirely on the degree of autonomy that has been decided. If the facilitator is conducting the game, there is a high degree of control and most of their attention is on the presentation and on ensuring that the participants get involved. In the case of a more participant-driven game, it is important for the facilitator to play a more passive role so that the participants propel the action forward. This is where the lower and mid-status characters come into their own. They are not able to make any decisions, so they are forced to work together. It may still be advantageous for the facilitator to refer to an unseen person of higher status. If participants ask questions that you cannot or do not wish to answer, it is often a good idea to say, "I don't know, but I'll ask." This will give you a chance to think and then return with a response from the unseen person. It also allows participants to decide not to accept the instructions, since the 'important person' is not actually present and thus cannot control the actions of the participants.

It is possible to subtly steer the participants in a particular direction. Often, you can direct participants by using open questions: questions that cannot be answered with a 'yes or no' answer. Things like: "How do you hope to accomplish your plan?" or "What will happen if you do what you are thinking?" These are questions that can encourage participants to consider their actions.

### 3.2.2.3 DISCUSSION

After the session is over, it is important to have a wrap-up. How you handle the dilemma is ultimately what makes it a learning experience rather than just a game. The facilitator and the participants discuss the experience. This conversation has several purposes. First, the participants have the opportunity to engage with the facilitator out of character and have a more open discussion. This can provide significant feedback for both the facilitator and the participants about the role-playing experience. Secondly, participants get a sense of closure. We have the opportunity to focus on certain aspects of the session and ensure that participants have the opportunity to share their thoughts and reflections about what they just experienced.

Again, it is important to ask open questions that trigger the participant's own reflections. Even though we can control the discussion and focus on specific aspects, the thoughts and reflections of the participants should be the priority.

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### 3.2.2.4 PERSPECTIVE

Part of the discussion could be, for example, to find a relationship between what the participants have just experienced and relevant contemporary topics. Putting things into perspective helps the experience become more real. The facilitator can focus on the similarities between the dilemma in the presentation and current or similar dilemmas, helping participants to reflect on their own choices.

Known stories, movies, books or media stories that have some of the same themes can also be put into perspective. In this way, participants will also have the opportunity to connect their considerations to existing issues or stories already known to them. Similarly, participants will also be able to reflect on more than just the story conveyed. They are given the opportunity to use their reflection and considerations actively when they finish the course.

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## 3.3 EXAMPLES OF DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

### *The Workhouse Dilemma – The Danish Welfare Museum*

This dilemma was created by the Danish Welfare Museum in Svendborg.

'The Workhouse Dilemma' is a live action role-play presentation, in which pupils play both the staff and the inmates. The game takes place on Mondays at the Svendborg Fattiggård (Svendborg Workhouse) when the museum is closed to the general public. This means that the pupils have this historical setting entirely to themselves, making the experience even more special and authentic.

The pupils encounter eight different dilemmas in the course of the session. The pupils are divided into groups of eight, four playing inmates and four playing employees. Each pupil receives a unique script and a character that he or she plays. All of the characters are based on historical people.

The pupils playing inmates are faced with the dilemmas, while those playing employees administer punishment and facilitate the activities that go on at the Workhouse. One punishment might involve working alone and in complete silence. The challenge for the inmates is to tackle the next task in the session without speaking.

The pupils work, plan their escape, roll cigarettes (fake, of course), tend their children, eat their greasy meals on time etc.





## DENMARK'S HISTORY

### DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

▲ Clothing worn by residents in the Workhouse  
Photo: Jon Bjarni Hjartarson  
– The Danish Welfare Museum

In groups of employees and inmates, the pupils work together on individual tasks and dilemmas. Each dilemma relates to one of the characters, and the pupils decide as a group on what action they will take in each situation. For example, those playing the staff must agree on the method of punishment to use from the several they have to choose from.

Halfway through the game, the pupils switch roles. Those playing staff are now the inmates and vice versa. The pupils are not aware this will happen, so it comes as a surprise.

Switching roles serves several purposes:

1. It is a social experiment calculated to provoke reflection. It gets pupils to think more about their actions now that suddenly they can administer the punishment or have to be punished. Was I too tough, too lenient or too unsympathetic?
2. It gives pupils a multi-dimensional understanding of everyday life at the Workhouse, since they experience the dilemma through the eyes of both the staff and the inmates. It helps develop their historical understanding and empathy.

## DENMARK'S HISTORY

### DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

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3. It helps pupils better understand the whole situation, out of which the dilemmas emerge, at the same time developing their ability to contextualise.

Following the session, the schedule allows time for a short discussion between the pupils and facilitators, in which they reflect on the day's activities and the pupils' experiences.

The Museum does not require preparation or a wrap-up but, in cooperation with a panel of teachers, has devised a study guide. The guide contains study aids such as source material, films, pictures and articles. Schools can borrow it to use both before and after the dilemma session.

The laundry at the Workhouse.  
Photo: Jon Bjarni Hjartarson  
– The Danish Welfare Museum ▼







## DENMARK'S HISTORY DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

▲ The class visits the moped workshop in Den Gamle By.  
Photo: Den Gamle By

### *Moped Lars - A Dilemma for Older Primary School Pupils*

This dilemma is based on an episode from the DR Ultra television series, *Vener fra fremtiden* (Friends from the Future). The 'Opgaven' (the Task) episode follows Lars and his problems at school and at home. The educational process builds on the episode and asks participants to go deeper into the issues it presents.

The process begins at school, when the class taking part receives worksheets and an edited version of the 'Task' episode. The class watches the episode and has four or five lessons on the topics of alcoholism, dyslexia and parental responsibility. These are serious topics that require introduction, so the class works in groups, each of which works on only one of the topics. They then present their work to the rest of the class. The preparation ensures that the participants are equipped to work with the themes when they visit the museum.

At the museum's entrance, a facilitator wearing a 1970s-style suit meets the participants. He provides a brief introduction to what is about to happen. They will be travelling back to 1975 and playing delegates from the local municipality. They will take a close look at Lars's domestic situation and the places where he usually hangs out in his spare time.

Along the way, they will meet both Lars's school psychologist and his neighbour's wife, both of which roles will be played by facilitators. Once they have studied the situation, they decide what the municipality needs to do to help Lars.

The class are taken to Den Gamle By's 1970s section, where the facilitator takes on the role of the school psychologist. The class is divided into two teams. They are reminded that they are from the municipality and are examining Lars' situation. One group (accompanied by a teacher if the school wishes) is sent to the flat where Lars lives, while the other group follows the psychologist to the mo-

## DENMARK'S HISTORY DILEMMA ROLE PLAY

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ped workshop. They experience various aspects of Lars's life and some of the problems he faces in his life. The groups switch places after about 10 minutes.

After the groups have gone through both scenarios, they reassemble and are led down to the Bent J. pub. Here they are allowed to sit down. They form groups, based on the topics they worked on in preparation for the trip. The groups must then decide what they are going to do to help Lars. The groups will have many different attitudes, depending on who they are and what they have been working on.

Once the groups reach internal agreement, they present their choices to each other, after which the groups negotiate a compromise they can all agree on. If no consensus is reached, the session ends without a conclusion.

Finally, there is a period for reflection and a discussion about points of view. The facilitators follow up on the issues they heard in the various groups or ask major questions about forcible removal, justice, parental duty and any other relevant topics that may have arisen.

Pupils attempt to reach a consensus  
Photo: Den Gamle By ▼



## OVERVIEW

Time consuming. Often takes 1½ hours or more, depending on the complexity.

### ADVANTAGES

- High level of involvement
- Ability to learn while using one's own body

### DISADVANTAGES

- Staff intensive
- Equipment intensive
- Requires training or introduction to role playing



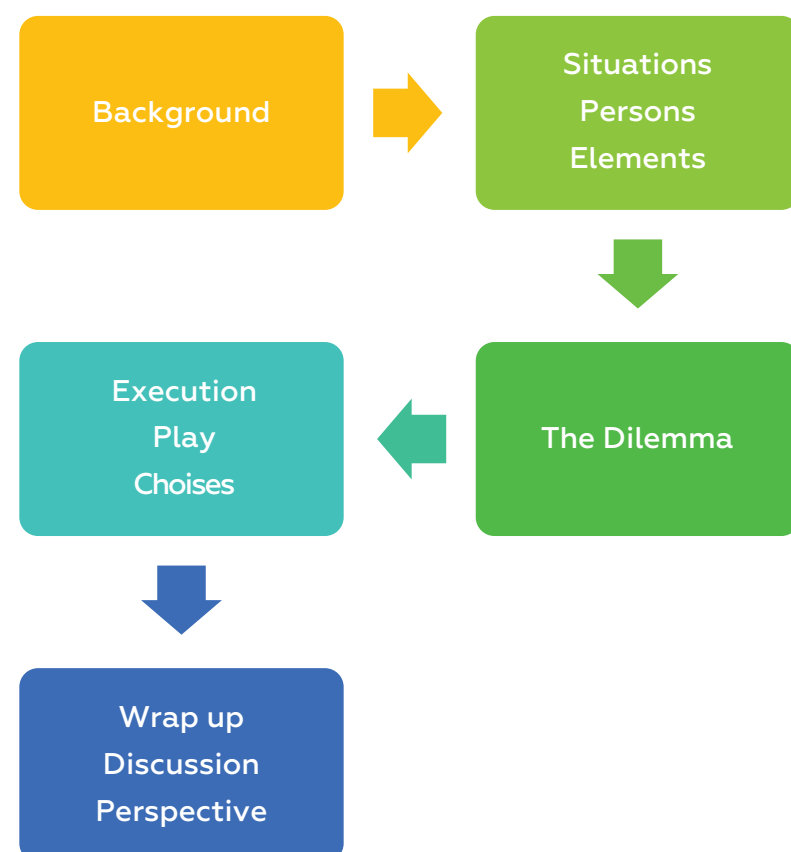


# THE MEDIATED DILEMMA

## 4.1 OVERVIEW

A single facilitator runs a mediated dilemma. It could be a teacher working with a class or a facilitator working at a museum. Whatever the setup, the presentation is not based on the roles of the participants, instead concentrating more on the dilemma as presented by the facilitator. Guided tours, dramatized guided tours and school trips can also be incorporated into facilitator-guided dilemmas.

### 4.1.1 PLAN



## 4.1.2 CHAPTER STRUCTURE

### CREATING THE DILEMMA

**Situations** – What situation/issue do we wish to present/interpret?

- Is there a particular situation you want to describe?
- What broader points of view/societal structures do you want to spotlight?

**Elements** – What elements can you use to help your presentation?

- Do we have access to particular objects or locations that could illustrate or support our presentation?
- Can we use objects or locations that represent a person?
- Should the facilitator play a role along the way?

**Characters** – What characters will play the major roles in the situations you will be presenting?

- Is there a personal dilemma that is particularly fascinating?
- Are there more characters it would be worth including?
- Are there any groups of people who affect the dilemma or have a dilemma of their own?

**Dilemma** - What is the central dilemma?

- Should there be more than one dilemma? A personal one and a larger one?
- Is the dilemma relevant to your participants?
- Does the dilemma shed light on a larger issue?
- What is the learning goal?



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## CONDUCTING THE DILEMMA

**Introduction** - What information is it necessary to give before the dilemma?

- Is it necessary to introduce the form of the presentation/interpretation?
- Will anything be expected of the participants along the way?
- Are there any special goals that participants need to be aware of?

**Structure** - Which presentational techniques should you use?

- Should you pay special attention to some participants?
- Should you ask the participants questions along the way?
- Should you change your approach to the presentation along the way?

**Discussion** – What kind of follow-up should there be?

- Should you ask the participants specific questions?
- Will the participants get an opportunity to ask their own questions?
- Should there be a discussion paper with points that the participants can discuss later?

**Perspective** - How do you ensure that the presentation puts the bigger story into perspective?

- How much time is there for putting everything into perspective?
- What current events can be used to put the dilemma into perspective?
- Should the participants attempt to put things into perspective?

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From the Workers Museum exhibition about Denmark in the 1950s.  
Photo: The Workers Museum ►

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## 4.2 ABOUT MEDIATED DILEMMAS

The classic mediated dilemma involves a facilitator who leads visitors/pupils on a comprehensive guided tour while providing information along the way. The form can be varied to meet different situations.

A mediated dilemma encourages visitors/pupils to become active participants. The dilemma shifts focus from the facilitator's perspective to that of the participants.

The facilitator's role is to ensure that the participants get involved and provide them with the information they need to reflect on the issues presented by the dilemma, and attempt to work out a possible solution.

### 4.2.1 CREATING THE DILEMMA

#### 4.2.1.1 SITUATIONS

There is usually a central theme for the presentation/interpretation: social structures, major upheavals or other significant events. We use the minor story to work up to the bigger story. To find a personal aspect to capture the attention of the participants, we can narrow things down to more local consequences or more preliminary incidents. It is important for the minor story to have significant aspects that highlight, or add dimension to the overall theme. One example comes from the Workers Museum. The bigger story is the conditions faced by the workers: their struggle and the changes they face. This is the theme that determines the context used to convey the larger issue. The 'Slaget på Fælleden' (The Battle on the Common) (Section 4.3) presentation employs a minor story to capture the interests of the participants, and paves the way for taking a look at the bigger story. It is based on a historical event that is appropriate to the overall mission of the Workers Museum.

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#### 4.2.1.2 ELEMENTS

The next step is to find elements that relate to the main presentation. These could be locations that relate to the situation or specific objects that have a similar history. If authentic items are not available, imitations can be used.

It is a very good idea to use items to support the presentation. Photographs, adverts, objects and places can support and illustrate the story, and inject life into your presentation. It is, however, a good idea to limit the elements used in a mediated dilemma. A few well-selected tools are often more powerful than a lot of different elements that need to be controlled. If you intend to change the nature of your presentation along the way, you should think carefully about what you can wear or carry easily.

#### 4.2.1.3 CHARACTERS

Next, after establishing reasonable control of the situation and the elements to be involved, come the characters. It is the characters that make the story come alive for the participants. They are often the most important element in a presentation.

There are a number of ways to create characters within this type of presentation: being fully in character; being partially in character; and not being in character.

##### *Fully in character*

A fully realised character must have recognisable characteristics. It must be clear whom you are portraying and that you are in character. Therefore, it is often necessary to simplify the character. It is often preferable to create a fictional character and avoid creating an incorrect representation of a historical person. If you do decide on a historical character, it often only takes a few recognisable elements to reveal whom you are portraying. A historical character should be neutral or stick to historical facts to maintain authenticity. If you plan to act in a fashion counter to known facts, it is important to inform the participants at the start so conflicts do not arise in terms of their expectations and prior knowledge.

A fictional character allows for more freedom, but it must be clear that you created the fictional character on the basis of historical facts. Again, a few simple characteristics are enough. The character should have multi-dimensional enough to suit the dilemma being presented. If there are several characters in the dilemma, they should be kept simple so as not to confuse the participants. Even though a character may only make a brief appearance, he or she should have a substantial backstory. When participants get involved, they will

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often ask about a character they find interesting, and it would be a shame if the facilitator did not to have the details.

##### *Partially in character*

This method is similar to being fully in character, with the difference that the facilitator can jump in and out of character along the way. It allows for more freedom and does not limit the participants or the facilitator to a single point of view. The disadvantage is that the presentation may feel fragmented and be less engaging.

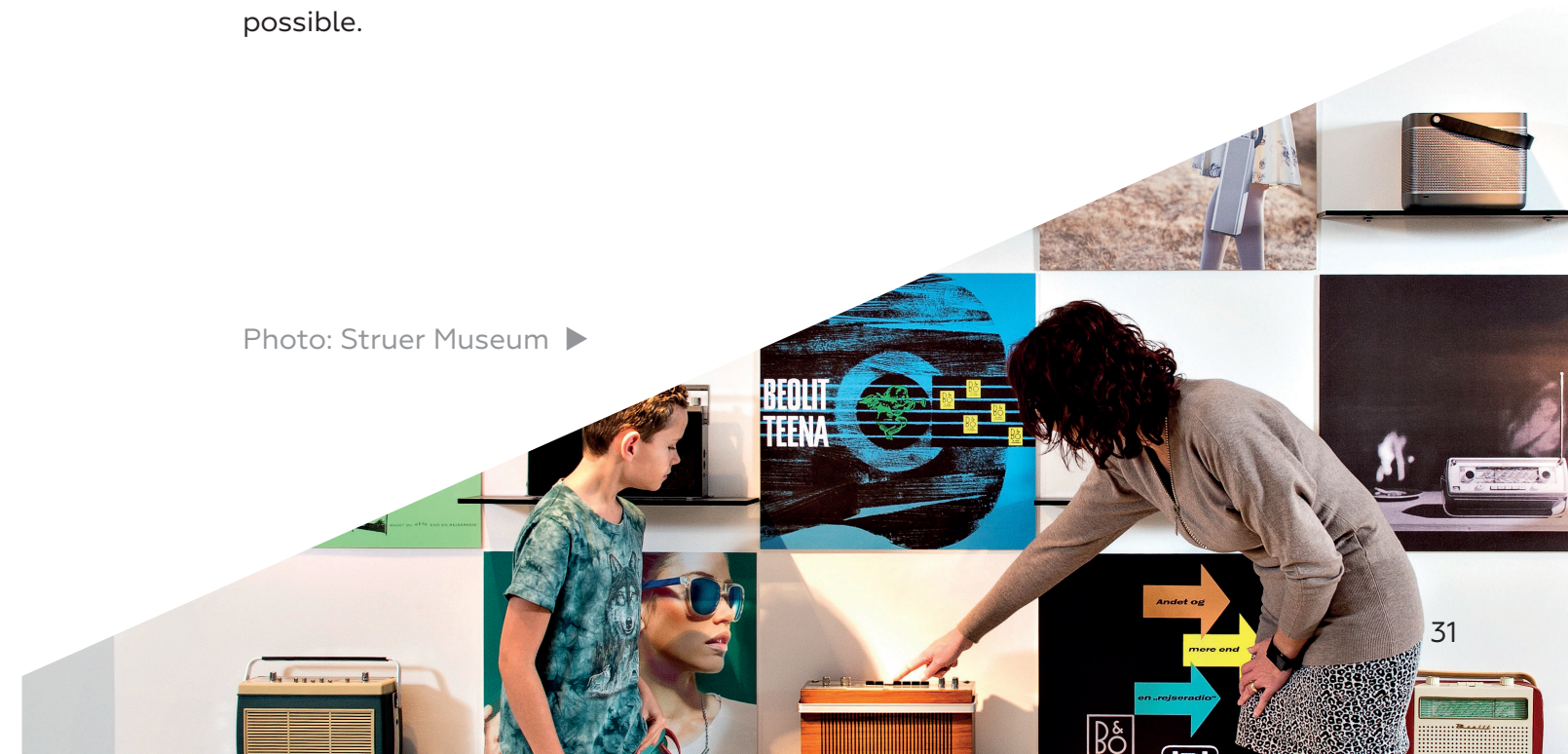
##### *Not in character*

Presenting while out of character is probably the most common form. The disadvantage is that it can be difficult to achieve the same level of empathy among the participants as you can when using characters. The advantage is the flexibility. It is easier to customise a presentation when not portraying a specific character.

#### 4.2.1.4 THE DILEMMA

The mediated dilemma is probably the most versatile form, as it allows presentation while both in and out of character. You can also adjust the presentation along the way in order to engage more participants. So the dilemma is mostly limited by place, opportunity, and what you are conveying. It is still most effective to adjust the dilemma so you can use places, objects and any knowledge already available to the participants in order to make the presentation as realistic as possible.

Photo: Struer Museum ▶





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## 4.2.2 CONDUCTING THE DILEMMA

### 4.2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The form itself – with a facilitator narrating and explaining – needs no introduction. What the facilitator might have to explain to the participants is what they will be responsible for. You can do this in various ways. One way is to introduce the entire programme and what is expected from the participants from the start so that they can immediately start focusing on what they find relevant. This often the very best approach with school children, as it helps them stay focused.

If active participation starts at a later stage in the session, you can make the introduction part of the presentation. This will help the flow and help warm up the participants with a 'soft start'. It is especially beneficial with participants who are not accustomed to getting involved and may need to be handled with a little extra care.

### 4.2.2.2 STRUCTURE

Dilemma-based presentations encourage the participants' own reflections and choices, so it is good idea to keep them involved along the way. You can do this by asking questions and/or requesting the participants to complete assignments. This may also help warm up participants who are unaccustomed to taking part in these types of activities.

A mediated dilemma can take a number of forms. The facilitator can play a character to present the dilemma. The facilitator can take the participants on a typical guided tour, but incorporate a dilemma that participants have to work on along the way. Or the facilitator can set the participants an assignment at the start and offer advice, guidance and information as needed.

Questions along the way are an excellent opportunity for communication. It is important for these not to be 'school teacher type questions' aimed at testing the participants' factual knowledge. We already know the facts and the participants come to learn from us. On the other hand, it is important to have some open-ended questions to encourage participants to think about what they are learning: "Why do you think Lars is not going to school?" "What can the neighbour do to help?" etc. The purpose is to ensure that the participants get deeply involved in the dilemma.

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In general, younger participants require more attention from the facilitator. Schoolchildren require a lot of attention, while adults can often manage more on their own.

A dilemma does not always catch the attention of the participants. Or perhaps it only partially engages them. One workshop presented pupils with a dilemma based on children who needed to find a way to help a friend with an alcoholic mother. Only a few of the pupils became caught up in the dilemma of the alcoholic mother. It was the small group of pupils who said anything. When the conversation switched to the subject of friendship and helping one's friends, many more pupils became interested and active. Actually, the core was still the same, but the familiar subject activated a large passive group who could now get involved in something they recognised. It is always advisable for a facilitator to have a number of different approaches ready, because a new approach might have a greater impact on the participants.

### 4.2.2.3 DISCUSSION

Discussion with the participants can go in a number of different directions. It is always a good idea to schedule discussion time in order to capture the participants' immediate thoughts, to help those that may have got lost along the way and to support those who were exposed to a dilemma that mirrored their personal experience. Always make sure that participants have the opportunity to comment and be heard. This not only supports the participants, but also helps you learn more about the dilemma and its results.

#### *Schools*

For schools, discussion is a natural part of the wrap-up session. It may be a good idea to have a discussion with the class immediately after the presentation to capture their initial thoughts and reflections. A more thoughtful discussion could be scheduled for later, after the pupils have had the opportunity to think about, and process their experience.

#### *Museums*

Museums often have less time for discussions, but when working with dilemmas, it is still important to have a discussion afterwards about why the participants made the choices they made and their possible consequences. Given that dilemma-based presentations are designed to allow participants to make crucial decisions, it is important for them to have the opportunity to explain them

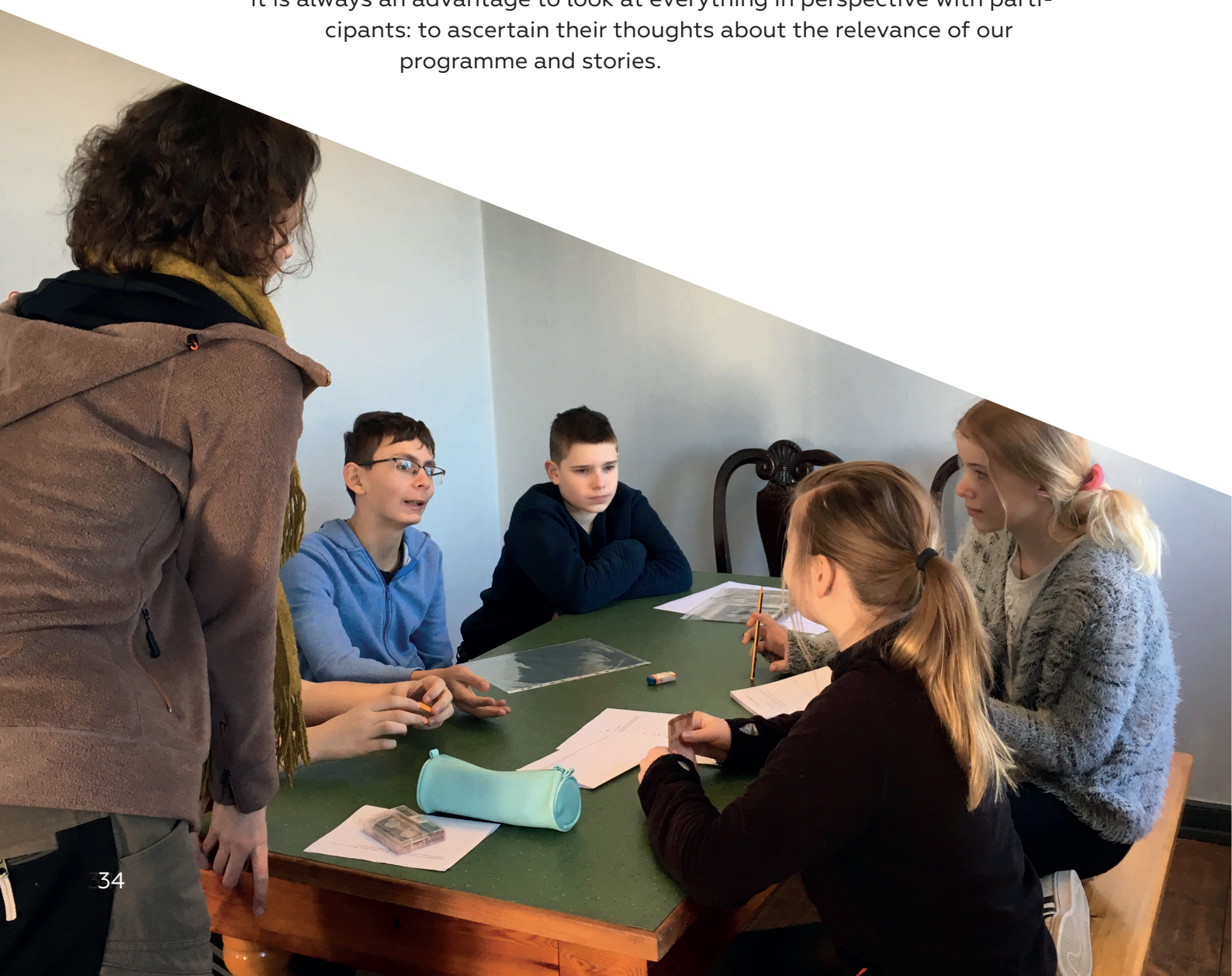
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later. Often you have a short discussion of 10 to 15 minutes, before encouraging participants to continue on their own at a later point.

#### 4.2.2.4 PERSPECTIVE

Following the actual presentation, the facilitator has the opportunity to explain the relevance of the dilemma. You can explore other historical or contemporary events that contain similar issues. You can also include this in the discussion by allowing the participants themselves to find relevant perspectives, but it is a good idea for the facilitator to make specific important points if the participants themselves miss them. This may be particularly relevant for younger pupils.

It is always an advantage to look at everything in perspective with participants: to ascertain their thoughts about the relevance of our programme and stories.



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#### 4.3 EXAMPLES OF MEDIATED DILEMMAS

##### *The Battle on the Common – The Workers Museum*

A teacher meets the pupils at Assistenskirkegården (Assistens Cemetery) in Copenhagen and explains the framework and objectives of the day's programme, letting the pupils know what is about to happen and what they will be learning.

Pupils are taken on a walk through the city, specifically the Nørrebro district. The tour is based on the story of the Battle on the Common. Pupils visit the places where the workers lived, worked and fought the Battle on the Common.

At the first stop on the tour, pupils are given individual identity cards, all based on, and inspired by workers of the day. At each stopping point, each pupil uses the information on his or her cards in a series of exercises, in which he or she encounters situations, in which the character he or she is portraying might have been involved. The issues include housing, economic conditions and citizens' rights. The participants are asked to manage their characters' finances and form an opinion on the right to vote.

When the tour arrives at the Common - today known as Skt. Hans Torv - the participant playing the role of Chief of Police Crone appears and arrests the pupil playing Luis Pio. The teacher supports the pupils during exercise and explains the motives behind it.

The programme ends at Skt. Hans Torv where the participants are divided into groups on the basis of their characters' opinions. The groups must then make up their mind about their roles in the battle, what they have in common and what they think about the entire experience.

Afterwards, the teacher asks individual representatives of the groups for their conclusions. The facilitator chooses the spokesperson to speak for the entire group.

Subsequently, pupils are given the opportunity to share thoughts amongst themselves.

◀ 6th-form pupils considering which objects should become museum artefacts.  
Photo: Museum Vestfyn



## DENMARK'S HISTORY

### THE MEDIATED DILEMMA

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#### *The Era of Caning – Museum Vestfyn*

'The Era of Caning' is the name of a mediated dilemma designed for use by the museum's educational services department.

**Form:** The session is has a three-part structure: an introduction to the period and the characters; the dilemma-based challenges in groups; and a perspective-based discussion. The dilemma's challenges are structured as a 'star race'. Working in groups, pupils have to find a site in town and solve the first dilemma before returning to the museum to get details of the next site. There are a total of two sites/dilemmas per group. The pupils are handed the dilemmas on cards in numbered envelopes. Each dilemma card has two sides: an information side and a challenge side. The dilemmas on the challenge side have three options, which the group must discuss together and consider. In this way, the session brings to life sites in the town of Assens and links them to life as it was lived in 1896. Each group works on one character, created on the basis of historical notes and photographs. There are a total of 4 working-class characters and 4 middle-class characters. Consequently, each group builds up an experience based on one particular individual, leading to a broad and more sophisticated picture of the period, viewed by children with different points of view, but from the same period. Each group has to find two locations in the town, where they work on dilemmas related to their character's association with those places.

**Content:** The experience is based on the Next Stop exhibition, which is about the establishment of the Tommerup-Assens railway line and the effect that railways had on towns, the growing number of towns with stations, and particularly the growth of industry and of population, and an increased need for children's labour in cities. The exhibition serves as an introduction to the subject and tells the bigger story.

The groups are then introduced to their historical character through photos, notes and props, which reveal something about the individual's status/gender/opportunities/dreams for the future. This historical character is the pupil's introduction to the challenges of everyday life in 1896. There are three female and five male characters. The dilemma looks at child labour and schooling (The Factory Law of 1873 and the School Law of 1814), authorised corporal punishment in schools, authorised corporal punishment in the family, the 1866 Penal Code, gender roles, the working class v. the middle classes:

## DENMARK'S HISTORY

### THE MEDIATED DILEMMA

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- The ability of women and men to choose their own future
- Expectations and authorised corporal punishment in the family, at work and at school
- Social challenges in everyday life
- The importance of children for a family's household income

Props used in the mediated dilemma / spanskrørets tid  
Photo: Museum Vestfyn ▼

## OVERVIEW

Usually lasts from ½ to 1½ hours.

Most participants lose concentration if it lasts longer.

## ADVANTAGES

- Reflection along the way
- Time-limited
- Very flexible

## DISADVANTAGES

- Less empathy
- Less involvement

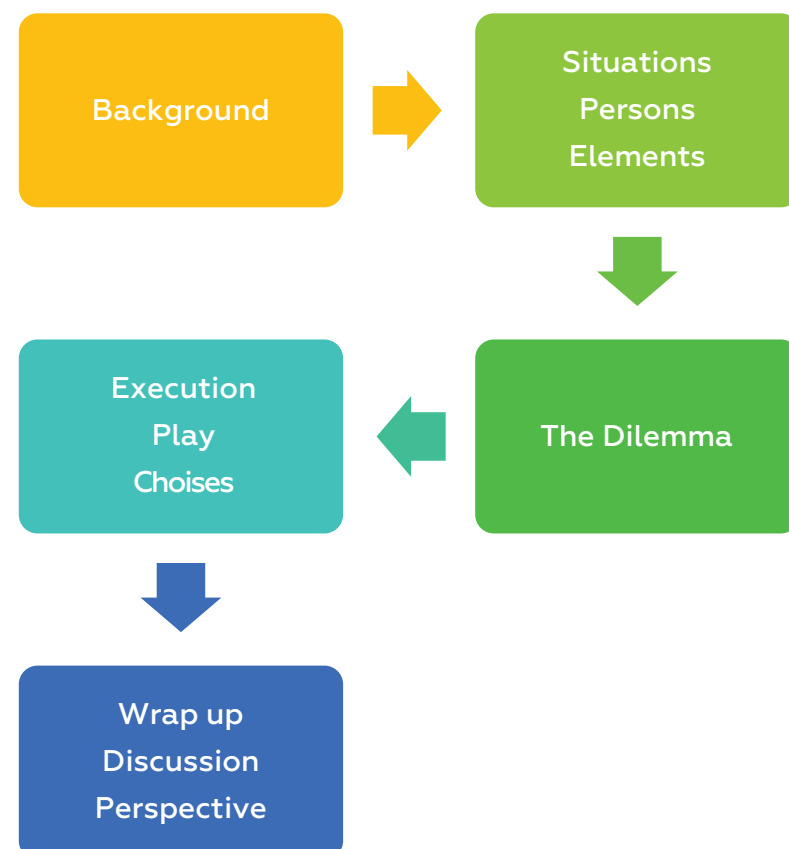
# DILEMMA-BASED EXPERIENCES

## 5.1 OVERVIEW

A dilemma-based experience does not involve a facilitator. The participants follow the dilemma by themselves. That means the presentation of the dilemma is crucial. It is impossible to adapt the process along the way, so it must be clear and easily understood from the start.

Make sure you present something that is clear and feasible for the participants and that does not require additional instruction from a facilitator.

### 5.1.1 PLAN



## 5.1.2 CHAPTER STRUCTURE

### CREATING THE DILEMMA

**Target group** - Who are you addressing?

- Families with small children?
- Families with older children?
- Schools and institutions?

**Elements** - What elements are available?

- Is there access to particular objects or places that can illustrate or support the process?
- Can you use objects or places that represent a character?
- Are the elements strong enough in themselves without requiring additional explanation?

**Situations** - Is there a specific situation you wish to describe?

- What larger perspectives influence the dilemma?
- How can you present/illustrate the dilemma simply so participants can get the gist it without further explanation?

**Characters** - What characters can you use in the presentation. What story can they tell?

- Are there any significant characters you want to highlight? Who would be effective at presenting a dilemma?
- Are there more characters/groups of characters whom it would be useful to include?
- How should you present each individual? With the use of letters? An important artefact? A place?



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**Dilemma** - What central dilemma could illustrate your presentation/interpretation?

- What could be a central dilemma for the characters?
- What would change the lives of the characters?
- What did the situation you are presenting/interpreting affect the lives of the characters?

## CONDUCTING THE DILEMMA

**Introduction** - How can you introduce the dilemma without a facilitator?

- Should you hand out a map/letter/text?
- Can the dilemma do without an introduction? "Show, don't tell!"

**Structure** - How will participants know what to do and where to go?

- How much time does the target group have and options do they have for following the dilemma?
- Are there any places available for working on possible assignments in the dilemma? (A classroom?)
- How many people can follow the dilemma at a time?
- Are there any places where the participants might get confused and lose the thread?
- How do we encourage participants to follow the dilemma all the way to the end?

**Discussion and putting things in perspective** - What are the options for a wrap-up session?

- How can you pave the way for a teacher/parent/participant help to spend some time on a wrap-up?
- Can you refer participants to study/school materials?
- Can you refer them to other treatments of the same topic (books, other museums, films etc.)?

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## 5.2 ABOUT DILEMMA-BASED EXPERIENCES

Most schools and museums have used dilemma-based experiences as a learning tool in the form of independent assignments, treasure hunts and other participator-controlled activities. These are experiences that the participants carry out by themselves without a facilitator or teacher controlling the process. It is a freer form of presentation/interpretation that requires a bit more from the participants, so the material must make it clear what is expected of them.

### 5.2.1 CREATING THE DILEMMA

#### 5.2.1.1 TARGET GROUP

There are a variety of target groups for dilemma-based experiences: families with young children, families with older children, institutions and schools.

*Mother and father as instructors (or grandparents/older brothers and sisters)*

Young children require simple dilemmas with simple solutions. At the same time, the programme needs to appeal to the adults accompanying them. Success often depends on whether parents or grandparents find the dilemma interesting. It is the adults who act as instructors for the children. If the parents are not interested in the dilemma, it is easy for them to suggest that the children move on to something else. The adults assess whether they think an activity is fun for their children.

But the adults have an innately valuable instructor role when it comes to guiding their family through the experience. Clear instructions for those adults are imperative, if they are to perform that role well.

*Older children as instructors*

Older children require more complex dilemmas and can handle multiple solutions or even open-ended problems, in which they have to come up with their own solution and every choice leads to new consequences. Older children also have a greater ability to persuade their families to take part. If they see that an activity looks fun, they can quickly assume the role of instructor and guide the family through the activity. It is still a good idea to involve the parents so they can also become active participants. So take into account the abilities of both the parents and the children, so that they can work together to tackle the dilemma.

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### DILEMMA-BASED EXPERIENCES

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#### *Schools (teachers as instructors)*

It can be a good solution for a visiting school to take a simple programme and allow pupils to follow it. This allows pupils to go exploring, but with clear goals for what they are supposed to achieve. The teacher will still have the role of facilitator role (this role has already been explained in the 'Facilitator-guided Dilemma' section).

When developing a game for schools, it is a good idea to include perspectives and tasks that support the school's educational goals. Extra assignments and questions designed for further examination in the classroom are a good idea. This can create extra challenges for a class that has time for a longer visit, and is flexible enough so as to not delay a class that has less time available.

#### *Considerations*

Family trips take place mostly on holidays and weekends, so families are expecting to have positive experiences together. So the main objective of these programmes is to provide a good experience for families. This does not mean that you should omit educational content, but if a family enjoys their visit, they will also become more interested in the place they are visiting.

A presentation should aim keep the participants busy for about half an hour, so the participants will feel that they got something out of the process. On the other hand, a presentation should rarely be longer than an hour, because the attention of the participants starts to wander.

Generally, programmes for younger children should be shorter than those for older children. Programmes for schools should be longer than those for children on their own, but age and class level are still important factors.

The time limits are only suggestions. Circumstances can change, and you can experiment with programmes of various duration to cater for specific target groups.

Important considerations: Is your programme a one-off or will it be used again and again? Is it linked to a particular exhibition or a finite event?

## DENMARK'S HISTORY

### DILEMMA-BASED EXPERIENCES

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#### 5.2.1.2 ELEMENTS

##### *Museums*

Are there specific parts of the museum or particular objects you want to focus on? Do you want to tackle a specific topic? Are there any fascinating objects that could activate parents or teachers? This could be period clothes in picture form or an object that adults would recognise and could tell stories about. This approach seems to work especially well with recent history.

##### *Schools*

What will support your theme/story? Is there access to something that the pupils themselves could investigate or work with? What would be interesting and pave the way for possible tasks or reflection? Objects like an old test tube or a typewriter, backed up by pictures and a letter can create a dilemma that pupils can relate to.

#### 5.2.1.3 SITUATIONS

To ensure the educational content, you could use a specific situation for the experience: for example, a period of time or a change in society. This will make sure there is an educational experience for even the youngest participants. Even though young children may not understand the bigger story being demonstrated by the dilemma, the adults accompanying them will understand it and they can then help explain it to their children. For older children, you can incorporate societal situations and issues into the dilemma so that they can work directly with them. For example, Museum Vestfyn uses dilemmas that are directly linked to the period of history they are working on (section 5.3).

#### 5.2.1.4 CHARACTERS

##### *Small children*

For small children, it is important for the characters to be instantly fascinating. In this instance, realism is not the most important issue, just as long as a character is fascinating. The character should also be interesting to the parents. You can possibly add small details to the character that the children do not recognise, but the parents can spot and point out to the children. That way, both the children and adults can participate.



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#### Older children

When it comes to engaging older children, a character needs to be realistic and identifiable.

If the dilemma is geared to more than one age group, you can either use characters that appeal to each of the target groups or incorporate different levels of complexity into a single character and appeal to several age groups, and the older children can discover and understand the subtleties.

### 5.2.1.5 DILEMMA

The dilemmas for these experiences are often out of the ordinary. They should be instantly fascinating and quickly present a problem.

#### Small children

It should be an easy-to-understand situation: preferably, something the children can recognise, so they quickly understand what is expected of them. This also helps parents assist the children ('Lone has run away from home' or 'How can we help Alma to visit her mother?'). The dilemmas should be simple and easy to complete, so the children get a complete experience.

#### Older children

Older children can handle more complex situations. Feel free to give them a dilemma that is trickier to solve, presenting a problem rather than a solution. They can easily be given several possible solutions with a variety of results.

## 5.2.2 CONDUCTING THE DILEMMA

### 5.2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The introduction to dilemma-based experiences is usually very basic: a simple written description or illustrative brochure. Your description should be precise so participants know what to expect.

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Educational activities at the Workers Museum place special focus on utilising the potential of the engineering exhibitions to encourage identification and empathy. Here 6th-form pupils from Copenhagen have just surprised the worker Aksel in a privy. Photo: The Workers Museum ►

### 5.2.2.2 STRUCTURE

Dilemma-based experiences are the simplest form to implement. They do not require a facilitator. Conversely, the fact that no facilitator is present to see the results can pose a challenge. It can be quite difficult to get feedback on dilemma-based experiences, since much of the response will only be evident to the participants.

Dilemma-based experiences are also the most difficult to steer in the direction of a specific result. Parents, grandparents and groups of pupils end up controlling their own learning. You cannot guarantee what, if anything, will be learned during these dilemmas. You can only present the dilemma in the best way possible, and hope it delivers the intended message.

The success criterion for dilemma-based experiences is different from the more resource-intensive dilemmas. The main purpose is to give the participants an interesting experience. The experience can then be used to educate, but when it comes to groups of children on their own, the educational aspect can be quickly lost.

A school class solving the dilemma will most likely have a teacher acting as a facilitator guiding the pupils towards the solution. It may be a good idea to have extra information available for teachers or other adults involved that they can share with the children.

It is a good idea to make sure you get on-going response to a dilemma, either by using selected volunteers or handing out questionnaires to be completed by participants.



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### 5.2.2.3 DISCUSSION

In the case of school classes, it is up to the teacher to organise a wrap-up that ensures reflection and learning. This could also be a nursery teacher, a scout leader or anyone else who has guided a group through the dilemma. To ensure a good wrap-up, it is important to provide the school with material that is suitable for the target group. The material should be simple to tackle and easy to use. Not only does that help the teacher, it also means that groups who are not accompanied by a teacher can also use the material.

When it comes to adult participants, it is a good idea to point them in the directions of other sources of information on the subject. Books are an obvious option, but films or other museums are another possibility.

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## 5.3 EXAMPLES OF DILEMMA-BASED EXPERIENCES

### *Energy-conscious Lone – Den Gamle By*

The purpose was to guide families around Den Gamle By's 1974 section. Participants started in a room where other activities were going on. Here, participants were told that, in Den Gamle By's 'nuclear family' flat, Lone had learned that energy saving measures were required, but that she might have misunderstood something. So Lone needed advice. It would be made clear to the participants what happened, as they followed Lone around. They are given a leaflet, in which they could write down their advice to Lone, once they knew her problem.

The participants proceeded to the 'nuclear family' flat. Here they found a letter from Lone to her parents, stating that she is running away after they told her off for turning off the flat's relay in an attempt to save energy. The letter also contained a list of Lone's plans to shut off the breaker, turn off the building's oil-fired heating system and demonstrate in front of the radio and TV shop, Poul's Radio.

As the participants followed Lone's footsteps and tried to reach the oil-fired system in the basement, they encountered a locked door with an angry message from the caretaker saying that someone had tried to sabotage the heating system and that access to the basement was prohibited.

At Poul's Radio, participants talked to the shopkeeper. He told them that a girl had been demonstrating outside his shop. He said that he took her placard away and angrily chased her away from the shop. He noticed that she was wea-

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ring a scout scarf and told them where they could find the scout premises in Den Gamle By.

The participants found another letter from Lone at the scout premises. It said she had run away to her grandmother's and was hiding where no one would be able to find her. Lone said that she no longer knew what to do, and asked the participants to write to her with some advice.

Participants wrote down their advice and handed it in at the starting point.

'Energy-conscious Lone' touches on topics such as: energy consumption, the energy crisis, family values and interaction between children and adults. These are subjects that families can discuss while walking around Den Gamle By's 1974 section, where parents or grandparents can introduce the children to artefacts and the spirit of the era.

### *Struer under besættelsen (Struer During the Occupation) – Struer Museum*

At the Struer Museum, they decided to create a dilemma-based board game. The game is called 'Struer under besættelsen' (Struer During the Occupation) and consists of 16 different dilemmas, based on different events/themes from the period, during which the Germans occupied Struer.

The rules of the game are as follows: The first player draws a dilemma card and reads it aloud. The card contains a dilemma. At the bottom of the card there are three possible solutions to the dilemma. The first player chooses one of the options. The other three players must then try to guess which of the options the first player chose. Both the opponents and the player who started receive points if the opponents respond correctly.

Struer Museum's game:  
'Struer During the Occupation' ▼





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No one receives any points if the opponents respond incorrectly. Before the next turn, the players turn the card over and read what is written on the back. The back of the card contains information about the real event that inspired the dilemma. The players learn which solution the residents of Struer chose during the occupation.

All the dilemmas in the game are very different. For example: You are a business owner - what do you do if the Germans threaten to blow up your business if you do not cooperate with them? You own a shoe shop, and the Germans and the Danes that support them are buying all the good shoes. Will you do something about it? As a farmer, you have shut down your unprofitable pig production, so do you now want to breed horses and profit from the war?

The rules of the game emphasise that the game is NOT about guessing the historically correct answer to the dilemmas. The idea is for the players themselves to empathise with the dilemmas and to be prepared to defend their choices to their opponents.

When we tried out the game, we received very positive feedback. We noticed that the pupils spent a long time discussing the different options. "Why did you choose that, when this or that is involved...?" "I was 100% certain that you would choose that one." "If you had had this choice, would you have picked it?" The pupils also looked forward to turning the card over and seeing which solutions the real residents of Struer went for.

#### *Following in the Tobacco Boy's Footsteps – Museum Vestfyn*

'Following the Tobacco Boy's Footsteps' is a dilemma-based experience featured during the holidays.

**Form:** The programme brings to life a number of locations in Assens, introducing them to the life of a working boy in 1896. It is aimed at families/groups who meet at the museum, where they are given an information bag containing a map with a number of sites marked on it, a card with information about the tobacco boy and five numbered envelopes, which the participants have to open when they arrive at the various sites. Each dilemma card has two sides; an information side and a challenge side. The dilemmas on the challenge side contain three options that the group is expected to discuss and consider. The programme is one of a number of holiday activities and special events. It takes about one hour and fifteen minutes without breaks, but the form makes it possible to pause or stop when needed.

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**Content:** It is based on the life of a (historically sampled character) boy, the 11-year-old tobacco boy Christian Lauritsen, in 1896. Christian works the afternoon shift at Assens Tobacco Factory. He goes to school in the morning. His father is a labourer and fond of brandy, and Christian makes a significant contribution to the family's finances.

The dilemmas the groups have to solve relate to Christian's life, and take place at different locations in the town. The dilemmas reflect the challenges of living a decent life as a working class child in 1896. The subjects covered include child labour (factory law, 1873), authorised corporal punishment in schools, authorised corporal punishment in the family, criminal law, gender roles and the working class v. the middle class. Twenty information bags are available so twenty groups can do the programme at the same time.

Participants follow in the footsteps of a young boy working in the tobacco industry in the 1890s  
Photo: Museum Vestfyn ▼

## OVERVIEW

Often lasts only about ½ hour.

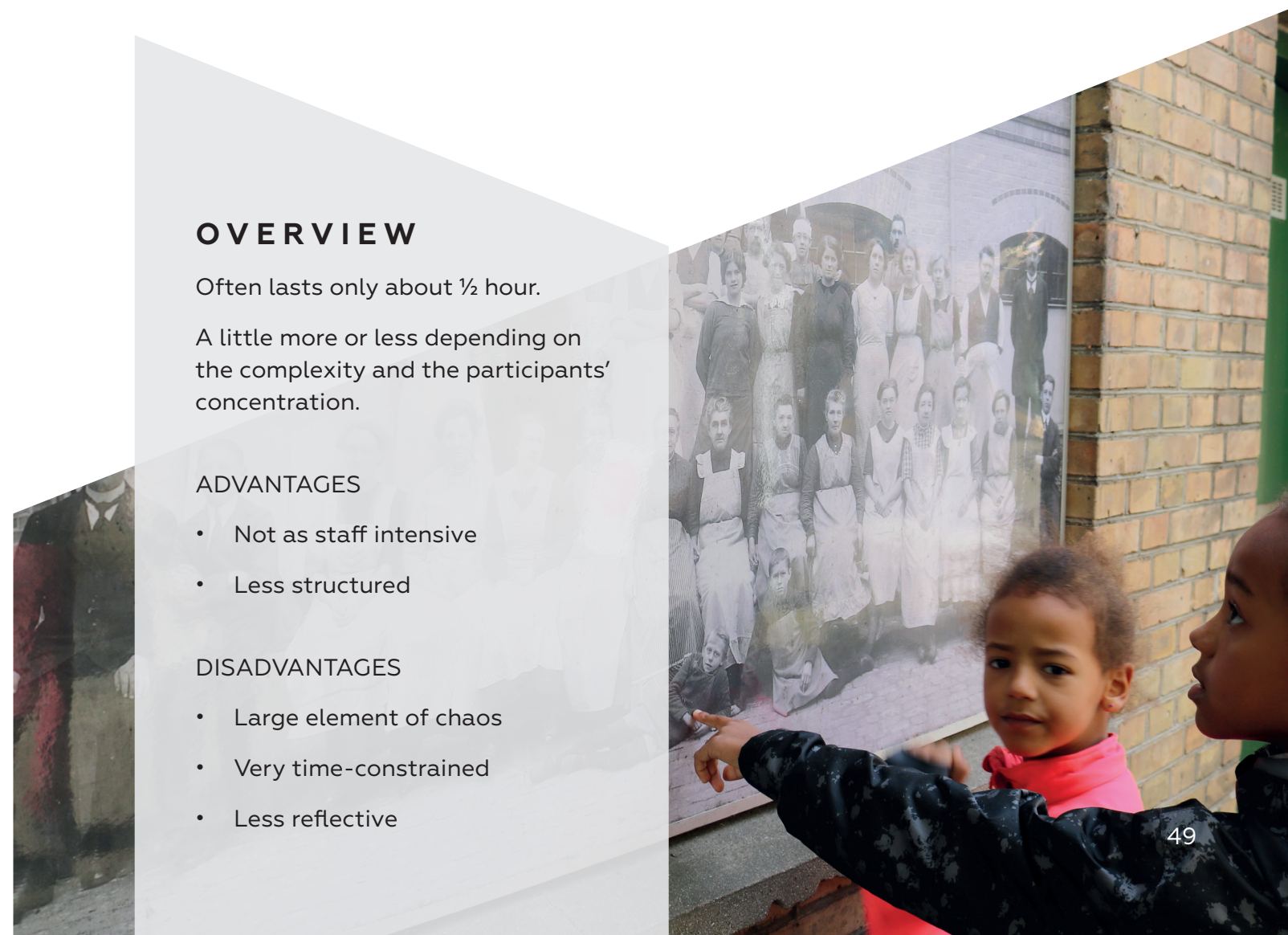
A little more or less depending on the complexity and the participants' concentration.

### ADVANTAGES

- Not as staff intensive
- Less structured

### DISADVANTAGES

- Large element of chaos
- Very time-constrained
- Less reflective



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# REFERENCES

## 6.1 EDUCATIONAL BASIS

For further knowledge of teaching using role play and advice on interrogative techniques and reflection methods, the following are recommended:

Betty Jane Wagner: *Dorothy Heathcote - Drama as a Learning Medium*, Washington DC: National Education Association, 1976

Additional techniques in drama education methods and theatrical theories can be found in:

John O'Toole & Brad Haseman: *Drama og teater – en pædagogisk metode* (Translation of Dramawise Reimagined: *Learning to Manage the Elements of Drama*), Gråsten: Drama, 1995

Augusto Boal: *Lystens regnbue: Boals metode for teater og terapi* (Translation of The Rainbow of Desire: *The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy*), Gråsten: Drama, 2000

Requirements for pupil's competencies and purposes of teaching:  
Ministry of Education: UVM.dk

For further work on drama, choices and dilemmas as a programme form, you can read:

Lisa Gjedde: *Læringsrollespil i skolen*, Copenhagen: Egmont Fonden, 2014

Marianne Dietz & Liselotte Hvidberg: *Indblik og Udsyn: På spil i historien: Dilemmaspil 7.-9. klasse*, Odense: Meloni, 2012

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## 6.2 FREINDS FROM THE FUTURE

The Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) TV series 'Venner fra fremtiden' (Freinds from the Future) broadcast in autumn 2017 may serve as a source of inspiration for others as it has done for us.

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## 6.3 PARTNERS

The Workers Museum: [www.arbejdermuseet.dk](http://www.arbejdermuseet.dk)

The Danish Welfare Museum: [www.svendborgmuseum.dk/forsorgsmuseet](http://www.svendborgmuseum.dk/forsorgsmuseet)

Museum Sønderjylland: [www.museum-sonderjylland.dk](http://www.museum-sonderjylland.dk)

Museum Vestfyn: [www.museumvestfyn.dk](http://www.museumvestfyn.dk)

Struer Museum: [www.struermuseum.dk](http://www.struermuseum.dk)

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Museum Vestfyn: Ingrid Vatne, [iv@museumvestfyn.dk](mailto:iv@museumvestfyn.dk)

Struer Museum: Jesper Bækgaard, [mail@struermuseum.dk](mailto:mail@struermuseum.dk)

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# DENMARK'S HISTORY

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SEUM

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FONDEN